

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST POLITY;
The Practice of Church and Ministry**

MEADVILLE/LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
Winter Intensive 2006

Instructor: James A. Hobart

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Daily Format: *Opening* by Mr. Hobart
Written Issues, 1 page reflection written by all students based on session's readings.
Class Discussion

Requirements: Regular attendance and participation
Assigned readings required
Additional readings [**in brackets**] recommended (now or later)
1 page issues paper prepared for each session
No exams
Final paper (approximately 10 pages) on a contemporary polity issue due by Tuesday, March 15. It is recommended that students discuss with Mr. Hobart a possible topic and the resources available for that topic.

Objectives: The purpose of the course is to prepare students planning to seek UU ministerial fellowship status and UU ministry settlement to be familiar with the history and theory of congregational polity and its practice (and mispractice) in the UUA and among its member congregations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unitarian Universalist Polity:
The Practice of Church and Ministry
Meadville Lombard, 2006 Winter Intensive

COURSE READING:

Chapters will be assigned from the books and papers included in this bibliography. Works in brackets [] are recommended, now or later, but not required.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU PURCHASE THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Alice Blair Wesley, *Our Covenant*, 2001-2002 Minns Lectures (Meadville/Lombard)

Conrad Wright, *Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian and Universalist Practice*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1997)

This book is out of print. If you cannot find a copy it is available at the UUA website. Type in “Conrad Wright-Congregational Polity.”

_____, *Walking Together: Polity and Participation in Unitarian Universalist Churches*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1989)

Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal, *Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity*, (Boston, UUA, 1997)

This book is also available at the UUA website.

** Books marked with asterisk are recommended for your library.*

Works in brackets [] are recommended for reading, now or later, but not required.

*James Luther Adams, *An Examined Faith*, edited by George K. Beach (Boston, Beacon Press, 1991).

* _____, *On Being Human Religiously*, (Boston, Beacon Press, 1976)

* _____, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, edited by George K. Beach (Boston, Beacon Press, 1986). OUT OF PRINT

_____, *A Transcription of Three Lectures, 1977*, Alice Blair Wesley, (ed), Meadville/Lombard Winter Institute.

_____, *Voluntary Associations*, edited by J. Ronald Engel, (Exploration Press, 1986). OUT OF PRINT

Robert N Bellah, "Unitarian Universalism in Societal Perspective," paper presented at 1998 General Assembly, Rochester, NY

Scott W. Alexander, (ed), *Salted with Fire: Unitarian Universalist Strategies for Sharing Faith and Growing Congregations*, (Boston, Skinner House, 1994)

Paul H. Beattie, "Individualism: A Historic Perspective," (paper, 1980).

*Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones (eds), *Soul Work*, (Boston, Skinner House, 2003).

Bulletin of the Congregational Library, Vols. 49 & 50 (1998) Commemorative Issue, "1648 ... The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline, The 350th Anniversary ... 1998."

John Carver, "Ends and Means: Nurturing the relationship between a congregation and its governing board," with commentary by Margaret Keip (paper on policy governance)

_____, "Basic Principles of Policy Governance," (paper on policy governance)

The Conference on the Free Church (papers on polity)

1. All Souls Church, Tulsa, OK, 1997
2. The First Unitarian Church, Worcester, MA, 1998
3. The First Unitarian Church, Memphis TN, 2002

J. Ronald Engel, "Conversations Among Liberal Democrats and Christians," (photocopy paper, 1990)

Henry Wilder Foote, (ed), *The Cambridge Platform of 1648*, Tercentenary Commemoration 1948, (Boston, Beacon Press and Pilgrim Press). OUT OF PRINT

Robert L. Hill, *Small Group Ministry*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 2003)

[*Charles Howe, *The Larger Faith*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1993).]

[_____, *For Faith and Freedom*, Boston, Skinner House Books, 1997.]

A.D. Lindsay, *The Essentials of Democracy*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929).

*Mark Morrison-Reed, *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1980, 1994).

[Virgil E. Murdock, "The Institutional History of the American Unitarian Association," *Minns Lectures, 1975-76*, (photocopy paper)].

Roy Oswald, *Making Your Church More Inviting*

David B. Parke, "Doing Our First Works Over: Whither Congregational Polity," 1998, Presentation at the General Assembly.

* _____, *The Epic of Unitarianism*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1985).

Rebecca Parker, "What They Dreamed Be Ours to Do: Lessons from the History of Covenant," 1998, Presentation at the General Assembly.

*D.B. Robinson, (ed), *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, (Richmond, VA, John Knox Press, 1966)

[*David Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, (Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1985).]

[Warren R. Ross, *The Premise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association*, (Boston, Skinner House, 2001)]

William F. Schulz (ed), *Transforming Words*, (Boston, Skinner House, 1984).

*Unitarian Universalist Association, *2005-2006 Directory*, (Boston, UUA, 2005)

* _____, *Unitarian Universalism and the Quest for Racial Justice*, (Boston, 1993), a re-publication of two works:

1. UUA Commission on Appraisal, *Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest for Racial Justice 1967-1982*, 1993 Study by the Commission.
2. Victor H. Carpenter, *The Black Empowerment Controversy and the Unitarian Universalist Association 1967-1970*, 1993 Minns Lectures.

Unitarian Universalist Association, Commission on Appraisal,

1. **Our Ministry: Structure, Support, Renewal*, 1992.
2. **Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity*, 1997
3. **Belonging, The Meaning of Membership*, 2001

*Unitarian Universalist Association, Fulfilling the Promise Committee, *Fulfilling the Promise*, (Boston, UUA, 1998)

*Unitarian Universalist Association, Racial and Cultural Diversity Task Force, *Journey Toward*

Wholeness, (Boston, UUA, 1996)

*Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association, *The Guidelines of the UUMA*.

_____, *Selected Essays, 1991*

_____, *Selected Essays, 1994*.

*Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, (New York, The Pilgrim Press, 1991).

Alice Blair Wesley, *Our Covenant*, 2001-2002 Minns Lectures (Meadville/Lombard)

_____, *Myths of Time and History: A Unitarian Universalist Theology*, (A.B.Wesley, 1987).

*George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, (Kirksville, MO, Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1992).

[*Conrad Wright, *A Stream of Light*, (Skinner House Books, 1975, 1989).]

_____, "In Search of a Usable Past," *Collegium Proceedings, Volume I*, 1977.

*_____, *The Unitarian Controversy: Essays on American Unitarian History*, (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1994).

SUGGESTED READING *These books are out of print,
but they are valuable resources if you can find them.*

Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment*

George Hunston Williams, ed, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, (Westminster Press, 1958).

Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America*, (Starr King Press, 1955)

In addition to these readings, there are interesting materials and discussions on such issues as policy governance, small group ministry, church size and other issues relating to polity available at the UUA website and in chat lists on each of these and other topics. Explore!

SESSION ONE: Monday Morning

Introduction and Overview

Who we are. Questions we bring. Expectations of the course.

Format: Collegial education

Polity Questions: from Conrad Wright *Walking Together* "A Doctrine of the Liberal Church" (pages 3 and 4).

Opening: James A. Hobart

SESSION TWO: Monday Afternoon

The European Background: Territorial Churches and Gathered Churches

Readings: [Charles Howe, *For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe*]

[David B. Parke, *The Epic of Unitarianism*, Chapters 1 and 2]

A.D. Lindsay, *The Essentials of Democracy*

Conrad Wright, *Walking Together*, Chapter 7, "Social Cohesion and the Uses of the Past."

James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, Chapter 13 "The Enduring Validity of Congregational Polity."

Williston Walker, *Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*
pp101-17, "Robert Browne's Statement of Congregational Principles"
pp28-32, "The London Confession of 1589"

George Hunston Williams, [*The Radical Reformation*, esp: chapters 32 & 33]

_____, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, Introduction

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions.

SESSION THREE: Tuesday Morning

American Beginnings

Readings: from *Bulletin of the Congregational Library*
1. Francis J. Bremmer “Congregations before Congregationalism
2. Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe “A Company of Believers Ecclesiastically Confederate”

from Henry Wilder Foote, (ed) *The Cambridge Platform of 1648*, (1948, Beacon Press and Pilgrim Press), Chapters 1 and 2.

[Charles Howe, *The Larger Faith*, Chapters 1 and 2.]

[Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment*]

Williston Walker, *Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*
X. “The Cambridge Synod and Platform”

Alice Blair Wesley, *Our Covenant*, “Love Is the Doctrine of this Church”

Conrad Wright (Editor) [*A Stream of Light*, Chapters 1 and 2]

_____, [*Beginnings of Unitarianism in America*].

_____, *Congregational Polity*, "Introduction" and "Congregationalism Prior to the Unitarian Controversy".

_____, *Walking Together*, Chapter 2, "Walking Together."

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions.

SESSION FOUR: Tuesday Afternoon

Developing the Structures of Associations

Readings: [Charles Howe, *The Larger Faith*, Chapters 3, 4, and 5.]

Conrad Wright, *Walking Together*,
Chapter 1, "A Doctrine of the Church for Liberals,"
Chapter 6, "UU Denominational Structure."

[_____, *A Stream of Light*, Chapter 3, "Salute the Arriving Moment."]

_____, *The Unitarian Controversy*, Chapter 5, "Institutional
Reconstruction in the Unitarian Controversy"

_____, *Congregational Polity*, pages 33-98

James Luther Adams, *On Being Human Religiously*, Chapter 1, "Guiding
Principles for a Free Faith."

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions.

SESSION FIVE: Wednesday Morning

The Covenant and the Voluntary Principle

Readings: James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, Chapter 28 "The
Indispensable Discipline of Social Responsibility: Voluntary Associations"

_____, *A Transcription of Three Lectures, 1977*
I. "The Prophetic Covenant and Social Concerns"
II. "The New Narcissism: Dissolution of Covenant"
III. "Congregational Polity and Covenant"

_____, *Voluntary Associations*,
[Chapter 10, "The Voluntary Principle in the Forming of American
Religion."]

[Chapter 12, "Mediating Structures and the Separation of Powers."]

[Chapter 15, "Some Notes on the Ministry of the Clergy and the Laity."]

Rebecca Parker, "What They Dreamed Be Ours to Do: Lessons from the History

of Covenant."

[Alice Blair Wesley, "The Basic Doctrines of a Covenantal Association"]

_____, *Myths of Time and History*, "The Pilgrims and the Spirit of the Covenant of the Free Church."

_____, *Our Covenant* 2000-2001 Minns Lectures, II "Thus Do We Covenant."

Conrad Wright, *Congregational Polity*, page 101-144

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions.

SESSION SIX: Wednesday Afternoon

Worship and Preaching among the Unitarian Universalists

Readings: Conrad Wright, *Walking Together*,
Chapter 3, "Worshipping Together"
Chapter 4, "Another Look at Corporate Worship"

James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*,
[Chapter 6, "Hidden Evils and Hidden Resources"]
Chapter 8, "By Their Roots Shall You Know Them"
[Chapter 27, "Fishing with Nets"]
Chapter 34, "Shalom: The Ministry of Wholeness"

William F. Schulz (ed), *Transforming Words*
Chapter 1, David O. Rankin, "The Sources of Authority in the Liberal Pulpit"
Chapter 5, Judith Hoehler, "The Preacher as Prophet"

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions

SESSION SEVEN: Thursday Morning

Pastoral Care in the Liberal Church

Readings: James Luther Adams, *An Examined Faith*, Chapter 20, "The AIDS Epidemic and Palliative Care"

_____, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, Chapter 32, "Aging, A Theological Interpretation"

_____, *Voluntary Associations*, Chapter 19, "Social Ethics and Pastoral Care"

Robert L. Hill, *Small Group Ministry*

Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association, *Guidelines of the UUMA*.

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions

SESSION EIGHT: Thursday Afternoon

Contemporary Issues of Polity I.

Ordination, Credentialing, Governance

Reading: John Carver, "Ends and Means"
_____, "Basic Principles of Policy Governance"

Conrad Wright, *Walking Together*, Chapter 5, "Autonomy and Fellowship"

[_____, *A Stream of Light*, Chapters 4 and 5.]

[Charles Howe, *The Larger Faith*, Chapters 6, 7, and 8.]

[_____, "The Doctrine of the Liberal Church from a Historical Standpoint," *Unitarian Universalist Selected Essays, 1994*, pp. 39-58.]

Roy Oswald, *Making Your Church More Inviting*, Chapter 2

"How to Minister Effectively in Family, Pastoral, Program and Corporate Sized Churches"

Unitarian Universalist Association, *UUA Directory 2005-2006*, especially UUA Bylaws and Rules,

Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal, *Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity*, Part I: Congregational Polity in Theory & Practice.

[Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal, *Our Ministry: Structure, Support, Renewal*, 1992:

- Recruitment," pp. 7-11
- "Fellowship, Disciplinary Action, and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee," pp. 26-34
- "Ordination" pp. 35-39
- "Credentialing & Ordaining of Ministers in the Unitarian and Universalist Traditions", Appendix B, pp. 98-102]

[Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Governance, *The Final Report of the Commission on Governance of the UUA, 1993*, especially chapters 6,7,8,9,10.]

Alice Blair Wesley, *Our Covenant*, 2001 Minns Lectures:

- III. "How We Came to Forget the Covenant for a Long Time"
- IV. "The Theology and Anthropology of our Liberal Covenant"
- V. "Updating the Cambridge Platform"

Conrad Wright, *Congregational Polity*, pp147-178

["A Response to the Commission on Governance" *Unitarian Universalist Selected Essays, 1994*, pp. 59-66]

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions.

SESSION NINE: Friday Morning

Contemporary Issues of Polity II.

Liberal Religion and Democracy: Individuals in Community.

Readings: James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*,
Chapter 14, "From Cage to Covenant"
Chapter 16, "Our Responsibility in Society"
[Chapter 26, "Politics of Culture in American Perspective."]

Scott W. Alexander, (ed), *Salted with Fire*, Chapter 21, Barbara Wells,
"Responsibility and Commitment: Why Just Signing the Book Is Never Enough"

Paul A. Beattie, "Individualism: A Historic Perspective"

Robert N. Bellah, "Unitarian Universalism in Societal Perspective"

The Conference on the Free Church:

- Burton Carley, "The Vision of the Cambridge Platform"
- Earl K. Holt, "The Wise Weakness of the Congregational Way"
- Suzanne Meyer, "The Curriculum of the Free Church"
- Brent A. Smith, "The Free Church: Revolution and Experiment"

[J. Ronald Engel, "Conversations Among Liberal Democrats and Christians."]

James A. Hobart, "The Proposed UUA-CUC Agreement"

[Virgil E. Murdock, "The Institutional History of the American Unitarian Association."]

[David B. Parke, "Doing Our First Works Over: Whither Congregational Polity?"]

Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal, *Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity: Part II: "Pressure Points: Issues and Concerns Related to Congregational Polity."*

Alice Blair Wesley, "Toward a Covenanted Association of Congregations,"
Minns Lecture VI, 2001

Conrad Wright, *Congregational Polity* pp179-206

_____, *Walking Together*, Chapter 11, "Individualism in Historic Perspective"

_____, "In Search of a Usable Past"

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions

SESSION TEN: Friday Afternoon

Contemporary Issues of Polity III.

Race and Class

Readings: James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, Chapter 31, "The Shock of Recognition: The Black Revolution and Greek Tragedy"

Jay Atkinson, "Third World Debt and Economic Justice: A Religious Perspective," *Unitarian Universalism, Selected Essays, 1991*, pp. 90-97.

[Victor Carpenter, *The Black Empowerment Controversy and the UUA, 1967-1970*. (In UUA, *Unitarian Universalism and the Quest for Racial Justice*)]

Rebecca Parker, "Not Somewhere Else but Here," in *Soul Work*, pp. 171-196

Mark Morrison-Reed, *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*,
Chapter 1, "Two American Faiths"
Chapter 4, "Segregation in the A.U.A."
Chapter 5, "Our Future"

Thandeka, "The Paradox of Racial Oppression," in *Soul Work*, pp 127-144

[Robert P. Throne, "Hollow Souls: Unitarian Universalist Polity and Congregational Diversity," *Unitarian Universalism, Selected Essays, 1994*, pp. 80-96.]

Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal, *Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest for Racial Justice*. (In UUA, *Unitarian Universalism and the Quest for Racial Justice*)

Unitarian Universalist Association Racial and Cultural Diversity Task Force, *Journey toward Wholeness*, "The Next Step: From Racial and Cultural Diversity to Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racist Multiculturalism"

Conrad Wright, *Congregational Polity*, pp 207-214

Opening: James Hobart

Presentations: All Participants: One page paper on issues and questions

FINAL PAPER

Due Tuesday, March 15, 2006

Each participant is required to prepare a paper of approximately ten pages on a contemporary issue of Unitarian Universalist congregational polity (Holt, Smith, and Wesley papers are examples as are discussions by J.L. Adams, Conrad Wright, Rebecca Parker, David Parke and others).

Your choice might be a specific issue--UUA Ministerial Fellowship, or Ministerial Ordination, for example. Your choice might be a reflection on an issue or issues raised in a Commission on Appraisal report--either of the two in the required reading or earlier reports such as Our Professional Ministry (1992), or Empowerment, (1983) are examples. You might choose to address one of the UUA's anti-oppression initiatives: "The Journey toward Wholeness," or "The Welcoming Congregation" (materials for these are available from the UUA). Or, you might discuss whether or not the General Assembly, and/or the UUA Administration measure up to UU congregational polity. Or, you might consider what UU congregational polity requires of a congregation in its practice of worship, religious education, social justice, administration, or inter-church relations. Or, perhaps you might discuss the relative priority or the relationship of UU congregational polity and the UUA's Principles and Purposes. Or, you may have another idea.

The guiding principle of selection and preparation is that the issue is important to our contemporary UU practice of congregational polity and it is informed by our Unitarian and/or Universalist experience with congregational polity.

Mr. Hobart will welcome discussion with you about the nature and topic of your paper and about resources that may be available.

