

# REACHING SIDEWAYS

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND IDEAS

Compiled by the Joseph Priestley District Women and Religion Committee

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Volume I, No. 4

October 1982

## AGENDA FOR ACTION

In our Washington D. C. area the cool refreshing breezes of Autumn have begun to sweep through the stodgy Summer air. This comes as something of a relief as I consider what happened during the Summer with the usual mixed feelings. I say "usual mixed feelings" because I, along with everyone else, I suspect, look back over the events of the period with both joy and sadness. To quote the beginning line of many ancient jokes, "I have some good news and some bad news."

Let's take the good news first. The 1982 General Assembly of our denomination provided a marvelous opportunity for the District Chairs of Women and Religion Committees from all over our continent to get together and really talk to each other. It was truly exciting to share our mutual concerns and to plan for the coming year together. One of the results of this meeting was our decision to continue our communication with each other and with other Very Involved People through a newsletter which we call MATRIX. Our JPD committee was asked to put out the first issue. It was mailed in the first week of August. I have a few copies left and if you would like to see one, please call or write and I will send you one. Unfortunately this offer can only be good as long as our extra copies last.

More good news. Our JPD Women and Religion Committee has been hard at work this Summer planning our program for the coming year. We have the beginnings of committees and chairpersons to put on three conferences this year in three different geographical areas, River Road Church in Bethesda, MD, the Germantown Church in the Philadelphia area, and the Harrisburg Church in mid-Pennsylvania. There is a page in this issue of Reaching Sideways which gives further information on each of these. If you would like to work on one or more of these conferences, please do not hesitate to contact either the chair of the local conference or me. We need your input. One of the reasons we have managed to put on successful conferences is that we have been fortunate enough

to have the participation and great ideas of many of the women and men in the District. Be generous enough with your ideas to help us make all three conferences the same successes we have had in the past!

It's a bit difficult to go from the above to what I said would be "bad news." Perhaps I shouldn't say "bad" but rather "disappointing" news. I began this summer with a feeling. . . a vague uneasiness. . . that a veil of dissembling is being drawn over issues and events in our denomination by those who somehow think that the rest of us are not to be trusted to discuss what is really happening. And this feeling grew stronger during this year's General Assembly. At the Hearing of the Bylaw Revision Committee on Purposes and Principles, only members of that committee were permitted to speak to the large number of people who attended the hearing during the first hour. Those of us not on the committee were allowed to speak in small groups. The rest of us, apparently, needed to have someone else translate our thoughts and opinions for us, someone who might or might not have known what we were talking about in the first place. Those of us who were not facilitators could not be trusted to speak as individuals to the larger group.

Why were we not to be trusted? What is happening in our denomination? Are we too afraid of each other to allow diverse points of view to be represented? Was this rigidly structured hearing supposed to be part of a process to revise our Bylaws?

I was all the more distressed later when David Parke, Editor of the UU World and Kairos, our UU literary quarterly, graciously sent me a copy of the 1982 Winter edition in which he has passionately written of the opportunity of our generation to be involved in an articulation of our theology. He eloquently calls for a process of revising our purposes and principles which would involve the participation of all of us, a process in which, "persons are valued as persons, ideas are valued as ideas, and differences are valued as the sine qua non of a mature and generative religious community."

What happened in the interval between such inspiring words in the Winter of 1982 and the General Assembly in June of 1982? Perhaps it is that fine words from a gifted writer do not make a process. A process involving a spiritual journey is a tender and fragile thing. It begins slowly and carefully among individuals speaking together in their congregations and learning to trust each other well enough to say what is in their hearts. And there must be listening in a process, lots of listening.

Now I am well aware that this kind of meaningful dialogue is difficult to manage on a large scale. Undoubtedly a large hearing of hundreds of

people is the wrong place to try to begin. The individual in her/his congregation needs assistance in starting a process, and assistance in creating meaningful dialogues - far more than a letter to each minister from a committee, or an editorial with inspiring words.

As a matter of fact, I have begun to realize that, although the organization of our denomination is supposed to be congregational, we have been getting further and further away from those meaningful dialogues which begin in small groups in congregations and proceed to our elected representatives and our professional staff for administration. As a denomination we have seemed to me to become more and more hierarchical in the past few years, with orders issued by our command echelon, the UUA Board. Now I know that our Board is charged with implementing policy, and that, according to the laws of Massachusetts, need not legally follow the will of the denomination as expressed through Business Resolutions passed at General Assemblies. But whether or not they are legally bound to listen to those they are legally representing, they have a moral obligation in a denomination such as ours. On the other hand, we as members of the congregations have a moral obligation to tell our UUA Board and our professional staff what we want. If we ignore what is going on, then we are creating a vacuum which can only be filled with authoritarian command decisions issued from the top.

We have an article by Mary Ann Kelley and one by Jewell McHugh in this issue which attempt to be part of a process which passes information from the "grass roots" interests of the women in our District to those responsible for representing our interests, the UUA Board of Trustees. These articles speak for themselves and I need comment no further.

I do, however, wish to propose that the women of our District initiate a process of discussing the revision of our Purposes and Principles by beginning at the only place a process can begin - - - among ourselves. The Women's Task Force of Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Bethesda, MD, has asked our Assistant Minister, the Rev. Sydney Wilde-Nugent to prepare a series of three sermon/discussions on the revision.

These sermon/discussions will have the following titles:

1. A Purpose for our Principles
2. Where have we been? A tour of UU Creeds
3. Where is Our Spiritual Journey Taking Us?  
A Look Toward Our Future Purposes.

Each of these will begin with a sermon and be followed by a series of discussion questions for groups to talk about. This is the process which we are proposing to use in our District. We plan to contact each and every

society and fellowship and to offer a packet of these lectures with the discussion questions so that each and every congregation has an opportunity to join the process. The first of these sermon/discussions has already been given at the Hagerstown Fellowship and the congregation was so enthusiastic that they scheduled two more meetings on their own without the presence of Sydney to lead them.

We are excited about the possibilities of involving every one in our search to articulate our religious values. But after we have completed our job of including our whole District in our process, will there be a place and a time when we can join other Districts and continue on a continental level?

----- Sara Best, 5211 Saratoga Ave. Chevy Chase MD 20815  
The Women and Religion Committee of  
The Joseph Priestley UJA District

# ANNOUNCES THREE CONFERENCES

March 5, 1982 River Road Unitarian Church 301-229-0400  
6301 River Road, Bethesda MD 20817  
For Info Helen Popenoe  
Call or Write

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March 12, 1983 Unitarian Church of Harrisburg 717-564-4761  
1280 Clover Lane, Harrisburg PA 17113  
For Info Pat Green  
Call or Write

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March 18/19 1983 Unitarian Society of Germantown 215-844-1157  
6511 Lincoln Dr. Philadelphia, PA 19119  
For Info Caryl Lutz  
Call or Write

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Beginning in January 1983, we will provide flyers describing conference programs to each of the churches and societies of the District for enclosure in newsletter and for other means of distribution.

During February '83 reservations can be made at your church with a representative of the Women and Religion Conference Committees of JPD.

An opinion paper in the form  
of a Responsive Reading

A FEMINIST IS . . .

-- by Mary Heath-Walter

El Cerrito, CA 94530

A FEMINIST IS A WOMAN OR A MAN. (And AN ANTI-FEMINIST IS A  
WOMAN OR A MAN.

\* A feminist is a member of any race or nationality.

A FEMINIST IS VERY YOUNG, VERY OLD, OR ANYWHERE IN BETWEEN.

\* A feminist is an individual whose appearance, clothing, and  
mannerisms may be very similar or very different from those  
of other feminists.

A FEMINIST IS OF BELOW POVERTY-LEVEL INCOME, OF MIDDLE INCOME, OR  
ANYWHERE IN THE RANGE UP TO VERY WEALTHY.

\* A feminist is a Republican or a Democrat, a Socialist, a mem-  
ber of some minor political party, or may be quite non-politi-  
cal.

A FEMINIST IS A MEMBER OF A ROMAN CATHOLIC ORDER, A JEW, A BUDDHIST,  
A MEMBER OF ANOTHER RELIGIOUS GROUP, OR TOTALLY OPPOSED TO ORGANI-  
ZED RELIGION -- BUT IS ALWAYS A PROTESTER.

\* A feminist is a worker, whether it is in the home, in private  
or public organizations, or in selected activities and endeavors.

A FEMINIST IS DIVORCED, SINGLE, WIDOWED, OR MARRIED; A PARENT OR  
A NON-PARENT.

\* A feminist is lesbian or gay, bisexual, heterosexual,  
celibate, or some combination.

A FEMINIST IS INVOLVED IN A COMMITTED RELATIONSHIP; AS CHANGING

IN RELATIONSHIPS AS THE NIGHT AND DAY; OR AS SINGULAR AS THE  
BRILLIANT PLANET VENUS.

- \* A feminist is educated -- whether it is through self-education,  
formal education, or sheer survival in life's experiences.

A FEMINIST IS ONE WHO LEARNED TO BECOME ONE -- NOBODY IS BORN A  
FEMINIST.

- \* A feminist is a believer, and often an activist.

A FEMINIST IS AS CONSPICUOUS AS A PERSON HOLDING A SIGN AT A RALLY,  
OR AS INCONSPICUOUS AS A FAMILY MEMBER WHO MAKES SMALL BUT IMPORTANT  
CHANGES IN THE HOME.

- \* A feminist is a defender of equality.

A FEMINIST IS SOMETIMES HEARD TO SAY, "I'M NOT A WOMEN'S LIBBER,  
BUT ..."

- \* A feminist is not necessarily in agreement with other feminists

A FEMINIST IS INTERESTED IN THE WELFARE OF THE GREATER COMMUNITY, NOT  
JUST THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND SMALLER GROUP.

- \* A feminist is willing to take risks.

A FEMINIST IS POWERFUL - AND CAN EVEN BE POLITE WHEN THAT SEEMS  
APPROPRIATE.

- \* A feminist is in favor of the freedom to choose -- whether it  
is lifestyle, actions, or beliefs.

A FEMINIST IS DETERMINED -- AND WILL DETERMINE.

- \* A feminist is attuned to reality and knows when it is time to  
stop being patient.

A FEMINIST IS A RULE-MAKER, A RULE-BREAKER, AND SOMETIMES EVEN  
A RULER.

- \* A feminist is only one of many, and in striving to achieve our goals may choose to emphasize something entirely different from the emphasis of another.

A FEMINIST IS GRATEFUL FOR THE EFFORTS OF WOMEN AND MEN WHO WORKED FOR THE CAUSE OF HUMAN LIBERATION EARLIER IN THIS CENTURY, AND LONG BEFORE THAT.

- \* A feminist is able to transform bitter experience into benefits for others.

A FEMINIST IS AWARE THAT EVEN THOSE TRADITIONS CALLED ANCIENT HAVE CHANGED DURING THE COURSE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.

- \* A feminist is concerned about language, because language expresses our vision of life.

A FEMINIST IS SENSITIVE TO OUR SELF-IMAGE, TO OUR IMAGE OF OTHERS, AND TO THE IMAGE OTHERS HAVE OF US.

- \* A feminist is wise in knowing that art is not limited to museums; celebrations are not limited to holidays; religion is not limited to temples and churches; and truth is not limited to the beliefs of one's own group.

A FEMINIST IS GLAD FOR THE STRENGTH AND JOY THAT COME WITH UNITY AND WITH DIVERSITY.

- \* A feminist is a part of nature, not apart from nature.

A FEMINIST IS READY TO ADMIT THAT OUR PERCEPTION OF THE TRUTH, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN NATURE, IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

- \* A feminist is just as ready to laugh as to cry, each in full measure.

A FEMINIST IS CONVINCED THAT OUR SOCIETY IS WONDERFULLY VARIED, AND ON THIS PLURALISTIC PLANET THERE MUST BE A RESPECTED PLACE FOR EACH OF US.

- \* A feminist is a part of the great chain of being that encompasses everything on this planet Earth -- and beyond.

## A View From The Pew:

### "WE'RE MISSING THE PURPOSE AND THE PROCESS OF THE PRINCIPLES REVIEW"

Over the period of the past five years Unitarian Universalist women have been endeavoring to bring to our denomination a new awareness, a life-affirming consciousness. These efforts are part of the phenomenal movement to bring about an ideological change that is sweeping through all religious denominations today. Women are bringing new insights into the religious dialogue and new ways in which women and men relate to each other and to the religious institution itself. The leadership of most religious institutions (primarily male), accustomed to having issues of ideology debated only in pulpits by theologically educated professionals, with the people in the pews as listeners, have given little attention to either the meaning or the potential of this recent occurrence initiated by laywomen. It is the women, one half of humanity, historically having been excluded from shaping religious traditions, who are beginning to make demands for basic changes in understandings, attitudes and practices. These demands fall across the broad spectrum of all theological beliefs. Throughout each of the many diverse religious expressions currently within our own UUA community, the basic assumption continues that the male is the norm, that his understanding of reality is true and total, and that no other perspective is available to us.

In the Unitarian Universalist Association, women have worked to bring about this new awareness of reality through the process of the "business resolution", the only means available to us. The basic resolution, passed unanimously at the 1977 UUQ General Assembly, is titled "Women and Religion." With the adoption of this Resolution, the UUA agreed to: "(a) put traditional assumptions and language in perspective, and (b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future." We thereby were called to undertake the most courageous and essential work of our day, that of seeking new ways of perceiving reality at a time when the old mind (the world view that sanctions hierarchy and dualistic thinking) has brought us to the brink of disaster, a man-made Armageddon. Thus, the implementation of the Women and Religion Resolution was the original and guiding impetus for opening the Principles for review and revision at this time.

A year ago, we turned again to the Business Resolution to call for a review of the wording of the Principles as they appear in our UUA Bylaws. During extensive discussions, feminists had become aware of the ways in which hierarchical concepts are reflected in and sanctioned by those Principles. We found they did not reflect the denomination's intent to affirm women as it affirms men. Neither did they indicate a respect for the totality of life and of earth which we deem important. We therefore



encouraged our districts to submit to the Agenda of the 1981 General Assembly some suggested Bylaw amendments to initiate the process of updating the Principles to bring them into harmony with today's world. The revisions they suggested provided some ideas for eradication of concepts of hierarchy and sex bias, and for the introduction of the feminist perspective. It was assumed that during the ensuing denomination-wide discussions, these perspectives would come into focus and that the dialogue and additional suggestions would enhance the Principles and enrich our religious community.

Unfortunately, there developed a widespread misinterpretation of the purpose for the review of the Principles at this time. A "theological" controversy, buried since the time of merger more than two decades ago, has been brought to the surface and made to appear in the minds of many as the reason for looking at the Principles in the first place. This internal and interminable debate, concerning the relative influence of three major theological positions--the theist, Christian and humanist--within the UUA, has pushed to the periphery the broader and more basic consideration of the sexist assumptions that underlie all three of these patriarchal traditions.

In resurrecting the old "humanist-theist" controversy of the past, women have been trivialized. Moreover, the process that women had envisioned has been subverted and lay participation is limited. In our previous history, attempts by our denomination to articulate our faith, or to survey our values or opinions, have failed to truly involve the laity (both women and men in the pews) in the dialogue. We women had envisioned this time an open process that would intentionally seek out, include and encourage lay membership, as well as the leadership, in full democratic participation. This has not happened. Little discussion has taken place among the more than 150,000 individuals in our churches and fellowships. In the first round of Principles reconsideration this Spring, small numbers of laywomen or laymen have participated. Many of the laywomen who initiated the review of the Principles have not been able to connect with the process.

As we see it, we must reclaim the original purpose, extend the time in this first round and devise a means for truly full participation. Women in the pews have given us all an opportunity to become engaged in a search for new insights and new understandings. It is important to bring a new vision to our religious movement.

(This paper is not intended to be a definitive statement and should be regarded as part of an ongoing analysis. It was developed by Lucile Schuck, Mass Bay District, edited by Rosemary and Howard Matson, Pacific Central District, and includes ideas that flowed from informal discussions with others, particularly Betty Hoskins of Central Mass District and Edith Fletcher and Carolyn McDade, Mass Bay District)

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

A cutting of a sermon delivered Aug 1, '82 at the Unitarian Society of Germantown PA by Mary Ann Maggiore, Phila, PA 19119

People of strength have always attracted me. I like smart people, well-organized people, self-sufficient people, powerful people. Over time I have made it my business to go where they go and talk to them whenever I can.

It was because I like strong people so much that I joined this church. Strong people are more demanding, more exciting and more fun.

But there is something else about most of the strong people I know, and I include myself among them, that has begun to trouble me. Strong people rarely ask for help. To them, asking for help is embarrassing; like yelling at your child in public or tripping over the curb, it is not what a strong person should be doing. It is demeaning, it is wrong, it is not adult.

Yet, if you listen to strong people you will frequently hear the sounds of people on their way to trouble. Their over-achievement, their competitiveness and their fears are keeping them above the community of humanity. Often, listening to someone I consider very strong, I am suddenly struck by how lonely they seem.

Asking for help is hard for strong people and receiving it is not much easier. They are always eager to help but they do not have a good sense that they need help, too. Often, they wait until it is very, very late.

Once upon a time, practically everything was shared. And so help was asked for and offered in the smooth rhythm of day-to-day life. Shelter was shared, bakery ovens, ox carts, building and repair skills were requested and given constantly. Now, in our advanced technological age, things are more difficult. Each of us has our own home, our own car, our own telephone. We tell ourselves we don't need anything from our neighbor. But we do.

The time comes and it comes frequently, when we are in trouble or merely troubled and we need someone to turn to. We have to know this, see this, admit this, and be gentle with ourselves about this. If we need help, we have to learn to ask.

So many of us here today are in or have been in the business of helping people. We have grown to believe that we are the people who know the answers, we are the people who never falter or fail. So that when we do falter or fail, it is brutal for us. But look at us,

really look at us. How many close, admired friends of ours have fallen victim to heart attacks, ulcers, migraines, breakdowns that are really cries of Help me that have been turned inside instead of out?

One of the worst things about this is that not only do we do this to ourselves but so many of us have children and we are teaching them by our example. We are raising new generations of young people who can not ask for help and who are suffering because of it. With the statistics of teenage suicides, runaways and cases of mental and physical collapse, can we really continue to claim that this kind of modelling is "building their character"?

And how many of us have been shocked by the number of young people we have known who have simply died before their time - victims of an inability to slow down, to stop and ask for help? I remember for awhile I worked as a clerk in a law library. And there was one guy in the firm who was just amazing. He was so skilled, so intelligent, so quick. He had "so much going for him" as they say. But I rarely saw him in the law library during the day. If I saw him, he would always be alone. He insisted on doing all his own research and looking up all his own books even though we were there to make the job easier for him. He took on all the toughest cases in the office and he always worked on them by himself. He was 34 years old when he died one night in his office. He left four children and a young wife. Afterward when everyone was eulogizing him I said, "You know, one thing about that guy was he never talked to anybody and he never asked for help."

I think, now that I look back, that this trait of not asking for help had become a cornerstone of his personality. He was determined to never ask for help. He died because of it. And 34 is too young to go.

Awhile ago, I called a very dear friend in Massachusetts. I knew she'd had a lot of money worries, things weren't going well with her husband, and she had a brand new baby.

"Suzanna," I said, "How ya doin'?"

"Fine," she chirruped

"Anything new your way?"

"not much," she said and laughed. "I just got out of the hospital."

"Why, what happened?" I was stunned.

"I had a little freak-out. Things are better now. They've got me on some very nice pills."

I felt terrible and after I got over feeling terrible, I got angry. Why hadn't she called me? Why didn't she let me help her? She brushed me aside at first, but then she said it, "I wanted to call you. I knew I needed help. I just didn't know how to ask."

She didn't know how to ask. I seemed a terrible thing for her to do; alien to the image of herself she so meticulously presented to everyone else. She, like me, and many of us, had the idea that she was supposed to be invincible. That if she were truly together, truly whole, she wouldn't need other people's help. By calling out for it, she would see herself as weak, a failure. She felt sheepish confiding all this to me, she said, because it made her feel so alone.

But she is not alone. We all know that she is not alone. And her problem is not new. It may be aggravated by our alienating society, but it is as old as humankind.

There have been many people - great people, strong people - who have understood the human need for help and necessity of asking for it. Christ saw it centuries ago when he said so clearly,

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find: knock and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened."

To me, His words are not an exhortation to God, some omnipotent father, but to each other - urging us to look to each other, to confide in each other, to stretch out of ourselves and see the love and support that is available to us, literally for the asking.

The verses give no limitation to time or trials. You may not always receive immediately; you may not receive on the first knock. But, if you seek, if you look, sometimes in places or among people you might not have considered, you will find an answer. You will find help. Listen to Susan B. Anthony pleading in a letter to her friend, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, anxious for help on a crucial speech that she felt unable to write.

"This week was to be leisure for me and the Mercy only knows when I get a moment . . . even if I do get the time, I can't get up a decent document. So, for the love of me and for the saving of the reputation of womanhood - set yourself about this work. It is of small moment who writes the address, but of vast moment that it be well done. I promise you to work hard, oh, how hard and pay you whatever you say for your time and brains but don't say no, nor delay a minute . . . now will you load my gun leaving me to pull the trigger and let fly the powder and ball?"

Stanton loaded Anthony's gun and the shot it fired is reverberating even now. Stanton juggled her seven young children and her precious spare time so that she could write and write and write for Anthony

and all womanhood. Why? Because she believed so strongly in the cause of feminism. And because her friend asked her to.

Communities are no longer organized around a common center, or a common rhythm. There is no general store where men meet at night and women meet in the daytime. . . No village fountain or ritual for ending the evening with a tamp of tobacco and children playing tag at our feet. Without these easy meeting grounds, asking is more difficult; we have to go out of our way to contact someone to do it. And even though the telephone has become a necessity in every household, it does not come close to the easy confidences of sharing a sorrow, a hurt or a need face-to-face with a friend. It takes more courage, but we must do it even so. And there are two reasons why we must.

"The best way to have a friend is to be one." is the old saying.

And so often when you help a friend or neighbor they are looking, waiting, hoping for the chance to be a friend to you, but they cannot read your mind. You have to tell them what you need, (so often I've been in a relationship with a person who has helped me and helped me and I've asked what kind of help could I give. Too often they have insisted that they needed none. Eventually the relationship has drifted away. A clear lesson here - if you give help you have to give people a chance to help you. You owe it to them.) In telling and asking a friend for help you bring about a more symmetrical relationship, an equal relationship of nurturing and eating, of helping and being helped that seals you closer and makes you better friends.

The second reason I know will appeal to you as good, responsible individuals. The world needs you - and what you can do for it - now more than ever before. It is a great task, a gigantic task and you cannot do it alone. You owe it to the world to keep yourself whole and sane and healthy and you need help from others to do it. By asking and receiving you double your energies, triple your strength, quadruple your successes and magnify your dreams.

I guess what I am asking, begging, urging is - Take care of yourself. Love yourself. Feed yourself, emotionally and physically with all the love and support you can find for you. You deserve it. You are perfect and strong, but not so perfect or strong that you do not need what every human needs - the aid and sustenance that can come only of asking for help of another. And there is no better time than now.

Wall Street Journal Sept 17 '82, Washington Wire column:

MINOR MEMOS: Surprise choice; Conservative warrior Phyllis Schlafly has been named to the Administrative Conference, an advisory panel that reviews federal procedures; most members are experts in administrative law.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS by Guy Best

Priscilla Pilgrim is a neophyte to the politics of liberal religion she has been much too busy for the past thirty years, working in the founding of two Unitarian Churches after being drawn into the fold by A. Powell Davies. She has met another wayfarer in the wilds of denominational concerns, Sweet Alice, (named for all the female stereotypes listed by Elizabeth Janeway. She is a very liberal UU who has been preparing church suppers, teaching RE, and running rummage sales for as long as Priscilla Pilgrim has been involved, thirty years.

Their conversation has come round to what they expect of the denomination.

SWEET ALICE: You know we are a diverse collection of people. Over 60% of the UU's are women. Our membership has increased slightly for the first time in eleven years. We seem to be sharing many of the problems being experienced by the other liberal and moderate Protestant denominations.

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: We are uniquely sophisticated. Along with Jews and Episcopalians, we Unitarian Universalists have the highest education levels. It's all in the Yearbook of American & Canadian churches.

SWEET ALICE: That must make the management of our denomination a real challenge to our elected and appointed leaders. Highly educated individuals have ideas of their own. I suppose those ideas move by due process to the UUA General Assembly via the delegates from each church.

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: That they do and Section C-4.2 of the Bylaws is clear on Powers and Duties:

"General Assemblies shall make overall policy for carrying out the purposes of the Association and shall direct and control its affairs."

The problem arises in the interpretation of that Section and another Section, C-6kl. Board of Trustees Responsibility:

"The Board of Trustees shall conduct the affairs of the Association and subject to these Bylaws, shall carry out the Association's policies and directives as provided by law."

SWEET ALICE: That's all settled. We elect people and they carry out our wishes as expressed at the General Assembly.

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: Not quite, I understand from Executive Vice President William F. Schulz that there is no procedure whatever for the implementation of a Business Resolution passed by the General Assembly. He cited the authority and responsibility of corporate officers under the laws of Massachusetts as the basis for our Board of Trustees acting on its own without reference to the will of the majority. "Catch 22"

SWEET ALICE: But the polity of our denomination is congregational. Each congregation retains ecclesiastical autonomy but unites in brotherhood (sic) and joint action. Isn't it all written down somewhere? Weren't our forebearers pretty smart, too?

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: Yes they were at least as intelligent as we are but somewhere the concept of democracy has slipped through the cracks. Perhaps our Rotten Borough system of representation by area rather than by people is at fault, compounded by the 100 to one voting power of our ordained ministers as compared to laypersons in the association. While this polity is not monarchical nor aristocratic it is more republican in actual fact than it is congregational. General Assemblies seem to be produced as shows to preoccupy the hoi polloi while the self-appointed elite busy themselves with self-perpetuation, self-aggrandizement, and deciding the fate of the masses. It's all Bread and Circuses.

SWEET ALICE: But we pass several business resolutions each year. Those resolutions express how we want the denomination to operate. None of them have Sunset clauses to automatically end their force and effect. We surely argue enough on their intent, implications, verbiage, and ramifications to make it abundantly clear what our legislative intent is to anyone who cares to know.

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: The elite, our rulers, are only letting us play at governing ourselves. They know what is good for us and act on their own omniscience without regard for what you think your human rights may be, and get this ...without any accountability to you. But, not to worry, it's all for your own good.

SWEET ALICE: But we elect them to be responsible and to be responsive to us. Has that gone completely out of style?

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: Sorry, there is no effective review process. The Commission on Appraisal is an arm of the GA, reporting annually, and hosting an open forum at the GA. They do seem quite oblivious to the process for implementation of resolutions and to women's concerns.

SWEET ALICE: But the budget ...that's where the real decisions are manifest. We get to review that.

PRISCILLA PILGRIM: Be my guest, Some laypersons have attempted to get answers at the General Assembly with no success. The budget is not structured by program, so you can't tell what resources are being applied to any specific purpose. Further, the chart of accounts is not structured in consonance with budget line items; and the meaning of most line items has been altered from year to year so that all continuity is lost. No, it's Catch 22 again, and when that is no longer true, you will see some pertinency to the real world in policy and in practice within our denomination's administration.

Are we there yet Grandma?  
Sermon GA 82, Brunswick, Maine

One day, a few weeks ago, as I broke a long silence and spoke out to a group of colleagues about lack of sensitivity in regard to language, I realized that I was suffering from the frustration of explaining it all again, starting back at square one. This road I had traveled many times before, and I had deluded myself into thinking I could leave explanation behind in this particular group. I lay awake one night some time later and I recalled as a young girl how impatient I would get when driving along with my grandparents from Chicago to Ohio. Every summer from age seven to fifteen, I visited my grandparents in Chicago, and then rode with them to visit my Dad near Cleveland, Ohio. On these trips I would be sure to ask after a couple of hours, "Are we there yet, Grandma?" My grandmother would answer patiently that we had a ways to go, but we would stop to eat and rest soon. "Be patient", she said. Becoming restless after a few hours and a long nap I would ask the question again and Grandpa would tell funny stories, sing silly songs, or point out interesting countryside to take my mind off the length of the trip. But before our journey ended I would again come back to - "Are we there yet, Grandma?" Then Grandma would be slightly annoyed and suggest that I find something to do to keep me busy until the end of the trip.

Sometimes now I feel very much like that child, impatient with the journey of the women's movement and with slow change, changes which I moved through a long time ago and took for granted which need articulation continually, to reach all those in various stages along the way. We need to reach all the people in various stages. Perhaps we are never totally there.

Sometimes it's hard to remember the idealism we all felt in the beginning of the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the peace movement. Did we go wrong someplace along the way? Did we expect too much? Or are we frozen by our own impatience and frustration? Can we settle for less than we asked for at the start of this journey? I think not. When we argued for equal access to the systems of power, we talked of restructuring society. It has in reality been easier to fit in than to restructure those systems. - - - In this process we become changed and take the less hazardous routes like dressing for success, instead of changing the definition of success. Today many men are opting out of the very same worn out patterns of life and work that women have been trying to fit into. Irony isn't it! And the realization hits us that we have a very long, a very long way to go on this journey. This journey we



women and men are on.

We as Unitarian Universalist men and women have an obligation and a unique opportunity to continue a process of restructuring our own Association and churches, help in the movement to restructure society. This General Assembly is dedicated to the merger of Unitarians and Universalists 21 years ago, and the coming of age of a new joint association. The coming of age of the Women's movement and all civil rights movement has not happened yet. It has been customary for Unitarian Universalist to speak out on human rights, and we must not stop now nor forget to look within our own hierarchical liturgies, and organizations, our language, our style. We have begun the process of empowering our women and gay and black ministers, but have we empowered the women and men in the pew? Have we done all we can do to offer not only guidelines to language changes, but explanations of the deeper meaning of how we communicate with one another? Lest we pat ourselves on the back and accept our secular movement for human rights as enough we need to take a long hard look at the very purposes for existence. The Women and Religion resolution was but a beginning and we have a long journey ahead. Our association of free churches needs to plan and develop strategies for internal and external change by working in coalitions from among our many organizations within the UUA and with ecumenical and secular groups. Clearly women's issues are religious issues. They are important to women and to men and to our future.

There are both possibilities and pitfalls to avoid for the future. A peak in the year 2000 - let us fantasy for a moment a society based on caring and nurture rather than competitiveness and individual aggrandizement, hierarchies and elitism. Let us picture a world where women and men share and interchange roles and work, where cooperatives are commonplace for childcare and other resources, architecture designed to accommodate such sharing, enabling the elderly, single, single parent, two person working team, to share energies and resources, and avoid alienation and isolation.

Now imagine a world where scapegoating rules and human rights are ignored, KKK, Nazis, and other groups thrive, ironclad government appears to lead most of the world, including the United States. Picture the redbaiting as happened at the end of the early suffragist movement, and infringement of rights a return to blacks on the back of the bus, and women in the household and gays in the closet. Either one of these worlds is possible or somewhere in between. Which one will we opt for, which one will we work for? Women taking on their own power will find some problems, but will find surprising allies among women and men. If we all work together not allowing the fatigue

to de-energize us the vision of hope and empowerment is possible.

Each of us may have a slightly different vision but it is all-important to keep exploring to keep a vision, a dream, to continue creating rather than freezing ourselves into place. Feminist fatigue (and I am using feminist in a broad sense encompassing both men and women) can render us helpless but we can renew ourselves by giving one another strength and move out of that fatigue to a new reenergized place. A place where networks and coalitions of women and men crossing racial and class boundaries can push us forward on our journey.

The question I asked as a little girl needs to be answered not just a no, we're not there yet, but we have moved to this point on our journey and we still have a ways to go before our journey's end!!!! We are not there yet as Grandma said, but we will get there together!

The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Cusick, Northeast District UUA,  
Portland, Maine 04102. Permission was graciously give to cut for  
this publication.

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#### DEFINITIONS

By Barbara Robb  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

In response to the challenge of questions asking why some of us are concerned with and/or dedicated to the cause of feminism, I wish to present a few definitions of the words feminism and feminist for you to chew on and consider. Among those I read, the following appealed to me as most appropriate:

- I Feminist - a believer in feminism; especially one who works for women's rights.
- Feminism - (a) the belief that men and women are intellectually and socially equal and that women should be given all the privileges, advantages, and opportunities enjoyed by men.  
b) organized activity based on this principle  
- Holt Dictionary of American English
- II Feminist - of, or relating to feminism.
- Feminism - (a) the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes.  
(b) organized activity on behalf of woman's rights and interests: the 19th and 20th century movements seeking to remove restrictions that discriminate against women.  
- Webster's Third New International Dictionary 1962  
(Unabridged) 10

III Feminism - the social doctrine that grants women the capacity and the rights until now reserved to men.

-Vox, Diccionario Manual Ilustrado de la Lengua Espanola

IV Feminism - ...In general terms, femminismo makes the following claims: 1. on economic grounds - access to all jobs and parity of wages (equal pay for equal work); 2. on legal grounds - abolition of every restriction to women's juridical and judicial rights, full equality with men under law; 3. on political grounds - access to the vote and women's eligibility to all elective posts. - Melzi, Il Novissimo Dizionario Italiano

Exploring these definitions, my feelings soared. What could be a more whole or holy cause than the pursuit of equality, freedom, and richer living for a very large part of the human race? Or more exciting than the hope of working and growing assertively as partners with equal choice and rights?

- Barbara Robb, Women's Rights Task Force, River Road Church

A verbatim excerpt from the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees, UUA, on June 21 & 25, 1982 (to be approved in October, '82)

#### EXTENSION OF BOARD POLICY ON NON-ERA STATES

President Pickett asked the Board to advise the staff regarding UUA policy on attending meetings in non-ERA states in light of the expected defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment. Denise Davidoff, President of the UU Women's Federation, appeared before the Board to ask that the Board acknowledge the spirit in which the women's movement has carried on the struggle for the ERA.

M (G. Thomas), S, (20-0)

VOTED: That the Board, acting in the spirit with which it adopted the policy regarding states which have not yet ratified the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), will continue the boycott of those states until September 1, 1982, as a means of demonstrating its concern for the failure of the Amendment. Further, the Board honors the work that has gone into this legislative struggle and pledges itself to a continuing battle for that essential statement of human dignity.

A RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE JPD BOARD SEPT 11, 1982 WHICH FAILED BY A  
5 TO 3 VOTE - Mary Ann Kelley, Adelphi, MD 20783

RE: Continuation of the 1978 UUA General Assembly Business Resolution on  
"UUA Meetings and Non-ratified States".

Whereas the 17th General Assembly of the UUA, meeting in Boston, MA in June  
1978, passed a Business Resolution which, in part, resolved to:

"...discourage the scheduling and the attending of multi-state denominational  
meetings, conferences, and retreats in public facilities in non-ratified  
states until the ERA becomes the law of the land. . .";

Whereas the UUA Board of Trustees Meeting, held in June 1982, saw fit to  
rescind the above mentioned General Assembly resolution; and

Whereas, the ERA has already been reintroduced into the U. S. Congress  
with all the original co-sponsors concurring in its reintroduction; then

Be it resolved: That the Joseph Priestley District Board urges the UUA  
Board of Trustees, and the President of the UUA, to reconsider at their  
next meeting their June 1982 decision to rescind the Resolution;

Be it further resolved: That the JPD Board urges the UUA Board to reaf-  
firm its continuation of the 1978 Resolution and the Board policy of hold-  
ing multistate denominational meetings, conferences and retreats only in  
the 35 states which showed support for the equality of women and men by  
passing the Equal Rights Amendment.

NEWS ITEM from the Joseph Priestley District Women and Religion Committee  
On September 11, 1982, we made a formal statement to the Board as follows:

"The Women and Religion Committee of the JPD wishes to express  
concern to the JPD Board on the lack of direction and leadership  
of the continental Women and Religion Committee of the Unitarian  
Universalist Association. The district committees, in order to  
fulfill their task of implementing the '77 Women and Religion,  
and the '80 Implementation Resolutions, need a central committee  
for coordination of their efforts, for exchange of ideas and other  
communications, and for encouragement.

It is not clear that the continental Women and Religion Committee  
is performing this function."

The Joseph Priestley Board of Trustees passed, without dissent, a motion  
to authorize the President, Karel Toll, to forward the letter, with his  
endorsement, to Rona Mears, Chair, and to the UUA Board of trustees.

A CALL FOR A NEW POLICY

-- by Jewell McHugh

Potomac, MD 20854

The UUA, as a result of action taken by its Board in June, has ended its policy of avoidance of large meetings in states which had not ratified the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

On Wednesday, September 1, the Women's Task Force of the Board of Social Concerns of Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Bethesda, Maryland, voted for a proposal which requested the UUA Board to reconsider this matter. On September 11, the Board of the Joseph Priestley District voted against a similar proposal. This is an important matter and all letters going to the UUA Board are important, especially those from boards and committees.

Many of the arguments against reconsideration center on the difficulties encountered in the previous boycott and ignore the possibilities encountered in the previous boycott and ignore the possibilities of a new policy with regard to states which have discriminatory laws and which have refused to pass equal rights amendments to their state constitutions.

A request to reconsider should be a request to reconsider the entire question, not merely the previous position.

Reconsideration might lead to a decision to adopt a new policy, one which could free the staff at 25 Beacon Street and small committees of the UUA to go or to meet where they can be of most help to the denomination, while at the same time the UUA could avoid regarding states which consistently deprive half of their citizens of their rights.

A new policy might encourage more support for Districts which lie partly or entirely within unratified (this refers to the pre-June 30 position) states. A new policy could be designed to encourage more cooperation between such Districts and their neighboring Districts.

Why is this still important since the failure of the last ERA effort?

The answer is easy for all to understand. The states which did not ratify are, for the most part, the same states which have laws discriminating against women and which have not added equal rights amendments to their state constitutions. Sex discrimination continues unabated.

It is imperative for a body which calls itself a Liberal Religion to maintain a strong, well-publicized position against blatant discrimination. A key part of such a position is the refusal to hold large, profitable conferences in such areas. Such meetings are offensive to freedom-loving, self-respecting individuals.

We must not ask our members to attend General Assembly in such an area, or to take their families with them. We must not provide profit for the businesses there - since it is generally known that profit-taking is a basic factor in continuing sexual discrimination.

If people doubt the wisdom of this position, ask them to think back to the Civil Rights efforts of the '50's and the '60's. Many of us quit taking vacations in racially segregated areas. We refused to patronize segregated restaurants and hotels insofar as this was possible. We did not cut ties with friends and relatives in those areas. Supportive relationships and close personal contacts were more important than ever before. These actions played an important part in the fight to end racial barriers.

If we could do this for a fractional part of our population, why should we not be doing the same for a group that comprises more than half of the membership of our societies?

Please allow me to give a very personal example. Next month I will go into an "unratified" state for a class reunion. I keep in close touch with some friends and relatives in similar places. I visit, but I bring my gifts with me from home, and make no large purchases there. If possible, I avoid large commercial establishments in travel and visits in such places. All across this continent many people have been following these practices, and are continuing to do so.

Our friends in those states tell us that it is important for us to keep going this and for us to keep announcing to state officials that we are doing this. It is important to our relatives that we "keep the pressure on." The church is my family, too. I call on it to support, encourage and expand this effort to hasten the time for full freedom for all of us.

SUPPORT CONTINUATION OF THE RESOLUTION ON NON-RATIFIED STATES

-by Mary Ann Kelley, 3209 Stanfor Street, Adelphi, MD

The 17th General Assembly of the UUA, meeting in Boston, MA, in June 1978, passed a Business Resolution which in part resolved to:

"...discourage the scheduling and the attending of multistate denominational meetings, conferences and retreats in public facilities in non-ratified states until the ERA becomes the law of the land..." (emphasis mine). The UUA Board of Trustees meeting, held in June 1982, saw fit to rescind this General Assembly Resolution.

In fact, except for not holding the General Assembly in a non-ratified state, the intent of this resolution was never carried out by the UUA administration:

1. The Commission on Appraisal of the UUA held every one of its meetings in a non-ratified state since 1979.
2. The Women and Religion Continental Committee held a meeting in Chicago, IL (a non-ratified state), and did not even know why the meeting should not be held there.
3. The non-ratified states were never notified by the UUA Administration as to why the General Assembly meetings were not being held in their states (as requested by the Resolution).

The UUA Board and Administration, in defending their recision and failure to comply, says that "we are not bound by the laws of Massachusetts to act on anything the GA delegates may vote." In effect, this means that the UUA is not bound by the moral and ethical values articulated by the GA delegates from our churches and fellowships. While legalistically this may be true, such action raises serious questions about the democratic process as manifested in our denomination.

Some of the UUA Trustees and Administration defend their recision of the Resolution at this time by claiming it "was done at the request of other UU women," i.e., the leadership of the UU Women's Federation. However, the UUWF is not the spokesperson for all UU women and men, nor was the 1978 GA Resolution the sole property of the UUWF. Moreover, some of the actions of the UUA Board and Administration at the 20th General Assembly in Philadelphia regarding the proposed Bylaw Amendment seem to suggest the use of the old political trick of pitting women against women, a reprehensible maneuver that should be condemned.

I urge the continuation of the Business Resolution on Non-Ratified States because:

1. The Equal Rights Amendment has already been reintroduced into the U. S. Congress with all the original co-sponsors concurring in its reintroduction;
2. To discontinue the "boycott" of non-ERA states at this time implies a "rewarding" of those states which helped defeat the previous Equal Rights Amendment;
3. Many UU churches, fellowships, other UU organizations and individuals have themselves complied with the spirit of the GA Resolution by not holding meetings in non-ERA states and wish to continue; they need the continued support of the UUA in their actions.

The UUA Board of Trustees will be meeting at UUA headquarters in Boston MA, from October 22 thru 24. I urge you to write your UUA Trustee, the Board of Trustees as a body, and the President of the UUA, letting them know how you feel about this issue, and hopefully, that you support the continuation of the Resolution on Non-Ratified States.

September 23, 1982 - by Mary Ann Kelley

Joseph Priestley District  
Women and Religion Committee  
9601 Cedar Lane  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

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