

# YRUU 5 Year Review

## I. INTRODUCTION

During the summers of 1981 and 1982, Unitarian Universalist youth and adults gathered to create a new structure for UU youth programs. The old structure, Liberal Religious Youth (LRY), suffered from mistrust between youth and adults, behavior problems, and a lack of adult involvement. (Footnote 1) At the two-week-long Common Ground conferences at Carleton and Bowdoin Colleges, delegates engaged in extensive dialogue, consensus-building, and decision making. The result was a new youth organization, Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), which replaced LRY on January 1, 1983.

In its first five years, YRUU has had much to overcome. The Special Committee on Youth Programs (SCOYP), which conducted the last major evaluation of UU youth programs in 1976-77, found the programming then in existence to be "inadequate and a disservice to youth," and noted a "massive abdication of adult responsibility." (Footnote 2) SCOYP recommended, among other things, increased activity by adults in youth programs, increased funding for youth staff by the UUA, the separation of programs for college-age youth (now more often known as "post-high youth") from those for youth in junior high and high school, and a "Continental Dialogue," which took form as Common Ground.

The Common Ground meetings were uncommonly spirited gatherings. "There was a sense," said the 1982 report, "that the whole week was one worship service, one long liturgical process." (Footnote 3) The experience united and excited a generation of youth and adults, some familiar with and some new to UU youth programs.

Like LRY, YRUU was designed as a religious organization dedicated to such purposes as "fostering spiritual depth, creating a peaceful community on earth and peace within us, and clarifying both individual and universal religious values as part of our growth process." (Footnote 4)

YRUU differs from LRY in its close institutional tie to the UUA and the participation of adults with youth at every decision-making level. LRY depended on the UUA for most of its income, but generally functioned as an autonomous, all-youth institution. The YRUU Youth Council and the YRUU Steering Committee have a ratio of one adult to every three youth. The transition from LRY to YRUU was a shift from "youth autonomy" to youth adult collaboration. YRUU is less independent; the agreement of the UUA is needed for decisions about budgets, staffing, and bylaws.

The new institutional arrangement was reinforced by the commitment to ensuring that YRUU is, as its bylaws say, "clearly identified as an organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association." Like UU adults in the same period, UU youth have become more willing to identify themselves as Unitarian Universalists and to see involvement in a local congregation and in the UUA as an important part of their religious commitment.

The primary purposes of Common Ground, and of YRUU, were to revive youth programs where they had atrophied, and to restore trust where it had waned.

In June 1987, pursuant to proposals from the Religious Education Advisory Committee and the YRUU Steering Committee, the UUA Board of Trustees initiated a review of the first five years of YRUU. The work of the Five-Year Review Committee, unlike SCOYP'S, is not occasioned by despair or crisis, which, in itself, says something about the success of Common Ground in renewing youth programs in the UUA. Ours is a routine evaluation; we hope others like it will happen regularly in the future. Our charge is as follows:

1. To conduct a review of YRUU in the context of all UU programs for youth, in consultation with the YRUU Steering Committee;
  2. To include in this review a study of YRUU history, promise, progress, present concerns, and future directions;
  3. To analyze how YRUU relates to the UUA, to the Religious Education Department, and to other youth programs in terms of organizational structure, responsibility, etc.;
  4. To analyze the relationship between YRUU's structure and its function and purpose;
  5. To make recommendations for the maintenance and improvement of youth programming.
- (Footnote 5)

It was the intention of the board to have, among the members of the committee: a director of religious education, a member of the UUA Board of Trustees, a youth member of Youth Council, a youth active at the local level, a youth who was at Common Ground, an adult advisor, and a minister with youth experience. The Committee on Committees was successful on all counts except the first; we have missed having a local religious educator (ideally a specialist in youth ministry), but have sought to make up for this shortcoming through interviews and consultations.

Our overall view of YRUU, and of the changes in UU youth programs that have occurred since Common Ground, is positive. Participation, as measured by the size of the YRUU mailing list and by attendance at continental events, has increased greatly. District delegations of youth and adults to the YRUU Youth Council have been nearly full each year. Youth programs at every level are better balanced than was the case in 1980.

We also see signs that young people are more active in all aspects of the life of local congregations. Youth participation in denominational affairs, including the General Assembly (GA), has also increased. One of the most heartening signs of this is the movement of YRUU leaders into important UUA posts. For example, Ben Ford, a member of the GA Planning Committee, and Julie-Ann Silberman, chair of the UUA Nominating Committee, are both recent YRUU leaders. Our aim is to advance what YRUU has already accomplished.

We are grateful to all those who have helped us with our work. The Reverend Ellen Brandenburg, Youth Program Director, and Andrew Moeller, Leia Durland and Jason Happel, members of the Youth Staff have given many hours of time and masses of information. All those who we interviewed (see Appendix A) were generous with their expertise; we wish our budget would permit us to publish more of their thoughts. The YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee have been both frank and patient as we have learned from them about issues they

have dealt with many times. We also thank those who responded to our questionnaires and those who wrote to us. Our special thanks go to Gene Navias, who as staff liaison and fellow committee member fed us, entertained us, and kept us on schedule through a task that was a new experience for most of us.

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1. For a recollection of the reasons for the Common Ground meetings, see Wayne Arnason interview, Appendix E.
2. Report of the Special Committee on Youth Programs to the UUA Board of Trustees (UUA, November, 1977).
3. Common Ground 1982, p. 8.
4. YRUU Bylaws, Article 11, Section 1 (Appendix B).
5. Minutes, UUA Board of Trustees, June, 1987.

## II. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a quick summary of our report. (Our full findings and detailed recommendations are in Section III below.)

### **A. Adult and youth leadership**

Adult involvement in YRUU has improved somewhat from the "massive abdication" found by SCOYP in 1977, but it is still far below what we believe is necessary, and youth leaders do not have enough support and training. We have recommended several steps to rectify this, including the funding of a continental leadership training program for both youth and adults as youth leaders, and an increased emphasis on youth ministry in the education of professional religious leaders.

### **B. Age range**

We have concluded after much study that YRUU is serving neither the junior-high nor the post-high age range effectively. The present 12-to-22-year old-age range was a compromise to begin with, and discourages the kind of focused, age-appropriate programs that we feel best meet the needs of youth. Accordingly, we recommend that the YRUU bylaws be amended to reduce the membership age range to 14 to 20 years old. We hope this change will draw attention to the need for UUA support of programs for junior-high youth. We recommend the addition of a Junior-High Youth Program Director to the Youth Staff.

### **C. Structure and accountability**

We think the overall design of YRUU and its relationship to the UUA have proved to be successful. We have recommended only a few minor refinements in this structure: 1) that the Youth Programs Director be identified as the supervisor of the Youth Program Specialists, and 2) that the YRUU Steering Committee be enabled (through funding for three meetings per year and for an improved program evaluation process) to set priorities for the Youth Program Specialists.

At the district level, we see much variation both in structure and effectiveness. Conference planning is especially spotty. We recommend that all districts have permanent and official representatives of youth and of adults who work with youth on district boards and religious education committees. We urge district staff, officers, and boards to accept responsibility for the recruitment, training, and support of district-level youth advisors. We also believe that a conference planning manual from the Youth Office would be helpful to districts, which too often have to start de novo every time youth leaders change.

### **D. Program content**

We applaud the trend, begun during the YRUU era, toward greater variety of program offerings for youth, but we still feel the lack of a guiding philosophy that takes into account the whole range of needs. The attached "Visions for Youth" paper is offered as a starting point for a restatement of the UUA's philosophy of youth ministry. We recommend that leaders at all levels evaluate youth program offerings to be sure they include the following: structured study-

discussion programs, social programs, worship and spiritual exploration, social service and action, and experience in self-governance and leadership.

### **E. Delivery of services**

We believe the first priority of the Youth Office should be to serve district YRUU programs particularly by offering leadership training. We have recommended that all staff activities should be measured against this priority, and that the Youth Office travel budget be increased and reallocated to permit more district visits.

### **F. Behavior**

It should surprise no one that behavior at youth conferences continues to be an issue. We believe that codes of behavior need to be evaluated periodically by youth and adults working together. We therefore recommend that a new Behavior Code for youth and adults at continental events be written by the YRUU Youth Council and approved by the UUA Board of Trustees. We would expect the new code to reflect current concerns and perspectives, and to be a model for a similar revision process in the districts.

# III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **A. Adult and youth leadership Findings**

Our most consistent finding from all sources is that our overall youth programs are inadequately supported by adult leaders. YRUU was conceived in a period of growing separation and alienation between youth and adults. It was hoped that Common Ground would lead to more active adult involvement in programs and leadership. While the formal structure now includes more adults, and youth-adult relations have improved, we still have a shortage of adults (and especially of men) working with youth.

Support and training for adults who work with youth is seriously lacking, and adults are reluctant to work with youth when there is little training or support for them. Most of the adults and many of the youth who responded to our questionnaire expressed a desire for more leadership training for adults. Youth involved in the Youth Council and Youth Staff were especially apt to see this need. We see a pattern of neglect of youth ministry among our ministers, especially parish ministers. This is communicated to lay leaders, and contrasts sharply with ministerial attitudes in denominations whose youth programs are more successful. Youth ministry is not taught in most of our theological schools, is rarely discussed in UU Ministers Association (UUMA) chapter meetings, and is not practiced personally by many ministers. With a few outstanding exceptions, parish ministers are absent from district youth-adult councils (YACS) and the Youth Council. Nor do the UUA field staff often provide leadership to district youth programs. In this respect, little seems to have changed since 1977, when the Special Committee on Youth Programs reported "little evidence of ministerial involvement in youth programming and almost no evidence of ministerial involvement in youth programming beyond the local level." (Footnote 6)

Youth group advisors need not only the knowledgeable support of the Director of Religious Education (DREs) or ministers who not only have a vision of good youth programming but good training as well, to help them gain an overview of their role and the skills for living it.

We see an acceptance of a wider variety of styles of adult leadership with youth. High-school RE classes based on a structured curriculum are now widespread. "Youth-group" type programs use a variety of leadership styles. We affirm both this variety and the continuing need to train adults who can support and work as equals with youth leaders. Adults can and should learn how to vary their leadership styles according to the needs of the group.

District youth programs and leadership are generally weak. Although there are some exceptions due to the personal skills and commitment of individuals, only regular opportunities for training of youth and adult leaders can ensure that program quality will be consistent. For young leaders especially, the rapid turnover means that trainings must occur frequently to succeed. Of crucial importance also is training for those who work directly with youth as youth group advisors and teachers.

The UUA has a long-established training program for leaders of About Your Sexuality (AYS) that works through a male-female training team in each district. As new programs such as World Religions have been published, initial training has been provided. Some districts may need to recruit new leaders to maintain training offerings for crucial programs such as AYS and Life Issues for Teenagers (LIFT).

Clearly a call to re-envision youth ministry needs to be heard at many levels. Training programs for ministers and religious educators need to be designed and conducted to provide these pivotal persons with a vision of good youth ministry as well as with the resources for conducting it.

We have some examples of effective leadership training before us. Both the Common Ground process and the Continental Youth Leadership Conference (1986) in Dallas proved that successful leadership training results in adult involvement, youth empowerment, and improved youth programs. Districts, local congregations, and UU camps and conferences have small-scale leadership training programs in place or under consideration. This is not enough, however.

In 1987 the UUA Department of Religious Education requested funds for a continent wide program of conferences on leadership development for both adults and youth as leaders of youth programs. On alternate years the conferences would be a) for youth and adults together, and b) for adult advisors alone. Two representatives from each district would be invited, and would then return to their districts to provide leadership training. This request received first-round approval but was ultimately turned down by the Board of Trustees. We have reviewed this proposal and believe it would go a long way toward strengthening our UU ministry to youth.

At Common Ground, the UUA and YRUU agreed to a much closer youth-adult collaboration than had occurred in LRY. YRUU gave up some autonomy in this agreement; the UUA agreed in turn to work with youth in building the new program. Our most important finding is that the UUA has not lived up to its end of the bargain struck at Common Ground. It is not reasonable to expect good youth adult relations if adults will not work seriously with youth, nor to expect adults to work effectively with youth if the UUA does not support and train them.

### **Recommendations**

1. We recommend full funding of the leadership development conferences for youth and youth advisors proposed by the Religious Education Department. This program should be implemented by the spring of 1990.
2. We recommend that the YRUU Youth Council continue to have a leadership-development component at its annual meetings.
3. We recommend that a Youth Ministry component be added to the training of all religious leaders. This would include a "Renaissance" module for directors of religious education, classes in theological schools, training for District Executives, a continuing education program of the UU Ministers Association, and a requirement in the Independent Study Program for ministers of religious education.

4. We recommend that district and continental conferences, including youth programs, provide opportunities for youth advisors to exchange ideas and support each other.
5. We recommend that adult conferences and professional organizations consider the theme of Youth Ministry as a topic.
6. We recommend that districts develop a resource list of experienced youth workers willing to consult with local congregations to assist them with their youth groups and to lead workshops at district and cluster events.

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6. Report of the Special Committee on Youth Programs to the UUA Board of Trustees (UUA, November, 1977), P. 8.



# IV - IMPLEMENTATION

The following steps need to be taken to carry out our recommendations. Most of these actions will require teamwork and good communication.

Our challenge to all Unitarian Universalists - to pay more attention to youth ministry - is not in this list. Here we confine ourselves to what is measurable. But that challenge is the most important part of this report: Without a change of heart, a renewed emphasis on ministry to youth, no institutional change can make us effective.

## A. UUA Board of Trustees

### 1. Additions to UUA budget

- See figure 1

### 2. Other items

The Youth Council could adopt proposed amendments to the YRUU bylaws at its 1989 meeting. We urge the UUA Board to give Youth Council proposals prompt consideration so that any changes can be effective in time for the Youth Council elections in the winter and spring 1990.

## B. The Youth Council and the Steering Committee

### 1. Bylaw amendments

Amendments to the YRUU bylaws must be approved by both the YRUU Youth Council and the UUA Board of Trustees. We recommend that the following amendments be considered by the 1989 Youth Council and forwarded to the UUA Board for immediate action, so that they can go into effect in 1990:

- *Article III, Section 1. (Membership)* Amend to read: "All youth between the ages of 14 and 20 years who either attend local, district, or continental YRUU activities, or who are in sympathy with YRUU's purposes and principles, are invited to consider themselves members of YRUU. To be eligible for YRUU office or youth Program Coordinator positions, a candidate must be under 21 at the time of election."
- *Article III, Section 3. (Advisors)* Replace "An adult ... is defined as someone over the age of 22" with "An adult ... is defined as someone over the age of 25 years."
- *Article V, Section 1, part b. (At-large delegates to Youth Council)* Delete current part b) "three at-large youth. Each youth shall be from and represent one age group defined as follows: junior high, ages 12-15; senior high, ages 15-18; post high, ages 18-22. During their terms, the youth at-large must remain within one month of the age group for which they were selected by the Steering Committee without being subject to approval of the UUA Board of Trustees." Replace with "The youth member of the Religious Education Advisory Committee of the UUA."
- *Article V, Section 2.* Delete the words "with the exception of the at-large youth delegates who shall serve one year terms."

- *Article VI, Section 1, part a. (Steering Committee)* Delete the words "with at least one youth representing each age group: Junior High, Senior High, and Post High."
- *Article VII, Section 2. (Youth Staff)* Amend first sentence to read "Two Youth Program Coordinators shall serve as members of the UUA Department of Religious Education under the supervision of the Director of Youth Programs."
- *Article VIII, Section 2.* Delete the words "and Age-Specific At-large". The sentence will now read: "It shall be the responsibility of the district youth organization to submit nominations for adult delegates."

## **2. Other items**

- (a) We recommend that the Steering Committee, guided by our recommendations under "Behavior" above, propose a process for the Youth Council to follow in revising the behavior code for youth and adults, with the revised code to be approved by the UUA Board of Trustees at the earliest opportunity.
- (b) We recommend that the Steering Committee develop a process through which the Youth Council's priorities concerning policy and programs are annually reevaluated. Our recommendation is that district service be a first priority. We hope the Steering Committee will give special attention to staff projects that consume time and other resources, but which are less clearly related to the bylaws purposes of YRUU.
- (c) We recommend that the Steering Committee work with the Youth Staff to clarify the division of responsibility for UUA youth programs among YRUU, the Youth Staff, and other entities.
- (d) In view of the dire need we have found for leadership training of adults and youth, we hope the Steering Committee will continue to take advantage of the opportunity, both at the Youth Council and at the Continental Conference, to offer leadership training.

## **C. Department of Religious Education**

### **1. Curriculum Office**

- (a) We recommend that the Curriculum Staff, in consultation with the Youth Staff, review current and forthcoming curricula as recommended under "Program Content" above. We especially urge consideration of the increased interest of senior high youth in structured religious programs, and in programs youth can lead.
- (b) We encourage the speedy commencement of new curriculum projects to achieve the balance of topics and issues needed by today's youth. Authors could be commissioned to write programs needed immediately and these could be published as part of the UUA's "Lifespan Series" or in some other inexpensive format. Some existing adult programs may be adaptable for use with youth.

### **2. Independent Study Program**

- We recommend that the Independent Study Program for ministers of religious education specifically require knowledge and competence in youth ministry.

### **3. Renaissance Program**

- We recommend that the Renaissance Program for directors of religious education include a module on youth ministry.

#### **4. Junior-High Programs Director**

- (a) The proposed Junior-High Programs Director position should be designed carefully. This person should work under the supervision of the Director of the Religious Education Department in close cooperation with the Youth Program Director and the Curriculum staff. The goals listed in Recommendation number 8 under "Age Range" should form the basis for the job description.
- (b) We look to the new Junior-High Programs Director to draw on expertise that already exists within and beyond the UUA to create, publish, and disseminate materials on ministry with junior-high youth, including a statement of philosophy for junior-high youth ministry, and a guide for organizing and conducting junior-high programs at the local, cluster, and district levels, including the five components listed in the "Visions for Youth" paper.

#### **5. Youth Office**

- (a) Changes in structure and procedures
  - (1) Job descriptions for all Youth Office staff need to be reviewed to reflect (1) the supervisory role of the Youth Programs Director and (2) the focusing of the Youth Program Specialists' assignment on serving high-school youth.
  - (2) The Youth Program Director's job description should be reviewed. In addition to his or her supervisory role, this person's primary personal assignment should be to serve the needs of senior high youth.
  - (3) The Youth Office and Administration will need to implement our suggestion (under "Structure and Accountability," above) that YRUU's full program costs appear separately from the "Youth Programs" budget lines.
- (b) Tasks
  - Leadership development
    - (1) The Youth Office has primary responsibility for implementing the proposed "Leadership Development for Youth and Youth Advisors" program when it is funded.
    - (2) Our proposed travel budget calls for the Youth Staff to provide more leadership training and consultation in districts.
- Age range
  - (3) We recommend that the Youth Office collect and promote successful models of mentoring and leadership by youth across age boundaries.
- Program content
  - (4) We urge the Youth Staff to state a UU philosophy of youth ministry as we have recommended under "Program Content" above. Youth ministry needs a compelling vision like that which has revitalized religious education for children and adults in the past decade. This process will require the participation of the whole UUA staff as well as denominational leaders from outside headquarters.

We recommend the attached "Visions for Youth" paper as a starting point for this process.

- (5) We recommend that the Youth Programs Director develop a guide to assist congregations in making a quality audit of their supports for and practice of youth ministry and that these materials be made available through REACH and the UUA Book Store.
- (6) We suggest that the REACH packet collect and share articles on both the theory and the practice of intergenerational programs that include youth, and consider a "REACH Collection" on this subject.
- (7) The proposals for (1) a guide on developing group worship experiences for youth and (2) a source book of songs, hymns, and readings would be implemented by the Youth Staff in cooperation with the UUA Worship Resources Office. The UU Musicians Network might be asked to collaborate on the song and hymn collection.
- (8) A guide to social action for youth could be developed by the Youth Office in consultation with the UUA Social Justice Department, and sold through the UUA Bookstore.
- (9) The Youth Office is currently writing a conference planning manual; we urge its completion and dissemination. Youth Office staff could implement the recommendation to offer workshops on conference planning at such events as the YRUU Youth Council meetings, the General Assembly, etc.
- Behavior
  - (10) The Youth Office should collect and develop educational materials about the consequences of substance abuse and sexual behavior (See Recommendation 2c [sic] under "Behavior"). This work could begin before the new behavior code is completed. The office should also develop a plan for distributing these materials and information.
  - (11) When the new continental behavior code is completed, the Youth Staff should publicize it through *The World*, *Synapse*, *REACH*, a mailing to all district YACs, and in all Youth Council and Continental Conference literature.

#### **D. Department of Extension and Field Services**

- The proposed Office on Young Adults has the role of assisting efforts by congregations, metropolitan areas. Camps and conferences, campus ministries, and the UU Young adults Network to serve the post high age group. Our recommendation that the YRUU age range be reduced makes their work all the more important.

#### **E. Districts**

- We urge all district officers, executives, boards, and YRUU leaders:
  - 1. To create regular positions for youth representatives on district boards, religious education committees, and other appropriate district bodies where they do not already exist.
  - 2. To make sure good communication and a clear division of responsibility exist between district religious education and youth-adult committees.

- 3. To accept responsibility for actively recruiting adults, including professional leaders, to work with youth.
- 4. To make sure that policies exist requiring conference organizers to send publicity to congregations that have not recently sent participants to youth conferences, and to ensure that such policies are followed.
- 5. To institute a regular review of district policies regarding behavior of youth and adults at youth conferences, along the lines of what we recommend for the continental level under "Behavior" above.
- 6. To inform congregations regularly of the services available for youth programs from the district and the UUA Youth Office.

**F. Theological schools**

- We recommend that all theological schools offer specific courses covering the special religious needs of youth and the methods of youth ministry.

**G. UU Ministers Association**

- We recommend that the UU Ministers Association add programs on youth ministry to its continuing education program.

**H. Camps and conferences**

- 1. We recommend that camps and conferences offer leadership training for youth and adults to supplement the continental program we have recommended.
- 2. We urge all conferences and professional gatherings to consider youth ministry as a program topic.

**I. Religious Education Advisory Committee**

- Finally, we suggest that REAC, in conjunction with the Youth Office, the Department of Religious Education, and the Board Representative to Youth Council, regularly monitor progress on the implementation of these recommendations.

**Figure 1: Additions to UUA budget**

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>1989-90</b>	<b>1990-91</b>	<b>1991-92</b>
Junior-High Programs Consultant (Footnote 14)	\$15,000	30,000	30,000
• Salary	3,000	5,000	6,000
• Travel	4,000	8,000	8,000
• Assistant	2,000	4,000	4,000

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program funds, including for guides, manuals, etc.</li> </ul>			
Leadership Development Training Programs (Footnote 15)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Advisors' Conference</li> <li>• Youth-Adult Conference</li> </ul>	2,500 0	15,000 2,500	0 15,000
Restore and augment Youth Staff Travel to district YACs	4,000	4,000	4,000
New Curricula for Senior Highers	2,500	2,500	2,500
Restore third meeting of Steering Committee	3,000	3,000	3,000
Renaissance module on youth ministry (Footnote 16)	3,000	2,000	0
Youth Staff assistant to become full time	8,000	8,000	8,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>80,500</b>

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14. This projection assumes that the Junior-High Program Director would be hired in the middle of 1989-90.

15. In 1990-91, the conference would be for two adult advisors from each district. In 1991-92, the conference would be for one youth and one adult from each district. After that each format would occur every other year, and the annual cost would be \$15,000. The first year's expense for each of these programs is for development of the program. This budget would cover conference leaders' expenses, program materials, the cost of the conference site and a partial travel subsidy.

16. First year, development; second year, launch.

## V- CONCLUSION

Effective ministry to youth richly repays the effort and the dollars spent. At no other time of life do human beings look for models, for community, for inspiration, with quite such energy. Young people, when served well and included fully, enrich the life of any congregation.

The current "boom" of babies will soon swell the ranks of youth. We are convinced that if the UUA maintains the momentum born at Common Ground, in the 1990s we can have the most varied and abundant ministry to youth that we have ever had.

Our attitude about youth ministry is not good. We habitually give it only token effort. Youth advising is too often delegated hastily to the first volunteer. Our professional religious leaders too rarely think of youth as full members of the community. Advisors continue to be hard to find. The UUA, in failing to fund the vision born at Common Ground, reflects a widespread preference not to spend time or money on youth ministry.

Is our wariness about youth ministry a legacy of hippie days, the 1960s? Or does it date back even further, to the days of Stephen Fritchman and the Red Scare? No matter. Now the time has come to shake off our aloofness and move forward. Today's youth are ready to collaborate with adults who care about them and respect them.

The grass roots are already sprouting: Youth ministry in many of our congregations is transformed since 1980. What remains is for the UUA - its youth and adults - to offer leadership, support, and vision.

# APPENDIX A – COMMITTEE PROCESS

## 1. Committee meetings

The YRUU Five-Year Review Committee met five times in Boston: October 1987, January, June, and October 1988; and January 1989.

## 2. Questionnaires

We invested a good deal of effort in a six-page questionnaire designed to gain information from youth about their experiences with and attitudes toward YRUU. and we developed variations on the questionnaire for adults.

We also designed specialized short questionnaires for particular groups. These questionnaires distributed in person turned out to be the most useful. We are especially grateful to LREDA, the district presidents, and the Conclave of district RE chairs, all of whom took time during their 1987 conferences to give thoughtful responses. Committee member Miki Conn was responsible for the tabulation of all questionnaire responses.

In retrospect, we can see we ought to have conducted a trial survey to refine (and most likely shorten) our instrument. The response rate, especially on the youth questionnaire distributed through Synapse, was far too small to justify any generalizations about the groups surveyed. We have therefore been cautious about using survey data in forming our conclusions, except where respondents expressed ideas or suggestions we found fruitful.

### (a) Questionnaire distribution and responses:

Figure 2: Questionnaire distribution and responses

Subject population	Where distributed	Number distributed	Number received - Youth	Number Received - Adults
UU Youth	<i>Synapse</i> *	10,500	25	
	informally through LREDA members, Youth Council Reps, and District Executives	135	21	
	1988 GA Hearing	25	15	
Advisors, parents, ministers, DREs, RE Teachers	<b>REACH</b> **	1,300		21
	1988 GA Hearing	9		5
District Youth Adult	mailed	27	1	9



Committees				
District RE chairs	1987 Conclave ***	23	1	9
Members of the Liberal Religious Education Assn.	1987 fall conference	40		19
District Service Representatives		20		7
District Presidents	1987 fall conference	20		14
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>12,099</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>95</b>

(b) Summary of information gained from questionnaires

The youth responses to the questionnaires showed the respondents to be enthusiastic participants in youth activities. The youth participate for friendship and fun as well as for intellectual stimulation, and the main reason cited for not participating was "too busy." Adults and youth agree that rallies and conferences are among the most rewarding and successful of the activities. Both adults and youth feel that YRUU is accepted in their local congregations as well as their districts, and most indicate that their experience in YRUU has been rewarding.

The LREDA questionnaires showed a broad range of programs for youth, including structured RE offerings as well as youth-led groups. This may be especially so in larger congregations. Adult participation covers a large range of leadership styles. This evidence confirms our impression from many sources that the trend in UU youth programming is toward a broader variety than existed five or ten years ago.

The district presidents varied in their awareness and evaluation of YRUU groups and activities in their districts, but we saw no pattern of alienation or deep dissatisfaction such as existed in the late 1970s. We do see a desire in many districts for more effective communication and more adult participation with youth.

Our adult respondents strongly feel the need for training in youth work, and both adults and youth mention training for youth as well. In addition, a lack of communication is a widely perceived problem within districts and on the continental level. Youth programming on the district level is felt to need improvement, and few of those responding to the questionnaire participated in or were familiar with programs on the continental level.

It is difficult to generalize about the views of youth on the "age-range" issue. Many did not answer this part of the questionnaire, perhaps because of the awkward phrasing of the question. The youth indicated that the "classroom" programs they participate in generally include youth ages 13 to 18 years, and district programs include youth ages 12 to 22 years.

Adults emphatically preferred separate programs for junior highers and senior highers as well as a lowered upper age limit. Many mentioned the need for post-high programming.

### 3. Correspondence

The Committee advertised its existence and invited correspondence through *The World*, *Synapse* (the broad-circulation YRUU newspaper), *Spider* (the newsletter for YRUU leaders), and *Youth Advisory* (a newsletter for advisors that is included in the REACH packet).

In response, we received letters from the following:

- Jennifer Cullison, conference coordinator, reporting on discussions at a Pacific Central District YRUU conference (1 / 15 / 88);
- Jennie Phillips, youth member of the Joseph Priestley District Board and Youth-Adult Committee (2 27/88);
- Pepi Acebo, 1987 Youth Council Representative from the Mid-South District (undated); and
- Duane Dowell, adult member of Youth Council and Steering Committee (1 1/20/88).

All letters were copied and distributed to the committee members.

### 4. Interviews and case studies

In an effort to benefit from the best thinking of leaders across the continent, we conducted interviews with selected persons, and we studied two local youth programs by talking to various participants. We were particularly interested in getting the views of several ministers of religious education, because our committee (contrary to the announced plan) did not have a member who was a DRE or MRE settled in a congregation. The following is a tabulation of these interviews.

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**Figure 3: Interview tabulation**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Interview Subject</b>	<b>Interviewers</b>
3/88	Rev. Norma Veridan, Minister of Religious Education. First Unitarian Church Dallas, Texas	Gene Navias
3/88	Tom Cutter, youth advisor All Souls UU Church Watertown, New York	Miki Conn
4/88	Rev. Roberta Nelson, Minister of Religious Education Cetar Lane Unitarian Church Bethesda, Maryland	Gene Navias
4/88	Rev. Tracey Robinson-Harris, former Minister of Religious Education First Parish Church Lexington, Massachusetts	Gene Navias

6/88	Rev. Ellen Brandenburg Andrew Moeller Leia Durland UUA Youth Staff	Whole committee
6/88	Rev. Wayne B. Arnason former UUA Youth Programs Director and Minister, Thomas Jefferson Memorial church Charlottesville, Virginia	Gene Navias Dan Hotchkiss Ann Harnar
7/88	Rev. Gary Blaine, Director, The Mountain Highlands, North Carolina	Dan Hotchkiss
8/88	Steve Jerome UU Young Adults Network	Gene Navias
	<b>Society Studied</b> First Unitarian Church San Jose, California	<b>Committee Member</b> Laila Ibrahim
	First Unitarian Church Rochester, New York	Miki Conn

## 5. Hearings and consultations

### (a) Youth Council, August 1987

Shortly after the appointment of the Five-Year-Review Committee, Dan Hotchkiss attended part of the Youth Council meeting in Toronto. Ann Hamar was already in attendance as the UUA board liaison. Dan and Ann presented the committee's charge and received many useful suggestions from Youth Council representatives.

### (b) UUA Religious Education Advisory Committee (REAC), March 1988

Dan Hotchkiss met with REAC at Pickett House to give them a progress report. REAC, which has a liaison relationship with the YRUU Steering Committee, had originated the proposal for a five-year review of YRUU. After this meeting, REAC took the following actions:

1. We continue to be concerned with the critical need for leadership training for adults working with youth in our congregations. We regret that such programs cannot be funded at this time. Therefore, we urge the Department of Religious Education to do whatever it can to begin to supply this need. We wonder if the UUA Administration can assist the department in seeking short-term grants for use in the near future.
2. We appreciate that the chair of the YRUU Review Committee came to meet with us and reported fully on its progress. We regret that a director or minister of religious education was not

appointed to the committee as proposed, and we recommend that the Committee consult with religious educators highly knowledgeable about youth programming.

(c) YRUU Steering Committee, April 1988 To the YRUU Steering Committee, Dan Hotchkiss presented substantially the same report he had given to REAC the month before. Also present from the committee were Ann Hamar and Gene Navias. A lively discussion ensued, much of it about the age-range issue. Some interesting and creative ideas were expressed, a number of which have found their way into this report. The tone of much that was said was in opposition to a change in the age range, but when asked whether the Committee had a position against a change, one member said. "No, we are divided ... inside ourselves."

(d) General Assembly, June 1988

At the 1988 UUA General Assembly in Palm Springs, California, we held a hearing on June 17 to which all GA registrants were invited to give information or express views on UU youth programs. Representing the committee were Dan Hotchkiss, Laila Ibrahim, Ann Hamar, and Gene Navias.

After a brief introductory presentation covering the information we had gathered up to that point and the issues we expected to address in our report, several of the 30 or 40 people who attended spoke in turn, with some lively dialogue ensuing. Minutes taken by Gene Navias were copied and distributed to all committee members. By a show of hands, those attending identified themselves as follows: 17 youth, eight youth leaders, two adult advisors, five other adults, one MRE/DRE, and one parish minister.

e) Youth Council, August 1988 Committee members Becky Scott, Laila Ibrahim, Gene Navias, and Dan Hotchkiss attended the August 1988 Youth Council meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We were given a day and a half of the Youth Council's time in which to present our preliminary findings and tentative conclusions and to solicit a response. This was done in small groups, which responded thoroughly to each of the major issues (adult and youth leadership, age range, structure and accountability, program content, delivery of services, and behavior). Again the age range issue proved to be the most provocative and difficult to resolve. We kept and distributed among the committee a thorough record of all that was said.

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\* Synapse is the YRUU Newspaper, which is sent directly to congregations and those on the YRUU mailing list.

\*\*The REACH (Religious Education Action Clearing House) packet is sent to all congregations and about 300 subscribers.

\*\*\*Conclave is the annual gathering of district religious education chairs or their representatives.

# APPENDIX B – CURRENT YRUU BYLAWS

The Bylaws Of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

As Revised at the 1988 Youth Council Meeting, Tulsa, OK

## ARTICLE I

### Name

*Section 1.* The name of this organization shall be Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. It is the successor to Liberal Religious Youth, Inc.

## ARTICLE II

### Purposes

*Section 1.* Young Religious Unitarian Universalists shall serve its members for the purposes of fostering spiritual depth, creating a peaceful community on earth and peace within us, and clarifying both individual and universal religious values as part of our growth process. Our purposes are to provide and manifest a greater understanding of Unitarian Universal 'ism, and to encourage the flow of communication between youth and adults.

In so doing we shall nurture the freedom and integrity of the questioning mind, and embrace all persons of diverse backgrounds. We shall encourage the development of a spirit of independence and responsibility.

We shall strive to support our members and member groups with educational resources, with a communications network. and with love.

These purposes shall assist us in developing an effective system for social actions, and serve to raise our levels of mutual respect, communication, and community consciousness.

*Section 2.* The continental level of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists shall assist District and local member groups in fulfilling the purposes stated above.

## ARTICLE III

### Membership

*Section 1.* Members of Young Religious Universalists shall be youth 12 through 22 years of age.

*Section 2.* Young Religious Unitarian Universalists shall be clearly identified as an organization of the UUA. Affiliated groups on the district and local levels shall also be so identified. Affiliated members shall not be required to hold membership in UU societies, but shall be encouraged to participate in programs and activities at all levels of UUA organization.

*Section 3.* An adult as referred to in these Bylaws is defined as someone over the age of 22. Adults are not members of YRUU but function in advisory capacities within local YRUU groups and on the governing bodies of the district and continental levels. YRUU affirms the importance of a commitment to the ideals of Unitarian Universalism and of participation in its institutions on the part of adults functioning in advisor roles.

## ARTICLE IV

### Annual Conference

*Section 1.* There shall be an annual conference of YRUU. This conference shall be held in the summer months at a time when schools are generally not in session. It shall be held at different locations around the continent from year to year.

*Section 2.* A General Meeting shall be held at the Annual Conference, open to all conference participants. The purpose of this meeting is to allow any participant in the conference to hear reports and ask questions of the organization's leadership.

## ARTICLE V

### Youth Council

*Section 1.* The governing body of YRUU shall be a Youth Council. The Council shall consist of:

a) one youth chosen by and representing the youth organization of each of the 23 districts of the UUA, with the exception of Mountain Desert District which shall have two representatives sharing one vote, with only one representative eligible to run for Steering Committee;

b) three at-large youth. Each youth shall be from and represent one age group defined as follows: junior high, ages 12-15, senior high, ages 15-18; post high, ages 18-22. During their terms, the youth at-large must remain within one month of the age group for which they were selected by the Steering Committee without being subject to approval of the UUA Board of Trustees;

c) eight adults appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees. They shall each be a member of a local UU society or the Church of the Larger Fellowship. One of these shall be a member of the UUA Board, and seven shall be appointed from the nominees submitted to the Board by the Steering Committee of YRUU;

d) the previous year's Steering Committee members who are not currently members in another capacity (including staff and the REAC representative), as non-voting members.

*Section 2.* Both youth and adults shall serve one full term of two years, with the exception of the at-large youth delegates who shall serve one year terms. Any District representative chosen to fill an unexpired term shall be eligible to serve his/her own full term. Two years after the expiration of his/her term of office, a delegate is eligible for another term.

Terms of office shall be staggered for youth representing their district youth organization, with half of them being brought on to the Council each year as follows:

Group A:

St. Lawrence, Pacific Southwest, Northeast, Connecticut Valley, Central Massachusetts, Mid-South, Florida, Pacific Northwest, Ohio Meadville, Mountain, Southwest.

Group B:

Michigan, Ohio Valley, Thomas Jefferson, Prairie Star, Western Canada, Pacific Central, Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire/Vermont, Joseph Priestley, Metropolitan New York, Central Midwest, Ballou Channing, Desert: with group A starting in even years and group B in odd.

Vacancies due to resignation or inability to complete a ten-n shall be filled by the body that made the original appointment.

*Section 3.* The Youth Council shall meet at least once a year at a time and place designated by the Steering Committee .

A quorum shall be three-fifths of the members of the Youth Council.

*Section 4.* It shall be the responsibility of the Youth Council to review policy for the past year and to make decisions as to the priorities, budget recommendations, and direction of the youth programs of the UUA for the coming year.

The Youth Council shall elect five youth and one adult member to the Steering Committee from among its members.

*Section 5.* At each Youth Council meeting the Council shall vote on whether to approve the Moderator chosen by the Steering Committee. If the Youth Council does not approve the Moderator, a Moderator shall be elected from among the Council members.

*Section 6.* The Youth Council shall delegate responsibilities as it deems necessary.

## ARTICLE VI

### Steering Committee

*Section 1.* The Steering Committee of YRUU shall be composed of 11 members, as follows:

- a) Five youth and one adult, with at least one youth representing each age group: Junior High, Senior High, and Post High.
- b) One adult member of the UUA Board, appointed by the Board.
- c) The youth member of the Religious Education Advisory Committee of the UUA.
- d) The Youth Programs Director and Youth Programs Specialists of the UUA, with non-voting status.

*Section 2.* The terms of office on the Steering Committee shall be one year, except for members who serve on the Steering Committee by virtue of their offices. Members serving year long terms shall be limited to two consecutive terms.

*Section 3.* Meetings shall be held three or four times a year, with one of those meetings to be held at the Annual Conference.

*Section 4.* The Steering Committee shall be responsible for:

- a) planning and implementing the Annual Conference and the agenda of the general meeting of YRUU.
- b) implementing the priorities and programs set by the Youth Council.
- c) receiving nominations from Districts and others for adult members of the Youth Council, and recommending its choices to the UUA Board for appointment.
- d) nominating UUA youth staff to the UUA administration.
- e) assuming the functions and responsibilities assigned to the UUA Youth Adult Committee prior to January 1, 1984.
- f) choosing a Moderator for Youth Council.

## ARTICLE VII

### Staff of the UUA Youth Office

*Section 1.* A full time Youth Programs Director shall serve the members of YRUU, as a member of the Religious Education Department with offices at the UUA headquarters.

*Section 2.* Two Youth Programs Specialists shall serve in an associate relationship with the Youth Programs Director. Their term of engagement shall be one year, with one staff person beginning his/ her year on September 1, and the second on January 1. They shall have the necessary office resources at UUA headquarters.



*Section 3.* All youth program staff shall be recommended by the Steering Committee to the UUA administration for appointment. Appropriate UUA staff members shall assist the Steering Committee in recommending youth program staff to the UUA administration for appointment.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Affiliated Youth Groups

*Section 1.* An organization of youth shall be created within each UUA District. Its structure, policies, and programs shall be determined by those youth and adults within the District selected to exercise this responsibility.

*Section 2.* It shall be the responsibility of the District organization to:

- a) select its own leadership and provide for its succession;
- b) encourage participation in the Annual Conference;
- c) elect one youth and consider the nomination of adults to serve on the Youth Council; also to fill any vacancies that may occur during the term;
- d) encourage communications and supportive relationships with other District bodies;
- e) assist in the organization of and programming for local groups;
- f) encourage the formation of local youth groups within each UU society to serve the needs of youth in that community.

It shall be the responsibility of the district youth organization to submit nominations for Adult and Age-Specific At-large delegates.

*Section 3.* Local youth groups shall be considered members of the District youth organization within whose boundaries they lie.

## ARTICLE IX

### Rules

*Section 1.* Youth Council may adopt Rules not inconsistent with the Bylaws. Each Rule adopted by the youth council shall be preceded by a 'YC.' The Steering Committee may adopt Rules not inconsistent with Bylaws or any Rule by the Youth Council. The Steering Committee shall report any change in Rules to the Youth Council.

## ARTICLE X

### Amendments

These Bylaws can be amended only upon approval by both Youth Council and the UUA Board of Trustees, according to the following process.

*Section 1.* A proposal to amend these Bylaws must be presented to Youth Council according to established agenda setting procedures.

*Section 2.* The proposed amendment becomes a pending amendment if passed by a two-thirds majority of Youth Council.

*Section 3.* In order to be adopted, the pending amendment must be approved by the UUA Board of Trustees and two-thirds majority of the subsequent Youth Council.

*Section 4.* If either the Board of Trustees or the Youth Council requires substantive changes to a pending amendment, then the amendment must be reconsidered by Youth Council as a new proposal.

*Section 5.* Pending Bylaw amendments must be published in the organization's publication 60 days in advance of the Council meeting at which they are to be considered for final approval; to be mailed to all Youth Council members, UU societies, District youth organizations, and individuals and groups on subscription mailing list.

*Section 6.* The UUA Board representative on the council shall be responsible for bringing pending amendments before the Board of Trustees.

# APPENDIX C – "YOUTH BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES" (1982)

## *Policy regarding sexual behavior at youth conferences*

That sexual intercourse and patently sexual behavior between participants under the age of eighteen be prohibited at UUA sponsored or financed youth events. This recommendation is prompted by the following considerations:

The UUA recognizes its responsibility to the parents of youth conference participants who are under a legal age of majority. We are also concerned that our youth conferences be as inclusive as possible. Although sexuality is something to be valued and developed in persons of all ages, the variance in readiness for sexual relationships among youth can make patently sexual activity at conferences awkward and difficult for all. Indeed patently sexual activity by participants of any age detracts from our goal of inclusiveness at conferences.

## *Policy regarding housing arrangements at conferences*

That separate housing arrangements shall be provided for males and females under the age of eighteen or for others upon request, at all UUA sponsored or financed youth events. Adequate adult supervision shall be provided when this is not feasible.

## *Policy regarding the responsibilities of conference planning committees*

That planning committees be responsible for making behavioral expectations clear to participants well in advance of the youth conference; and that planning committees determine the consequence of failure to abide by them.

## *Recommendation to Districts*

That Districts be encouraged to grapple with these issues and develop their own appropriate guidelines.

# **APPENDIX D – CODE OF ETHICS FOR PERSONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN UUA SPONSORED PROGRAMS (1986)**

## **1. The Role of Adult Leaders**

Adults working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one which may carry with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as youth advisor, chaperone, child-care worker, teacher, minister, registrant at a youth adult conference or in any other role, the adult has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring to the young people and to the adult. Adults can be mentors to, role models for, and trusted friends of children and youth. They can be teachers, counselors and ministers. To help our children grow up to be caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

While it is important that adults be capable of maintaining meaningful friendships with the young people they work with, adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and youth and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with adults and may find it difficult to speak out about the inappropriate behavior of adults. Adult leaders need to possess a special dedication to working with our young people in ways which affirm the UUA Principles. Good communication skills, self-awareness and understanding of others, sensitivity, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and a positive attitude are all important attributes. Additionally, in recruiting adult leaders we should also seek persons who 1) have a social network outside of their religious education responsibility in which to meet their own needs for friendship, affirmation, and self-esteem, and 2) are willing and able to seek assistance from colleagues and religious professionals when they become aware of a situation requiring expert help or intervention.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation or conference community, not just those in leadership positions, to create and maintain a climate which supports the growth and welfare of children and youth.

## **2. Code of Ethics**

With the aforementioned in mind, the following statement is submitted as a "Code of Ethics" for adults working with children and youth:

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is therefore especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the

special nurturing, care, and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized.

There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; leaders will therefore refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass youth nor engage in behavior with children or youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their roles. In cases of any violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

# APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE ARNASON

The Reverend Wayne Arnason, who served as UUA Youth Programs Director during the Common Ground period, was interviewed by Dan Hotchkiss, Ann Harnar, and Gene Navias at the UUA General Assembly in Palm Springs, California, on June 20, 1988. The following summary of Rev. Arnason's views as expressed during that interview was prepared by Gene Navias.

## **1. How would you describe the history and politics that led up to Common Grounds I and II?**

A. The idea arose out of political necessity. Around 1977 the UUA board appointed a task force like this one, but under a negative climate, a sense that LRY had lost general adult support at all levels. Locals had usual problems with limited adult involvement; districts were moribund; what was functioning was doing so "in a vacuum"; adults were detached from or even hostile toward the organization as whole.

B. There was dissatisfaction with youth leadership in Boston. Annual turnover precluded continuity.

C. The number of youth involved was decreasing because adults were not wanting their kids to be involved.

D. Congregations were finding it harder to find adults to be involved. Ideology of youth autonomy was used by some youth to justify detachment and a confrontational attitude.

E. There was a lack of substantive week-to-week programming, but there was a focus on conferences, which were experienced by adults as mysterious and threatening, and by youth as "at the heart of things." There was a lack of appreciation by adults of why the conference experience was so powerful; it became something that was worth fighting for and about.

F. Adults/churches didn't see conferences as sufficient youth group programming, didn't understand the spiritual dimension and the developmental needs that conferences were fulfilling.

G. Increasingly, LRY was serving a minority of youth. Gradually local congregations were organizing alternatives to LRY with a different approach. Such organization took place in some districts such as Michigan and Southwest.

H. Youth autonomy as it was experienced involved a real counter dependency, with some hostility among youth, LRY, and congregations. The youth culture of the 1970s was running out of steam, so our youth were living out a cultural expression that they hadn't helped create. They

were being very conformist to a lifestyle (hippy), but thought of themselves as autonomous- a paradox of youth development.

I. The SCOYP Report was a thoughtful, balanced document. The UUA board and President Carnes could not fully address it and picked the most negative criticisms and acted on them. Carnes decided continental LRY was no longer viable and should be ended and a new beginning made. Bruce Southworth knows the politics of the SCOYP Committee with majority and minority reports. The UUA Administration supported the minority report, on which Bruce was the leader. The seed of Common Ground was in that report as written by Ann Heller.

J. In April 1979, the UUA board voted to eliminate funding to the LRY Executive Staff in Boston. Wayne sought to change this decision because he felt it to be ill advised. He felt responsible because he helped to set the pattern of youth autonomy at the 1969 GA. Wayne felt that youth leadership at the continental level should not be given up; if it was stopped, it would be hard to regain.

K. Paul Carnes died; Gene Pickett was elected UUA President.

L. In 1979, the goals of Wayne and others were to save LRY and there was politicking around this. Essentially, Pickett wanted there to be a UUA Youth Staff position. Wayne wanted to save the Youth Staff.

M. Wayne was appointed Youth Director and started in that position in January 1980. At the January 1980 board meeting, the issue of whether to continue or to cut the LRY Executive Committee was considered. At the Board of Trustees Finance Committee Hearing, Wayne proposed funding for a convention to start up a new youth organization from scratch. One goal was to save the idea of youth leadership at the continental level.

N. Wayne was hired to build/create a youth program that had broad denominational support.

O. The LRY board met in the summer of 1980, and its support was needed to get youth involvement in what became Common Ground. The several different parties in Common Ground had their own agendas but were generally open to exploring alternatives. There was enormous time pressure to put Common Ground together.

## **2. Please describe the assumptions behind Common Ground.**

A. Structuring Common Ground with one third of the delegates being adults was absolutely new. The inclusion of adults implied that adult involvement was crucial, that we needed to have greater adult youth dialogue, relations, rapport. The acceptance of that by the youth was a major accomplishment. The adults also discovered that youth wanted to change their organization and were not monolithic in their views.

B. Districts which had no youth programming in many years became involved in Common Ground. Wayne went to almost every district to get such involvement.

### **3. Please describe the evolution of the current age range.**

A. I think originally it was proposed as covering ages 12 to 22 years, but there was no one younger than 14 years there.

B. Some groups of 12 to 14 year olds called themselves LRY.

C. On the floor of Common Ground there were lobbies to include junior-high and post-high. There were no strong voices for limiting YRUU to senior high youth.

D. The shift was from LRY as a membership organization that was self-determining to YRUU, which was to be a service organization.

E. Leadership on the continental level are staff, selected on application, and not elected by the grass roots. The Youth Council is the closest thing to old LRY as a democratically elected group.

F. The relationship between the YRUU Council and the UUA staff was deliberately "fudged."

G. The greatest ambiguities were the relation of youth staff to the UUA Administration and to the YRUU Council. This was never made clear; the vagueness was left to help the UUA think it was in control and the Council to think it had power.

H. YRUU Council and Steering Committee are really to provide advice so that service is given to youth programming. This was never spelled out clearly in a flow chart. LRY was to serve its members.

I. YRUU's purpose is to serve the youth and the youth programming of the denomination. Common Ground made every youth a member and no one a member.

J. Wayne believes that the tension between the UUA and the YRUU Council is inevitable and reflects the developmental tension between youth and adults.

K. Wayne did not expect 20-to-22-year-old youth to be so consistently elected to youth staff positions.

L. Wayne hoped that Youth Staff members would be between high- school and college-age youth 17-to- 19-year-olds.

M. Older staff of 21 to 23 years present a problem as adults because they see themselves as self-determining.

N. Wayne envisioned Youth Staff as interns who learned their job as well as sharing the good experience they brought. As such they would expect supervision by the Program Director. The original term used by Wayne was "intern," which was rejected by the Youth Staff as the years went on.



#### **4. What should the Program Directors role be?**

A. YRUU needs to continue to have a sense of itself as an organization that invites youth to move through the levels of rank, so YRUU needs to be a leadership development program.

B. YRUU saw itself as a political structure that was like a school for youth leadership. Yet the Youth Office had other programs that serve the youth of the denomination.

C. The staff person does have a responsibility to nurture YRUU, but also has lots of other responsibilities for youth. Adults at Common Ground saw no one else serving junior highers at the UUA and thought therefore that YRUU should do something.

#### **5. Age Range- there's some more to say...**

A. I don't think junior high has ever been a meaningful part of YRUU. There was never a junior high constituency of LRY.

B. Junior-high youth inclusion in YRUU was an adult concept, out of guilt and concern.

C. The real question is how and who will serve junior highers.

D. Wayne agreed that we need the staff to serve junior highers and don't have it.

E. Wayne recommends that the UUA needs to provide more programming for junior highers and remove junior highers from YRUU.

F. The big problem with post-high youth is how to relate to youth 18 to 20 years who have a real commitment to the denomination and have no other place to go and how they can be included in good programming.

G. Wayne supported the inclusion of youth ages 19 to 22 years because they would be in leadership positions and those who wanted to would have such inclusion.

H. Wayne, what do you think of our tentative proposal that members would be limited to youth ages 14 to 18 years with cutoff of 19, and that youth Staff members would be up to 20 years at time of appointment? I think that it would work to include most of the Youth Staff we've had.

#### **6. Issue of supervision by Director of Youth Staff**

A. Wayne worked out with Youth Staff that it was both good educationally for him to be supervisor and was needed by the UUA Administration. It was, however, dependent on trust. Wayne tried to be very collegial in the office and gentle when he had to pull rank. It required thoughtful use of a collegial style parallel to that of the RE Department.

B. One of the things that is true of the situation is that the Youth Staff Specialists have very differing abilities.

## **7. What happens if a Youth Staff member isn't capable?**

The Youth Staff Director helps either to put the project aside or to pick up the slack, depending on its importance.

## **8. Behavior rules**

A. Wayne believes that the success of behavior standards rests on their being collectively and commonly agreed upon by the Youth. The worst thing that happens is if they are unilaterally imposed by adults. Youth leadership needs to help create and administer them.

B. How kids experience rules being created at the district level will prepare them for continental ones.

C. Rule formulation needs to be a collaborative effort of youth and adults. The council needs to evaluate the use of rules at Con-Con.

## **9. District YACs**

A. What do you see? "Mine sucks." I don't know about other districts. We had a youth committee and studied and made recommendations to the district board. and they did not follow the recommendations.

B. I'm sad that district programs seem weaker than they were.

C. Common Ground started and motivated adult involvement and support that lasted for some years. We need to provide some new motivation again.

## **10. How can we increase support and involvement of adults in youth work?**

We need to motivate and train adults at the local level. We need commitment of congregations, districts, and UUA. Wayne did a lot of traveling to do work with YACs and provide training. He sees this as a need.

# APPENDIX F – CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM MATERIALS FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST YOUTH

*January 15, 1989*

## **1. Junior-High Programs And Resources**

*Life Journey* by Caroline Fenderson. a year-long program on ages and stages of life. UUA, December 1988.

*A Growing-Up Year* by Margaret K. Gooding. A year-long program on finding religious meanings. UUA, June 1988.

*World Religions* by Robertson, Donn, Alcott, Middleton and Moore. A year-long curriculum explores major religious traditions of the world. UUA, 1987.

*About Your Sexuality* by Deryck Calderwood. Year long multi-media kit program. UUA, 1983 Revision.

*AIDS: A Supplement to About Your Sexuality* by Ellen Brandenburg and Orloff Miller. A guide to adding AIDS education to the AYS Kit. UUA, December 1988.

*How Can I Know What To Believe?* 1986 Revision by Charlene Brotman. Full-year program. Brotman-Marshfield.

*How Others Worship* by June Hutchinson. UU Christian Fellowship.

*Transition Programs and Resource Materials* for use with young adolescents, edited by Ellen Brandenburg, a packet of coming-of-age program materials, sold by the UU Youth Office.

*Religion In Life* Self-study program about UUism for junior high boys and girls. Suitable for scout emblem program and also for non-scouts. UUA, 1981.

*Peace Experiments* by Terry Hermsen. Five session multi-generational program includes Junior High track. Published by the UU Peace Network, 1985.

*Bright Legacy: The Story of Lewis Howard Latimer*, a video program for ages 10 years to adult on the life of a black Unitarian inventor, artist and early pioneer in electrical engineering. UUA, 1988.

*AIDS Packet*, edited by Eugene B. Navias, guidelines and materials for children, youth, and adult programs about AIDS. Revision 1988.

## **II. Junior-High Programs In Development**

*Unitarian Universalist Catechism* by Tony Larsen. an intergenerational program in the Lifespan Series. UUA.

*Living With Fundamentalism* by Jean Rickard and Burton Carley. Lifespan Series Adult program with a youth component. UUA.

*Gender Identity and Gender Roles*. Junior-high program.

*Racial Justice* Junior-high program. (Field test, 1989.)

*Unitarian Universalism* Junior-high program

## **III. Senior-High Programs and Resources**

*On The Path. Spirituality for Youth And Adults* by Arnason, Harvey, Levine, Marshak, Morris, Robinson and Schoeny. 10 sessions. UUA, 1988.

*Life Issues For Teenagers* by Wayne Arnason, Cheryl Markoff Powers, et al. Twenty session structured program. UUA, 1985.

*How Open The Door? The Afro-American Experience in Unitarian Universalism* Mark Morrison-Reed. This eight-session program that includes a video looks at the past, present and future. An adult program appropriate for older youth. UUA, 1989.

*Peace Experiments* (see above) includes senior-high track.

*Bright Legacy*: See junior-high listing.

## **IV. Senior-High Programs In Development**

*Under One Sky* senior-high program. UUA.

*"A Unitarian Universalist Catechism"* by Tony Larsen, an intergenerational program in the Lifespan Series. UUA.

*"Racial Justice"* senior-high program. UUA. (Field test, January 1990)

*"Living With Fundamentalism "* by Jean Rickard and Burton Carley. Lifespan Series program for adults and teens. UUA.

*"Heritages from Judaism and Christianity"* senior-high program. UUA.

*Holocaust* senior-high program. UUA.

## **V. Youth Group Program and Leadership Guides**

*The Local Youth Group Handbook* by Arnason, Schoeny and Young. Practical suggestions for leaders and members of groups.

*The Youth Advisors Handbook* edited by Wayne Arnason. A Guide to theory and practice - written for advisors by advisors.

## **VI. Leadership Guides In Development**

*The Conference Planning Handbook* by Durland, Happel, Deal, Wilson, et al. Practical suggestions for youth conference planners.

## **VII. Youth Publications**

*Synapse* the YRUU newspaper, published three times a year, sent free to subscribers. From the Youth Office.

*Spider* a newsletter sent periodically to Youth Council representatives by the Youth Office Specialists.

*UUA Youth Advisory* a newsletter for youth advisors, published three times a year.

A list of Youth Program Resources and a Bibliography for Youth Workers are available on request from the UUA Youth Office.

# APPENDIX G – BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# APPENDIX H – GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- *AYS. About Your Sexuality.* A popular curriculum for junior highers, first published in 1971.
- *CAC.* Conference Affairs Committee. The usual name for the committee in charge of behavior problems at a YRUU conference.
- *ConCon.* Continental Conference. The annual summer conference of YRUU, held immediately after the Youth Council meeting.
- *Common Ground.* The two conferences held at Carleton College in 1981 and Bowdoin College in 1982. The term is also sometimes used to describe the spirit of those conferences or the principles of youth-adult cooperation articulated there.
- *DE.* District Executive. A staff member jointly supported by the UUA and the district to represent the UUA and serve congregations.
- *DRE.* Director of Religious Education. This term is generally used for the person in charge of a religious education program in a congregation. Compare MRE below.
- *GA.* UUA General Assembly. The annual meeting of the UU congregations in Canada and the United States.
- *LIFT. Life Issues for Teenagers.* A curriculum published by the UUA for high-school groups.
- *LRV.* Liberal Religious Youth. YRUU's predecessor, which was founded when the Unitarian and Universalist youth movements merged in 1954.
- *MRE.* Minister of Religious Education. A fully credentialed minister whose specialty is religious education for children and adults, as differentiated from the parish minister, whose specialty is typically preaching. There is much overlap and some confusion about these two roles.
- *REAC.* Religious Education Advisory Committee. A presidential committee that meets annually to advise the UUA president and the Department of Religious Education.
- *REACH* packet. The acronym stands for Religious Education Action Clearing House. The packet is for religious education leaders; at least one goes to every congregation.
- *SCOYP.* Special Committee on Youth Programs. A committee appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees which evaluated UU youth programs in 1976-77.
- *YAC.* Youth-Adult Committee. This is the most common name for the committee in charge of district YRUU programs. Typically the adults are appointed by the district board, and the youth are elected by the youth in the district. This term is also used at the local and was formerly used at the continental level.
- *YRUU.* Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. Organization formed at the 1982 Common Ground conference. and officially incorporated in 1982.

# APPENDIX I – VISIONS FOR YOUTH

*by Eugene B. Navias*

The charge to "review YRUU in the context of all youth programming" is both a logical and a sizeable one. It is logical because YRUU provides a vital part but not all of the programming for UU Youth, ages 12 to 22 years, sponsored by local, district, and continental agencies. In order to evaluate the contribution and current workings of YRUU it is important to see them in the context of the whole of our Unitarian Universalist ministry to youth. The charge, however, also represents an enormous task because it suggests that an adequate review of YRUU involves a review of all we do with and for youth.

A summary of our ministry for young people ages 12 to 22 years reveals that it is offered at four basic levels:

## **Local Congregations through:**

- Church school classes and courses
- Coming-of-Age Programs and Trips
- Local congregation youth retreats and trips
- Membership classes for older teens
- Youth choirs
- Junior-high youth groups
- Senior-high youth groups (frequently called or identified as "YRUU")
- Post-high and college center groups
- UU Young Adult Network (UUYAN) groups
- Invitations and involvement of young people as participants in congregational life as committee members, congregation school teachers, worshipers, etc.
- The counseling, pastoral care, preaching, and other ministries of the congregation

## **Districts, Councils, Area Groups, and Clusters through:**

- District and interdistrict conferences
- Rallies
- Camps
- Training programs for youth leaders, youth and adult

## **Independent Conference Sites through:**

- Youth camps and conferences
- Family or inter-generational conferences that include youth

## **Continental Programs Sponsored by YRUU through:**

- The YRUU Continental Conference
- The YRUU Council and Steering Committee



- The Youth Caucus at the General Assembly
- The UU-UNO Seminar
- Youth participation at the National Workshop for Social Justice International  
Understanding Trips such as the 1988 trip to the USSR

Faced with the magnitude of this ministry with youth, the committee has found it important to focus on those programs and activities at the local, district, and continental levels that are most central to the experience of the majority of young people.

In order to make such an evaluation or review, it is important to start with a vision for Unitarian Universalist young people.

### **1. What is our vision for UU youth?**

We claim that it is the goal of a Unitarian Universalist ministry to youth to foster the religious growth of young people as they progress from late preadolescence to adulthood in our liberal religious community.

In this vision, there are viable programs appropriate to the changing social, physical, intellectual, religious, spiritual, and service needs of young people as they grow through their teens and into their twenties.

In this vision, young people find a series of places within an enlarging religious community where they feel supported and welcomed as they explore an ever larger liberal religious world. They become and remain active and enthusiastic members of our movement. They consider this their religious home. There are meaningful attachment and action points for them at every age.

In this vision, young people do not graduate from elementary school, junior high, or high school to a void where there is no programming, no community of peers, no UU youth ministry for them. In this vision, young adults do not have to wait until they have children to have an excuse to return to congregational life to find appropriate programming. In this vision there is a sequence of opportunities that provide an inviting environment for growing youth and young adults.

Within our religious household, young people find a place where they can "put their own visions, where they can put their passion and their values into action."

#### **a) The vision of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists**

In its statement of purpose fashioned at the Common Ground conferences in 1981 and 1982, YRUU has ably stated its own vision in Article II of its bylaws.

Section 1. Young Religious Unitarian Universalists shall serve its members for the purposes of fostering spiritual depth, creating a peaceful community on earth and peace within us, and clarifying both individual and universal religious values as part of our growing process. Our purposes are to provide and manifest a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism, and to encourage the flow of communication between youth and adults.

In so doing we shall nurture the freedom and integrity of the questioning mind, and embrace all persons of diverse backgrounds. We shall encourage the development of a spirit of independence and responsibility.

We shall strive to support our members and member groups with educational resources, with a communications network, and with love.

These purposes shall assist us in developing an effective system for social actions, and serve to raise our levels of mutual respect, communication, and community consciousness.

Section 2. The continental level of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists shall assist District and local member groups in fulfilling the purposes stated above.

**b) The Vision of UUYAN, the UU Young Adult Network**

Formed in 1986, the Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network (UUYAN) is seeking to meet what it considers the unmet needs of young adults ages 18 to 35 years. It has stated the purposes of its continental organization to be:

- to support and nurture our UU community;
- to represent young adults to the UUA;
- to nurture the vitality of individual spiritual and religious search;
- to be a communication network of ideas and people among diverse communities;
- to promote living in accordance with one's own religious principles;
- to share resources and information among UU young adults-;
- to sustain a continental UU young adult identity; and
- to grow as a community of action.

As we review the purposes of YRUU and of UUYAN we find these consistent with the Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and with our own visions for young people ages 12 to 22 years.

**c) What are our visions of human growth?**

The persons we are considering come into our vision as they move from childhood into their teens. In the eleven years from 12 through 22 they will have the capacity for enormous change. They will greatly benefit, in using that capacity, from the support and enrichment that our congregations, religious leaders and organizations can help to provide.

In these years, we will want to encourage their growth from a faith primarily inherited from parents and other authorities. through a faith primarily influenced by peers and significant persons, to a faith self-fashioned, affirmed and claimed in community. We will want to foster and accompany this growth.

In these years, they have the potential of moving from relational modes of dependency through stages of counter-dependence to independence and interdependence. We would hope to nurture such movement, for it is never automatic.

In these years, they will move from pre- or early pubertal growth to fullness of stature physically and mentally. They will grow from an early understanding of who they are as men or women to some clarity and security in their sexual and role identity. We will want to provide education and support for such growth.

In these years, we will want to assist them in moving out of childhood understandings of Unitarian Universalism to a knowledge of a broader and deeper movement, richly grounded in the history of liberal religion.

From the smaller arena of their congregation and its neighboring religions, we will want them to find themselves in the larger world of religion, to discover truth and inspiration from a diversity of sources, and to gain some sense of what they share with other traditions and faith groups and of what they especially prize in Unitarian Universalism.

From "at-homeness" and identity with a local church school class or group, we will want to encourage their enlarging knowledge of, participation in, and loyalty to a congregation, a district, a denomination, and a continental and world movement. Those enlarging circles include the youth organizations of our association.

From the ability to cooperate in groups planned and led by adults, we will want to sponsor them in learning to participate in the making of decisions that affect them, and progressively to learn the arts and skills of forming and governing their own groups with the support of caring adults. Clearly, we shall want them able to take charge of their own groups and organizations just as we shall want them to learn to take charge of their own lives. In this process we envision their responsible and effective participation in the governance of local congregations, districts, and denominational structures.

From heeding the ethical rules for the good life made by others, we envision their growing capacity to consider, fashion, and apply ethical and humanitarian principles to daily living.

From partaking in worship and spiritual expressions led by adults, we envision them launching their own deepening spiritual search, finding and sharing in community their own sources and spiritual insights. Some among them will become skilled in the arts of leading worship that satisfies the soul and the mind and provides strength for living. In these years, we hope they will become familiar with and find value in the worship practices of adult UU communities as well as in those of their youth community.

From financial dependency on parents and others, they will in these years be learning, reaching, and acting with increasing self-sufficiency. From a time when they are dependent on the life work, occupation, or profession of parents or surrogate parents, they will prepare for and begin their own life work.

The changes possible for most 12 to 22 year olds are mega changes. They invite YRUU, UUYAN, and the UUA, its member congregations and agencies, to provide a significant ministry to youth. Such a ministry is demanding!

## **2. What are the components of a vital ministry to youth?**

As we consider wisdom and practice from within and beyond our denomination, we conclude that a vital ministry to youth requires a suitable and supportive environment, balanced programming, and effective leadership.

### **a) A supportive environment**

Most young people in the lower years of our 12-to-22-year-old range come to Unitarian Universalism as they grow up in local congregations. Many congregations plan for the religious education of younger children with thoughtful planning and skill. Some congregations then run out of steam or expertise or leadership when they come to planning and conducting programs for young people.

Good programming for young people requires an environment which is both physically and attitudinally supportive. Young people need appropriate space and facilities for the balance of activities which will serve their needs.

Even more important, they need to be valued by the congregation and its ministerial and/or lay leadership. Although most congregations would speak ardently of the importance of their youth "as the future," we believe that many do not follow their words with appropriate action. Indeed, we would hope that congregations would think of the importance of youth to their congregation in present rather than future terms. Any congregation that has lost a generation is greatly impoverished.

It would be easy to blame congregations for their lack of caring, but we suspect that this is not fair. We believe that many congregations do not know what a viable ministry with youth consists of. They are not clear on goals, structures, and activities for good programming, and the leadership good programming requires. Indeed, they do not feel they have the skills to provide such leadership. A clear vision of youth ministry, a philosophy of youth ministry, and good leadership are crucial. Leadership training is a prime need!

We believe that to educate the congregation so that it provides a supportive and conducive environment for young people, that someone in the congregation must be informed and persuasive. That includes the parish minister, minister of religious education or director of religious education, or youth coordinator if there is such. We would urge such leaders to become more informed about youth ministry so that they can be agents of support for it in their congregations.

Such support includes advocacy for youth as a vital part of the congregation, advocacy for good youth programming and facilities, financial support through the budget, support for those who work with the young people as teachers and advisors, and the support of being with and known by the young people. In congregations served by ministers) it is vital that the young people feel themselves a part of that ministry. Ministers need to find viable and mutually agreeable ways of being with the youth.

### **b) Balanced programming**

The wisdom from our own survey of model UU youth programs and from the current interfaith

literature defines good youth programming as having a balance of opportunities that are relevant to the ages and needs of the young people.

We believe that balanced programming has five components:

1. opportunities for religious growth and learning through structured programming;
2. social programs with peers and times with inter-generational groups and adults;
3. worship and spiritual exploration and expression;
4. hands-on projects for service and social action;
5. education and experience in self-governance and leadership skills.

Congregations vary greatly in their arrangement of classes and youth groups, and we find no problem with this. We suggest, however, that every congregation survey its offerings for youth to check out its own balance of programming.

Most often we found structured courses for junior highers such as About Your Sexuality and World Religions being offered under the aegis of local religious education committees, with social programs and worship being included in junior-high youth group programs. Service projects were frequently included in "Coming of Age" programs for thirteen year olds.

In the high-school years, there is great variety in the programming of congregations. Some congregations have senior-high classes on Sunday mornings and groups (named YRUU or something else) on Sunday evening. Some have programs that stretch from Sunday at 11:00 A.M. to mid-afternoon, including a structured learning experience, a meal, and a youth led-adult advised group activity in the afternoon. The variety is enormous.

The development of leadership skills is a clear goal of most YRUU groups, and practice in governing itself is assumed to build skills whether or not there is conscious leadership education. In fact, however, there is a need for much more attention to this element of balanced youth ministry.

In addition, we found an enormous need to improve communication between the various parties who contribute to youth programming at the local, area, and district levels. In a local congregation there needs to be good communication between an RE committee and a youth committee who may be planning programs for the same young people. There needs to be good communication between YRUU and the congregation and its agencies. An effective local youth-adult committee can fill that need. If there is an UUYAN group it needs good communication with the appropriate church bodies- the program council, the adult religious education committee, or the board of trustees, and with the minister and staff, if any.

The same kind of communication needs to take place at the area or district level. As we studied reports from district RE committees, presidents, and youth-adult committees, we found little evidence that many district structures brought these three entities together in any effective way. The need was obvious. District RE committees usually had responsibility for providing leader training for such programs as *LIFT*, *About Your Sexuality*, and *World Religions*. District YACs

had responsibility for conducting youth rallies and conferences and for any youth leadership development programs (whether titled YRUU or not).

### **1. Structured Programs**

Most congregations recognize the need for planned programs to help young people to increase their knowledge of Unitarian Universalism, to gain knowledge of sexuality, and to explore life issues. In many congregations such programs are offered under the aegis of the church school. Some offer these same programs in a structured portion of a youth group meeting. The high quality and success of the UUA's *About Your Sexuality* and *LIFT* have helped win approval for such programming, both among young people and adults. In fact, congregations are asking for more of such structured programs. At the time of this writing, many are beginning to use *World Religions* with junior highers and are looking forward to the spirituality program, *On the Path*, for older youth.

Many congregations help young people learn about Unitarian Universalism through "coming-of-age" programs. The UUA Youth Office reports a considerable demand for help with such programs, and it supplies this need as requests are received by mailing out a sizeable packet of program suggestions at cost. Pilgrimage and other educational trips are an important part of many of these "coming-of-age" programs.

One key to a vital ministry to youth is that it contains programming with youth, rather than simply for youth. This means that the interests and input of the young people are entered into the plans. *About Your Sexuality* makes successful use of junior highers' questions and concerns by using them to fine tune the contents, depth, and sequence of resources available in the kit. *LIFT* focuses on life issues that are keenly apparent in the lives of most senior highers. The format and process of both these programs provides models of programming with young people. YRUU groups, and many others which do not call themselves YRUU, ordinarily are youth-led with adult guidance; such groups plan their own programs and include what meets their interests. A ministry with youth involves a sharing of leadership between youth and adult leaders, and good communication among all of the participants.

Many congregations that use structured programming report that they invite young people to discuss the range of program possibilities, to express their interests, and to take part in creating the plans. Such congregations pay attention to young people's growing abilities by investing more decision-making power in the young people as they move up from junior high into and through high school.

Post-high groups and local UUYAN groups may either be led entirely by young adults or be facilitated by ministers or adult leaders. Obviously such groups will not succeed unless they respect the autonomy and meet the needs and interests of young adults.

### **2. Social programs**

As young people grow from early teens to adulthood, their social needs and skills change greatly. Good youth programs help young people develop comfort and skill in relating to peers of both sexes. They help bonding occur among the class or group of young people.

We would also uphold the goal that youth programming encourage young people to bond or identify with the congregation. Through planned interaction with adult members of the congregation, youth can build bonds of affection and regard for adult members, and vice versa.

We would affirm the recommendation of such programs as *LIFT* that youth classes and groups start the year with a special retreat that will serve social needs and goals and engage young people in decision making about the year's program.

Camp and conference programs, district and cluster rallies, the YRUU Continental Conference, and the UUYAN Opus Conference all respond to social needs and can help young people learn new social skills and grow in an expanding social world.

### **3. Worship**

Author Sharon Parks, states that one of the most important functions of good youth programming is to provide "spiritual highs." (See Footnote 17) YRUU conferences, youth retreats, youth camps and youth conferences are often the place where such "mountaintop worship" takes place with great meaning for young people.

We affirm that young people need the inspiration, insight, and motivation that comes from good worship. Indeed they need it far more frequently than they can get it in the retreat and camp setting. Worship experiences should be a regular part of local youth programming.

We believe it is natural that young people explore new horizons of spirituality through the worship at camps and conferences beyond their own congregation. Often worship at these places away from home is more deeply emotional than that in the services of their local congregation. Often it adds to and celebrates a sense of interpersonal and group connectedness to a camp or conference or to a larger YRUU or youth community that is their prime spiritual home at this time in their lives.

Young people are searching for something transcendent that lifts and connects them to one another and to a spiritual way of living in the world. This **is** revealed in the worship they provide for themselves at continental conferences for instance. Young people, as much as adults- or perhaps even more than adults, need to have experiences that provide them with faith in themselves and with hope for the future of the world.

As they grow, young people can increasingly plan and conduct their own services, and they can take on important roles in conducting worship for congregational occasions. Some ministers and adult worship leaders have been effective in working with young people to aid them in increasing their skills in worship leadership, and young people who have had such an apprenticeship have valued the experience highly.

In addition to their own worship occasions, young people may want to elect times when they attend the congregation's worship services or are included in the leadership of the worship events of their congregation. If young people are given a free hand, they may well create services that express their own depth of feeling, conviction, and spiritual search in ways that are not familiar to the local congregation. Congregations may need to open themselves to receive these

unfamiliar forms of worship and to see them as sincere gifts of sharing. Some congregations whose worship patterns are unvarying may find themselves experiencing new possibilities. In addition, it may be important to hold up the vision that the worship of our adult congregations meets the spiritual needs of our young people.

#### **4. Hands-on service and social action**

The young adult years are times of high idealism and energy. Young people have strong visions of an ideal world and are often deeply concerned when they see that reality is so unlike their ideal. (Indeed, adults are sometimes astonished to see how seriously young people have taken the ideals espoused by their congregation.) Today's young adults are particularly concerned with Issues of peace. They understandably wonder whether there will continue to be a viable world throughout their lifetimes. Programs need not only to study issues of paramount concern to youth but also provide hope and alternatives for action. Richard Gilbert's classification of alternatives for socially responsible living into (1) social education, (2) social witness, (3) social service, and (4) social action needs to be used with young adults to help them envision their own possibilities for changing the world. (See Footnote 18)

Good programs can help youth learn how to take action in support of their ideals. Cooking and serving in a local soup kitchen, working in a Habitat for Humanity construction project, and participating in a Walk for Hunger are only a few ways that groups have become involved in social action and service.

In addition some groups, as part of a "coming-of-age" program, serve their local congregation through grounds clean-up projects or by joining a project to paint the congregation's building. Although these may be done solely by the group, there is special value in projects in which youth and adults work together.

#### **5. Education in leadership**

One of the greatest program opportunities we have in Unitarian Universalism is to foster the ability of young people to take charge of their own lives, individually and collectively. The structures and visions of YRUU count on the growing abilities of young people to plan and conduct successful youth programs at the local, cluster or district, and continental levels.

One of the visions of YRUU is to apply such Unitarian Universalist principles as respect for persons, equality of opportunity, and the use of the democratic process to the decision-making process that takes place in the meetings of the YRUU Youth Council and the Steering Committee.

That vision includes teaching by the example of the leadership style and manner employed at such gatherings. We see young people who have developed impressive leadership skills through their experiences in taking on increasingly demanding responsibilities in a local youth program, in organizing and leading area and district youth programs and committees, and in serving on the YRUU Youth Council, Steering Committee, and on the Continental Youth Staff.

We see such YRUU experiences as a major training ground for 'church person ship,' lay leadership in the congregations and agencies of our UU Association, and as preparation for the



Unitarian Universalist ministry. Frequently however, and especially at the local or district levels, there is no conscious help provided to youth in building the skills of organization, group decision-making, chairing of meetings, and planning of events. We believe that leadership theory, skill building, and practice could be built into youth programming with great benefit.

If nothing more, we would hope that young people will gain some understanding of ways of inclusive decision making and good planning by the modeling of the adult leaders who work with them. To achieve such a balance in their ministry to youth, congregations need systems that promote good communication and coordination. Since congregations vary so much in the size and situation of their youth population, there are a variety of successful models of balanced programming.

If a congregation has a small number of youth, one program or group may be offered for a wide age range of young people providing a variety of activities to meet the needs of program balance.

In congregations with a larger number of youth, a youth-adult committee (YAC) may provide a balance of programs by regularly bringing together youth and adult representatives from the various youth programs. The YAC may decide, for instance, that social, social action, and service programs will be part of the YRUU or senior-high group and that other educational and worship programs will be part of a Sunday morning class format.

### **c) Effective leadership**

#### **1. Adult leaders- the keystone of good youth programming**

We have received an avalanche of opinions about the importance of good youth leaders and teachers for programs for junior- and senior-high youth. It came in some form from all the surveys we conducted-whether of local leaders, youth, district presidents, or religious educators. Good adult leadership is essential for facilitating good youth programming. Many of our respondents said the most pressing need was for good adults willing to work with youth, and for solid training opportunities for those adults.

The evidence is that in many congregations, clusters, and districts there is a grave shortage of persons willing to work with youth. In addition, there are far too few opportunities for youth leaders to get training to help them understand young people, to gain a philosophy of youth ministry, and to envision the parameters of good programming and to gain the skills to facilitate it.

We do not accuse Unitarian Universalists of being heedless of the needs of our youth: rather we suspect that the UUA Youth Office and YRUU need more resources than are currently available for sharing the importance of youth programming, a solid philosophy of youth programming, training in curriculum and program techniques, and general leadership skills for working with youth.

#### **2. Youth leaders of youth**

We have already mentioned the importance of including leadership training for young people in local youth programs. Such training should also be included in district and continental programs offered by district YACS, YRUU, and the UUA.

Senior highers, for example, can learn to work very effectively alongside adult leaders in working with junior highers, and they have the special gift of being admired as next-stage models for junior highers. Often junior highers can learn a great deal from seeing the ways in which skilled senior highers relate in social or other situations, relate to adults with confidence, etc.

Some post-high young adults feel a serious desire to be mentors and models for junior and senior highers. They can be effective junior advisors and camp and conference counselors in the years before they are eligible to become adult advisors. And they, too, can benefit from leadership-training programs.

Conference centers that provide programs for junior and senior highers can also provide training programs, apprenticeships, and incentives for young people to take on increasing responsibilities and develop leadership skills as they progress through the teen years, graduating from the role of camper / participant to camper/leader and finally to leader. A youth leadership development program that could be a model for other conference centers is routinely conducted at The Mountain.

#### **d) Good communication**

In arriving at our visions, we found ourselves with some incidental concerns which seemed significant. One of these is communication. There is an enormous need to improve communication among the various parties who contribute to youth programming at the local, area, and district levels.

In a local congregation there needs to be good communication between the RE committee and a youth committee who may be planning programs for the same young people. An effective local youth adult committee can fill that need. Ministers, DREs, and other congregational leaders need to be engaged in the communications network about youth.

The same kind of communication needs to take place at the area or district level. As we studied reports from district RE committees, presidents, and youth-adult committees we found little evidence that there are many district structures that bring these three parties together in any effective way. The need is obvious. District RE committees usually have responsibility for providing leader training for such programs as LIFT, About Your Sexuality and World Religions. District YACs have responsibility for conducting youth rallies. YRUU conferences, and any youth leadership development programs. These two groups needed to share their knowledge, visions, concerns, and concrete plans.

At the district level board presidents and district executives need to be engaged in the communications network about and with youth. It is obvious from the reports we received that some district executives, for instance, play an important role in working with the district YAC and youth programming, but that others have almost no contact.

Young people have only a very few years to rise to develop leadership capability and to rise to leadership positions in district structures before they are out of high school and into the world of work or college, so leadership turnover is by nature rapid. Continuity of leadership of district

YACs is important and hard to come by: the result is a roller coaster rise and fall in the district YACs' functional success. Someone or some system needs to help district YACs to maintain continuity. In addition, the founding and rapid rise of UUYAN speaks to the need for communication between it and YRUU. As we write, YRUU invites young people from 12 to 22 years to participate in its events. UUYAN includes young people aged 18 to 35 years. Ways need to be explored for helping young people move from YRUU to UUYAN, where UUYAN groups exist. Congregations without post-high programs need to be in communication with their older teens who are going to remain in the community to find out how they can provide entry points for such youth into the life of the adult congregation. All of the people of our congregational family are precious! Good communication that helps us plan for all the members of the family will help us keep the UUs we have throughout their life spans.

We would recommend that adults who want to keep in touch with Continental YRUU read *Synapse*, the YRUU newspaper published three or four times a year, and that those wanting to be informed about continental UUYAN subscribe to its newsletter, *Connexion*. Both periodicals share news and views of their continental and district or local groups, as well as some programming ideas.

In addition, it is important to note that *Synapse* and *Connexion* are sources of vital communication among the UU youth and young adults. They provide a medium for free expression, for the giving and receiving of ideas and news that are important in the youth years. For the post-high youth, these publications can provide a way for youth networking to continue so that the readers feel a sense of belonging to a larger UU world.

It is not accidental that *Synapse* is distributed to some 10,000 young people and interested adults, for it is an expression of one of YRUU's primary purposes- of creating, sustaining, and giving voice to a continental youth community.

We have now outlined a Unitarian Universalist vision for youth programming, as well as our understandings of some conditions and ingredients essential to serving that vision. In this vision, we serve our youth with a vital ministry! In this vision, there are enough adults willing to work with youth: youth advisors and teachers, DREs, MREs, and parish ministers. In this vision, the adults who are willing to work with youth are enabled better to do so through training programs. In this vision there are no age gaps in our ministry. In this vision, we keep our youth and they become lifelong participating members of our congregations, enriching our communal life.

Such a ministry is not going to happen just because we want it, nor can it happen with the resources currently available. To serve this vision we must commit new energy, intention, and money at the continental, district, and local levels.

There is a lot at stake.

17. Sharon Parks, "Adolescence: Promise and Vulnerability," REACH, (UUA, January 1983).

18. Richard Gilbert, *The Prophetic Imperative: Unitarian Universalist Foundations for a New Social Gospel* (UUA, 1980).