

# Developmentally Challenged: Understanding Unitarian Universalism's Lack of Mass Appeal

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## I. Introduction

Unitarian Universalists (UUs) are frequently heard mulling over the question of why our religious denomination continues to be so small. While the rate of growth of Unitarian Universalism has been respectful over the past decade, even outpacing the rate of growth of more mainstream denominations, relative to the size of the U.S. population Unitarian Universalism, with its approximately 220,000 adherents,<sup>1</sup> struggles with attracting the type of numerical following that it has aspired to. Folk-wisdom about the reasons for this lack of mass appeal abound within the denomination: “we haven’t done enough in getting our message out,” “our growth strategies have been misguided and ineffectual,” or “our form of religion requires too much work, it isn’t for everybody.” This last possibility may contain a kernel of truth. It is, indeed, possible that Unitarian Universalism isn’t for everybody, and there perhaps might be very good reasons why that is the case. Robert Kegan’s theory of human development and James Fowler’s theory of faith development may help shed light on this possibility

Kegan’s constructive-developmental approach to adult growth and meaning-making outlines five orders of consciousness at which human beings function and construct meaning. In this developmental theory, individuals progress through various stages (from 1<sup>st</sup> order meaning making on the low end towards 5<sup>th</sup> order meaning making on the high end), with each earlier stage being an essential building block for the successive stages. At each of the successive developmental stages the way in which an individual relates to and understands the world (the way in which the individual constructs meaning) changes and is markedly different. Maintenance of each order of consciousness is aided by support mechanisms in the environment around the individual, and the impetus to grow towards a higher order occurs because of challenges to the current form of meaning making. Kegan’s theory raises important questions about communal religion. Is it possible that different religions would appeal to different individuals based on where they are in their constructive-developmental thinking? If so, how might we assess what orders of consciousness a particular religion is best suited to support and nurture? Finally, if a particular religion is developmentally geared towards certain orders of consciousness, what are the implications of this?

Unitarian Universalism’s difficulties in gaining wide appeal may be related to the fact that it is a religion narrowly defined in terms of the constructive-developmental orders of consciousness it can support. In determining the appropriate correspondence between Unitarian Universalism and Kegan’s orders of consciousness, I propose first developing an analytical framework that meshes Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory with James Fowler’s stages of faith development. Then, using this framework, we will examine Unitarian Universalism’s religious beliefs, its approach to religious education, and its institutions. Such a methodology should provide us insight into the orders of consciousness best supported by Unitarian Universalism as well as point to the impact of such findings.

## II. An Analytical Framework: Treating Kegan and Fowler as Complementary

A major assumption of this paper is that Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory can be understood as complementary with James Fowler's stages of faith development. I predicate this assumption on several facts. First, in the "Acknowledgements" section of his seminal work, *Stages of Faith Development*, Fowler thanks Kegan as having been a former research associate on his staff.<sup>2</sup> Kegan is, thus, intimately aware of Fowler's work and suppositions. Kegan, for his part, notes in the "Preface" to *The Evolving Self* that: "James Fowler [and others]...have each been important to my learning for many years. Although this book may not exactly represent the views of any of them, their own developing visions have mattered to the way I see."<sup>3</sup> Next, they both self-identify their respective theories as drawing heavily on the work of Jean Piaget.<sup>4</sup> This further implies a certain affinity and common intellectual heritage.

Third, I believe the two theories are complementary because they fill gaps in each. Kegan's order of consciousness theory addresses the way individuals (and by extension institutions or systems) overall construct meaning. While in his work, *In Over Our Heads*, Kegan explicitly applies his order of consciousness theory to many aspects of adult life in America (including partnering, parenting, learning, working, etc), the spiritual or religious dimensions of life are barely addressed.<sup>5</sup> Religious applications need to be inferred or extrapolated from Kegan's general principles. Fowler's work (which preceded Kegan's), in turn, limits itself by primarily addressing what the stages of faith development look like at an individual level. So, viewing both together might yield a more holistic continuum. A final assumption worth noting is that I will confine the scope of our analysis by focusing on Kegan and Fowler's 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> orders of consciousness and stages of faith development, respectively. Orders/stages 1 and 2 are generally experienced in childhood and are only indirectly relevant to the analysis undertaken here. In addition, I will not address Fowler's stage 6, since, as he himself notes, it is a rare stage.<sup>6</sup>

A quick side-by-side comparison of Kegan and Fowler's orders/stages 3, 4, and 5 will help us with our later analysis of Unitarian Universalism. Indeed, Kegan's orders of consciousness and Fowler's stages of faith development tend to match up one-to-one:

Kegan's 3<sup>rd</sup> Order and Fowler's 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage: Jennifer Berger's useful summary of Kegan's work notes that an individual at the 3<sup>rd</sup> order of consciousness has a "traditional" mind. Such individuals "internalize the feelings and emotions of others and are guided by those people or institutions...that are most important to them."<sup>7</sup> "The major limitation of this order," she notes, "...[is that t]here is no sense of what I want outside of others' expectations or societal roles." Individuals at Kegan's 3<sup>rd</sup> order have internalized outside expectations and strive to live in harmony with them. Authority is thus located outside the individual, not internally. Fowler refers to his 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of faith development as that of Synthetic-Conventional faith. "It is a 'conformist' stage in the sense that [the individual] is acutely tuned to expectations and judgments of significant others and does not yet have a sure enough grasp on [his/her] own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective."<sup>8</sup> As Fowler further explains, "faith [at this stage] must synthesize values and information; it must provide a basis for identity and outlook." Religion at Fowler's 3<sup>rd</sup> stage provides critical information for the individual — it underpins identity and helps explain how to look at the world. Both theories note that this order/stage is generally attained in adolescence.

Kegan's 4<sup>th</sup> Order and Fowler's 4<sup>th</sup> Stage: Building on 3<sup>rd</sup> order meaning making, individuals functioning at the 4<sup>th</sup> order have "created a self that exists outside of its relationship to others," they have a "self-authoring mind." The external opinions and expectations that had previously been subject are now object. People constructing meaning at the 4<sup>th</sup> order "have an internal set of rules and regulations — a self governing system...[they] are self-guided, self-motivated, and self-evaluative."<sup>9</sup> Fowler refers to his 4<sup>th</sup> stage as that of Individuative-Reflective faith. As Fowler explains it, "[t]he self...now claims an identity no longer defined by the composite of one's roles or meanings to others...Stage 4 [also] typically translates symbols into conceptual meanings. This is a 'demythologizing' stage."<sup>10</sup> Faith becomes subject to critical reflection; faith-based propositions can be examined, adopted, rejected, and amended.

Kegan's 5<sup>th</sup> Order and Fowler's 5<sup>th</sup> Stage: Building on the 4<sup>th</sup> order, Kegan's 5<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness is referred to as the "self-transformational mind." Such individuals have "learned the limits of their own inner systems [of meaning-making] — and the limits of having an inner system in general." Adults at this order are "less likely to see the world in terms of dichotomies or polarities...[and understand that] all...are part of a larger community — the community of human beings, perhaps, or of members of our planet."<sup>11</sup> It is an order at which dialectic between systems and individual selves becomes central — the process of dialogue holds value in and of itself. Fowler terms his 5<sup>th</sup> stage Conjunctive faith. In Fowler's words, "Stage 5 recognizes the task of integrating or reconciling conscious and unconscious...[it] accepts as axiomatic that truth is more multidimensional and organically interdependent than most theories or accounts of truth can grasp...[the individual at stage 5] assumes that each genuine perspective will augment and correct aspects of the other, in a mutual movement toward the real and true."<sup>12</sup> At this stage, faith and the ongoing discernment of truth becomes a process.

### **III. Unitarian Universalism's Religious Beliefs**

American stereotypes often portray Unitarian Universalism as a religion in which "anything goes." In fact this stereotype is prevalent enough that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) specifically addresses the point on its web-page Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for newcomers:

**"I've heard that Unitarian Universalists can believe anything they want to. Is that true?"**

No. One could not be considered a Unitarian Universalist and believe that subscription to specific doctrines or creeds are necessary for access to God or spirituality or membership in our congregations.

Unitarian Universalists could not believe that God favors any group of people based on any inherent qualities, such as skin color, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.-or that any group of people is more worthy of access to opportunities than any other as a result of these qualities.

We don't believe that autocratic, undemocratic or overly hierarchical systems are appropriate methods of organizing our congregations or the larger society.

We don't believe that humanity has the right or moral authority to exploit the environment or other life forms with whom we share this planet."<sup>13</sup>

Similar sentiments are expressed, in more affirming language, in the denomination's seven "official" principles, which were voted on and accepted at the 1986 Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly. At this assembly, the congregations of the UUA voted to covenant together to affirm and promote:<sup>14</sup>

- 1) The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- 2) Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- 3) Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
- 4) A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- 5) The rights of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.
- 6) The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- 7) Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.

Taken as a whole, these seven principles comprise the entirety of what Unitarian Universalists have agreed to hold as common religious goals/beliefs within the denomination. To the extent, then, that Unitarian Universalism has 3<sup>rd</sup> order/stage conventional religious norms, this is it. However, it is worth noting that someone genuinely functioning at the 3<sup>rd</sup> order of consciousness would likely have great difficulty with these principles. They are so broadly stated and devoid of particular context that they would leave a 3<sup>rd</sup> order individual yearning for further guidance. Take for example the war on terrorism. The first UU principle would indicate that terrorists have violated the inherent worth and dignity of other human beings. Some sort of repercussion would seem justified for this violation. Yet the sixth principle talks of world peace. Is supporting a war against terrorism justified, then, or not? A 3<sup>rd</sup> order individual could take these seven principles as tenets of faith, but would need outside mediation in order to make contextual sense of them. Because the seven principles are so general in nature, such an individual would likely eventually feel frustrated by the lack of clarity and preciseness in the religion.

The seven principles are vague because there is an assumption that individuals will autonomously apply and interpret them as needed. This emphasis on individual interpretation is reflected in the six sources of Unitarian Universalist faith. These sources go hand-in-hand with the principles noted above and are meant to provide lenses through which Unitarian Universalists interpret and understand our principles. As codified in the Unitarian Universalist Association's by-laws, the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism draws on the following sources:<sup>15</sup>

- 1) Direct living experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life.
- 2) Words and deeds of prophetic women and men, which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.
- 3) Wisdom from the world's religions, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.

- 4) Jewish and Christian teachings, which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.
- 5) Humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- 6) Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

As apparent through the above noted sources, there is huge variety in the lenses that can be brought to bear in interpreting the Unitarian Universalist principles. While ministers can provide one lens (their own) for drawing on sources of wisdom and in interpreting the principles, there is a central assumption that individuals within a congregation are "self-authoring" and capable of deciding for themselves how they approach and interpret the religion. As Unitarian Universalist minister Steve Edington puts it, "While we are bound by a set of common principles, we leave it to the individual to decide what particular beliefs lead to those principles."<sup>16</sup> As described above, this level of individual engagement, autonomy, and self-authorship is a characteristic of the 4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness. Thus, at the level of religious beliefs, Unitarian Universalism demands a minimum of 4<sup>th</sup> order meaning making from its adherents.

#### **IV. Unitarian Universalism's Approach to Religious Education**

Religious Education in the Unitarian Universalist denomination varies as widely as our sources of faith. There is no expectation that congregations will teach standardized, UUA-approved or published curricula. Many congregations create their own curricula or purchase non-UUA materials. Having said that, there is a general difference between how children's religious education is approached and that of adult religious education that may be illuminating for our analysis here.

UU children's religious education curricula tend, generally speaking, to be developmentally appropriate in terms of the basic skills acquisition emphasized for each age group. For example, *Around the Church Around the Year*, a curriculum for children grades K-2, states two of its goals as helping the kids learn more their own church community as well as explore their feelings about themselves and their community.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, *We Are Many We Are One*, a preschool curriculum, states two of its primary goals as helping the children experience positive and nurturing relationships at church, as well as affirmation for their individuality.<sup>18</sup> Given this general context of age-appropriate developmental goals, what makes these curricula distinctly Unitarian Universalist in character is their sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit linkage to the UU principles and sources. *Around the Church Around the Year* states explicitly that "...[a] goal is for the children to enhance their overall understanding of Unitarian Universalism. What do Unitarian Universalists believe about life, death, people, and the environment?"<sup>19</sup> *We Are Many We Are One* approaches the matter more implicitly, with an entire unit devoted to helping the children connect with the earth, trees, seasons, animals etc. Other lessons emphasize the importance of appreciating the individuality and diversity of every human being. The running theme in these curricula is that there are certain basic spiritual values that define what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Even as we teach our children the psycho-motor-social skills of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> orders of consciousness, an at times implicit and at times explicit goal remains inculcating the children in the values and beliefs of Unitarian Universalism, an expectation of eventual 3<sup>rd</sup> order meaning making. In this regard, Unitarian Universalism is no different than every other religion in likewise seeking to teach (some

would say “indoctrinate”) children its prevailing norms/values/beliefs. Unitarian Universalist children’s religious education, thus, while explicitly supporting the developmental needs of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order thinking, maintains an expectation that children will reach 3<sup>rd</sup> order acceptance of the UU principles.

As UU youngsters go through adolescence there is an increasing movement in the curricula to introduce them to and support them in making autonomous decision making. The *Neighboring Faiths* curriculum introduces junior high teens to other religious settings with an explicit goal of appreciating religious diversity, but also an implicit assumption that these various traditions can be sources for their own spirituality.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the notion that it is acceptable to cobble together a personal religious framework based on varied sources is introduced. The *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education curriculum for junior high and high school teens seeks to present teens with factual information about sexuality while at the same time encouraging autonomous decision making that holds true to the spirit of the UU principles.<sup>21</sup> For example, the principles don’t tell you not to cheat on a boyfriend/girlfriend, but perhaps such an action would not be in line with respecting the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings. The older the teen gets within the UU religious education paradigm, the more likely that the teen will be presented with a pedagogy designed to move him/her beyond 3<sup>rd</sup> order meaning making and towards the 4<sup>th</sup> order.

UU adult religious education curricula, on the other hand, tends to assume a minimum of 4<sup>th</sup> order thinking, and actually operate on a level beyond 4<sup>th</sup>. The adult religious education curriculum, *Building Your Own Theology*, currently the most popular adult curriculum within the movement, takes for granted that participants in this course are functioning as 4<sup>th</sup> order self-authoring individuals. As the curriculum’s author, Richard Gilbert, notes in the Introduction, “Unitarian Universalists are ‘heretics’ in the best sense of the word. Heresy derives from the Greek ‘harein’ meaning to choose. We will choose our religious values, not have them chosen for us.”<sup>22</sup> But as a pure 4<sup>th</sup> order individual, why engage in a communal process? One could reflect critically on one’s faith in isolation and come to whatever conclusion one was inclined to. The entire purpose of such curricula, however, is to arrive at your own independent understandings via *dialogue* with others. As Gilbert puts it, “The central purpose of *Building Your Own Theology* is to create a community context in which individuals can create their own credos.”<sup>23</sup> We arrive at truth via dialogue within community — this is a form of meaning making and religious life characteristic of the 5<sup>th</sup> order/stage. Similar patterns of pedagogy, with an emphasis on truth seeking via dialogue, can be discerned in other UU adult curricula, such as Richard Gilbert’s *Ethics*, Wayne Arnason’s *Faithful Choices*, and the *Our Whole Lives* adult sexuality curriculum by Richard Kimball. This type of spiritual context would likely either frustrate or challenge an adult operating purely at the 4<sup>th</sup> order who would, in essence, only view community as a forum in which to vocalize relative individual truths, not as a dialogic learning opportunity. Hence, at the level of UU adult religious education, the 4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness is assumed, and some progression towards 5<sup>th</sup> is necessary in order for the pedagogy to have value.

## V. Unitarian Universalist Institutions

### A. Worship

This emphasis on seeking truth via dialogue is not limited to the UU adult religious education experience. The Unitarian Universalist style of worship and preaching emphasizes this, too. Unlike Christian denominations where worship frequently revolves around the exegesis of a

scriptural text, Unitarian Universalism has no one common scripture. While it is possible to preach on the basis of any number of writings, be they literary, philosophical, scriptural, or otherwise, the type of writings drawn upon can differ greatly from minister to minister. In my experience, while Unitarian Universalists do not have a common textual cannon, we do have a common style of worship — a common type of worship experience that we tend to share as a denomination. The once UU minister Ralph Waldo Emerson presciently described in his 1838 “Divinity School Address” a style of worship that he longed for, a style that is so common in most present-day UU congregations that it is taken for granted:

I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say I would go to church no more...He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned. Not one fact in all his experience had he yet imported into his doctrine...there was not a surmise, a hint, in all the discourse, that he had ever lived at all...The true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life — life passed through the fire of thought. But of the bad preacher, it could not be told from his sermon what age of the world he fell in; whether he had a father or a child; whether he was a freeholder or a pauper; whether he was a citizen or a countryman; or any other fact of his biography.<sup>24</sup>

As I have visited, worked at, and worshipped at different UU congregations across the country, one important commonality has been our style of worship. Many Unitarian Universalist ministers preach in a personal style, comfortably sharing what Emerson terms their “life — life passed through the fire of thought.” This isn’t the raw experience of life that Emerson refers to, for when raw experience is passed through the fire of thought (by analyzing it, reflecting on it, meditating on it), we arrive at grains of universal truth that can be inspiring and meaningful to all. *This* style of worship, of sharing of one’s life, is quite common in modern day UU congregations, so much so that we don’t often appreciate how different a mode of worship it is from other denominations.

It is worth taking a moment to reflect on the import of this worship style. In a UU worship service, the minister and/or lay worship volunteers seek to highlight universal truths, typically by drawing connections with a reading or two, several hymns or musical selections, and a sermon that would probably include personal reflections on the topic at hand. This *gestalt* presumes that the worshiper is capable of being in dialogue vicariously with the worship leader over the nature of truth, meaning, and ultimate reality. It assumes that the worshiper is not “closed” in his/her meaning making, as would be the case at a pure 4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness in which the individual is content in defining meaning in a purely self-referential way. It assumes an open, dialogic process, in which the worship leader’s take on truth is not considered ultimate or authoritative, but one meaningful experience or viewpoint that we can learn from. This is clearly a 5<sup>th</sup> order/stage worship experience, as described earlier. For reasons similar to those encountered in our examination of UU adult religious education, in order for this style of worship to be meaningful, 5<sup>th</sup> order thinking has to have some resonance with the individual; the worshiper needs to be beyond pure 4<sup>th</sup> order meaning making.

## **B. Congregational Polity**

A similar pattern emerges if we were to examine how Unitarian Universalist churches organize themselves and relate to one another, in other words, if we examine the denomination's congregational polity. As the UUA Commission on Appraisal notes in its 1997 report on congregational polity, the notion of covenanting is central to how we relate to one another. The seven UU principles, noted above, are framed in terms of a covenant between UU congregations. When an individual joins a congregation, it is not uncommon to hear parishioners refer to a covenant (frequently unwritten, but in spirit) between individual congregation members in support of one another. The relationship between individual congregations and the umbrella organization, the Unitarian Universalist Association, is also referred to as covenantal. As the Commission on Appraisal frames it:

The Cambridge Platform of 1648 reflected the biblical concept of a covenant...[this] idea [was] central in the theology of the New England Puritans...Their congregations, a significant number of which became Unitarian in the early nineteenth century, expressed their 'bond of unity' — their common faith and purpose — in the form of covenants. These covenants remained in use among these churches long after the ancient Christian creeds had fallen into disuse.<sup>25</sup>

...the Cambridge Platform did not view the local congregation as going it alone, but accented the community of autonomous churches. The platform spoke of six ways in which congregational churches exercise their responsibility to and for one another: care, consultation, admonition, participation, recommendation, and relief. Today these six ways remain valid as guides for creating a community of autonomous congregations.<sup>26</sup>

Unitarian Universalist congregational polity can, thus, be summarized on two levels. We have individual, autonomous (minimum 4<sup>th</sup> order) adult congregation members who participate in dialogic institutional processes in supporting one another's quests for truth and meaning. That same pattern is modeled at the national level. Individual, autonomous congregations retain ultimate sovereignty over themselves, but freely enter into covenanted dialogue with other congregations and the national body (the UUA) in the hopes of mutual support, growth, and learning. The UU model of congregational polity, both at the individual and the congregational level, represents a 5<sup>th</sup> order institutional psyche. In order for these multi-layered, covenanted relationships to be meaningful, a 5<sup>th</sup> order openness to discovery of meaning via dialogue is required.

## **VI. Implications and Conclusions**

This analysis holds some important implications for Unitarian Universalism. It might be the case that UU'ism will always struggle with attaining numerical mass appeal because it is, in essence, "developmentally challenged." The religion minimally requires functioning at the 4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness from its adult adherents, and is likely to be most successful (in terms of organizational structure, style of worship, and adult religious education) with those who are somewhere beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> order. What this means is that Unitarian Universalism is developmentally likely to hold appeal for only a very narrow range of adults. In terms of numbers, I would highlight two different studies that have been done applying Kegan's constructive-

developmental theory here in the U.S. The first study, conducted by W. Torbert in 1987, indicated that 58% of those interviewed, the vast majority, were functioning at less than the 4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness.<sup>27</sup> A second study, conducted by Kegan in 1994 yielded identical numbers: 58% of those interviewed were functioning at less than the 4<sup>th</sup> order of consciousness.<sup>28</sup> Neither study located a single individual functioning purely at the 5<sup>th</sup> order, underscoring how rare a pure 5 is. In terms of those functioning somewhere between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> orders, the Torbert study, which broke down its results by professional category, found that 2.5% of junior and middle managers were functioning between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> order, while 14% of white collar executives were constructing meaning in this range. Kegan's 1994 study found that even amongst highly educated individuals, only 10% were identifiable as being between orders 4 and 5

The implications of this analysis are significant. First, given how few individuals are functioning in the developmental range that this religion would consider "prime time," it may be necessary for Unitarian Universalists to make peace with the fact that our religion may never have numerical mass appeal. Second, as newcomers and visitors try to integrate themselves into our churches we should be aware that perhaps a large percentage of those walking through our doors may be, as Kegan would term it, "in over their heads." The developmental expectations of the religious environment may exceed the developmental functioning of the visitor or newcomer, and there may be no easy way around this. Third, we should be aware that UU'ism may attract and retain some pure 4<sup>th</sup> order thinkers (who, according to Kegan's 1994 study, could be as much as 34% of the general population) because of our 4<sup>th</sup> order belief system. However, such individuals may not be able to function or deal well with our congregational polity, adult education, and/or worship mechanisms. Such individuals might bristle when confronted with difference in perspective, and not quite "get" the dialogic meaning making structures that deeply imbue our practice.

Finally, in terms of order of consciousness and faith stage development theory, I would like to highlight that this intersection may be an area ripe for further exploration. If the type of analysis offered here holds value, it may be possible to also explain why certain religions do have mass appeal. For example, as an individual deeply intimate with Hinduism, it seems to me, prima facie, that Hinduism might have almost one billion adherents because it is able to appeal to and hold onto adults at different developmental orders of consciousness. One layer of the Hindu experience might appeal to 3<sup>rd</sup> order "traditional" meaning makers, while another, different layer might appeal to those at the "self-authoring" 4<sup>th</sup> order, etc. If so, Hinduism would certainly be able to hold and support a far greater numerical number of adults (potentially 80% of the general population or more, using Kegan's 1994 statistics) than Unitarian Universalism. A more systemic examination of Hinduism, and other religious traditions, might shed useful light on the correlation between constructive-developmental theory and the numerical appeal of different religions.

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Miller, "Journey of Faith," *Boston Globe Magazine*, 10 March 2002; available on-line at <http://www.boston.com>, accessed March 24, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper Collins, 1981), ix.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), xi.

<sup>4</sup> Fowler, 39; Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), passim.

<sup>6</sup> Fowler, 198.

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- <sup>7</sup> J. G. Berger, Key Concepts for Understanding the Work of Robert Kegan, unpublished manuscript 1999, Collection of Manish Mishra, 4.
- <sup>8</sup> Fowler, 172-173.
- <sup>9</sup> Berger, 5.
- <sup>10</sup> Fowler, 182.
- <sup>11</sup> Berger, 6.
- <sup>12</sup> Fowler, 186-187.
- <sup>13</sup> Unitarian Universalist Association, "Frequently Asked Questions"; available from <http://www.uua.org/aboutuu/newcomerfaq.html#4>; Internet; accessed March 25, 2005.
- <sup>14</sup> J. Buehrens and F. Church, *A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalist* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), xxiv-xxv.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, xxv.
- <sup>16</sup> J. Sias, *100 Questions that Non-Members Ask About Unitarian Universalists* (Nashua: Transition Publishing, 1994), 2.
- <sup>17</sup> J. Evans-Tiller, *Around the Church Around the Year: Unitarian Universalism for Children Kindergarten to Grade 2* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1990), 5.
- <sup>18</sup> C. McDonald, *We Are Many We Are One* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1996), 1-2.
- <sup>19</sup> Evans-Tiller, 5.
- <sup>20</sup> C. F. Reed and P. Hoertdoerfer, *Neighboring Faiths: Exploring World Religions with Junior High Youth* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist, 1997), passim.
- <sup>21</sup> P. M. Wilson, *Our Whole Lives: Sexuality Education for Grades 7-9* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1999), passim.
- <sup>22</sup> R. Gilbert, *Building Your Own Theology* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1983) 5.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 5.
- <sup>24</sup> R. W. Emerson, *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. S. E. Whicher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), 109.
- <sup>25</sup> Commission on Appraisal of the Unitarian Universalist Association, *Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1997), 42.
- <sup>26</sup> Commission on Appraisal of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 3.
- <sup>27</sup> W. Torbert, *Managing the Corporate Dream* (Homewood: Dow-Jones Irwin, 1987), 43.
- <sup>28</sup> R. Kegan, *In Over Our Heads*, 195.