

# **The Quality of Religious Life in Unitarian Universalist Congregations**

*A Survey by the  
Commission on Appraisal*

*Unitarian Universalist Association  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, Massachusetts*

**1989**

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1-55896-149-6

## INTRODUCTION

*Fifty five years ago, in the depths of the Depression, the Unitarian part of our movement was in such doldrums that its continued existence as a denomination seemed in question. In an attempt to find out how it could be revitalized, a group of concerned ministers and lay people asked the 1934 Annual Meeting of the American Unitarian Association to form a Commission of Appraisal, which it did.*

*The Commission, headed by Frederick May Eliot, examined every aspect of the Unitarian movement from its churches and Boston headquarters to the values and needs of its individual members. As a result of the recommendations contained in the study, called *Unitarians Face a New Age*, the denomination's administration and programs were restructured and there was a sense of revitalization throughout the movement.*

*Recognizing the value of what the Commission had done, it was given permanent status and in 1961, when the Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association merged to form the Unitarian Universalist Association, a Commission on Appraisal (the "of" became "on") was written into the by-laws of the Association as a body of the General Assembly with ongoing responsibility for studying and suggesting approaches to issues of concern to the Association.*

*Today the Unitarian Universalist movement is stronger than either of its parts were at the time of the Commission's original report. Though our post-World War II growth was reversed for a time, as was the case for other mainline denominations, we have begun to regain our momentum after dealing with such crucial issues as a crisis in financing, the tensions created by the war in Vietnam and the black empowerment movement (chronicled in the report of the Commission's Empowerment study), the aging of our population and a decline in the number of school age children in many of our communities.*

*Given our success in dealing with such issues, Unitarian Universalists seem optimistic about the future of our movement. Yet at numerous hearings held across the United States and Canada, the Commission has heard complaints from Unitarian Universalists about such things as the quality of our ministry, the effectiveness of denominational services and what is being done to help encourage and train lay leadership.*

*Because of this, the Commission felt it was time to take a fresh look at how UUs feel about the quality of religious life within their local societies. No such systematic study had been undertaken since the Committee on Goals Report in 1967 and the 1979 Media Feasibility Study.*

*Initially, the Commission thought it might be able to gather the information it needed through personal interviews with people in different areas of the United States and Canada. To see how well this would work, a pilot workshop was held in Chicago. But, not only did the Commission discover that this was too costly a way to gather information, it found the information received difficult to quantify. The Commission decided that a better way to gather information would be to conduct a survey of a scientifically selected sample of Unitarian Universalists across the United States and Canada. The UUA Board was gracious enough to allow the Commission to use randomly chosen names from the UU World mailing list for its sample, and a survey instrument called "A Survey of the Quality of Religious Life in Unitarian Universalist Congregations" was mailed at the end of January 1987.*

### *A Word About the Definition of "Quality"*

*In conceiving this study the Commission thought it might be able to find the answer to two questions:*

- 1. What do individual UUs feel is the quality religious program or service which their local*

*societies can be expected to deliver, given their present size and resources?*

2. *How can the denomination marshal its resources and assist its societies so that they deliver the quality program expected by UUs?*

*During the course of the study it became clear that a thorough answer to the second question was beyond the scope of the answers that could be provided by the Commission. It is our hope that the data presented in this report will be used by a wide variety of groups throughout the denomination as they plan their own activities.*

*As for the first question, the Commission chose to use a particular definition of the word “quality.” To quote the original proposal for the project:*

*Quality can and does mean a quality, e.g., a spiritual worship service. It can and does connote qualities one expects of a religious group, such as acceptance and concern for moral values. However, the meaning the Commission would stress is an operational one, one which can elicit useful, concrete and practical evaluation and discussion. A “quality” religious program is one that does what it aims to do in a first-rate way. This applies to a sermon, a building, an anthem, a social action project, a church school class. UUs don’t need to belabor the word “quality.” They want it in whatever they do and are dissatisfied whenever it is lacking. Indeed the gap between expectations and performance is probably a major ingredient in present restlessness.*

#### *The Survey’s Limitations and Conclusions*

*A survey such as this has limitations. Only a portion of it could be open-ended and we chose not to ask questions about emotions, such as, “How deeply are you moved by your minister’s sermons?” But whatever the limitations of the survey, the Commission has discovered a great deal about the expectations of Unitarian Universalists and how well these expectations are being met by the local societies. On the whole, it’s a good story, though there are areas of congregational life in which we could be doing better.*

*Laile Bartlett, who has often written about our movement, has said that Unitarian Universalist societies are, above all, communities of support for people engaged in their varied searches for truth. The Commission has attempted to focus on what it is that makes for a quality religious experience in such communities. The results of this survey indicate that the quality of this experience is dependent on things traditionally associated with church life, such as fellowship, worship, pastoral care and religious education. This is because fellowship leads to a sense of belonging. Worship not only adds to this sense, it helps people place their lives in a context of transcendence. Pastoral concern provides people with the support and reflection they need in times of crisis or confusion, and religious education reinforces the life people want for their children and the hope they have for not only their future, but for the future of the world and the rest of the human family.*

*One of the things shown by the results of this survey is that many of the problems experienced by Unitarian Universalist societies are related to their not doing as well as they should in these areas. The problems have to do with things like weakness of ministers in dealing with people, reluctance to do what would be necessary to attract and hold the diversity of individuals our respondents say they would like their societies to include, and unwillingness by many Unitarian Universalists to make the commitments necessary to achieve genuine community.*

*As one of our commissioners has put it, the practical and perhaps theological dilemma for us is to find a way to live in community, bound together because we need one another, and yet to do this without*

*submerging or betraying our individuality. The danger we face is that in overly affirming the individual, we become so atomistic that our societies do not provide the support we need and want.*

*In Unitarians Face a New Age, the long-ago original study of the Commission on Appraisal, the authors said that our movement has always been critical of itself “and at every period in its history it has included among its members at least a few outspoken critics--both lay and clerical--who have not hesitated to point out the wide discrepancies between the actual practice of the denomination and its professed ideals.” Having said this, however, the authors went on: “It would be impossible for anyone to set up a series of ideals and aims for the denomination today that would be more lofty or more inspiring than those which Unitarian and Universalist pioneers and prophets have from time to time set forth.” It is in that spirit that the Commission offers not only the results of the survey, but comments on what the results may mean.*

*In what follows, the Commission has tried to keep its analysis within reasonable bounds. The data usually speaks for itself. Members of the Commission have prepared more detailed reports on the various themes contained in the survey. These are available on request.*

*The Commission also urges those who want to pursue the question of how UUs fit into a more general pattern of what is happening in North American religion, to read the results of two other important new studies. These are: FRAGMENTED GODS: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada by Reginald W. Bibby (Irwin Publishers, Toronto, 1987), and American Mainline Religion, Its Changing Shape and Future by Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1987).*

#### **METHODOLOGY**

*In an attempt to get responses from as accurate a sampling of the Unitarian Universalists of North America as possible, our questionnaire, “A Survey of the Quality of Religious Life in Unitarian Universalist Congregations,” was mailed to 2,020 addresses (every fiftieth name on the UU World mailing list) at the end of January 1987. In those cases where the World was being sent to more than one person, a method using birth dates was used to randomly generate which person would fill out the questionnaire.*

*To ensure the highest possible response, a second copy of the survey was sent in March to those who had not yet responded. In all 1,286 useable responses were received, a respectable 64.3% of the total. Our consultant, Charles Elder, Chair of the Political Science Department at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, tells us that, assuming random non-response, statistics based on the total sample will have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 2.7%, well within the range that ensures that the answers we have are an accurate reflection of how a total sample of Unitarian Universalists receiving the UU World would answer.*

*By late spring of 1987 our data had been collected, and the initial results of the survey were ready for analysis in November. Commissioners explored the various themes contained in the survey, requested cross-tabulations to show how those answering certain questions in a particular way answered other questions, and prepared papers on their themes. These papers were then condensed and consolidated into the analysis contained in this report.*

*We thank Dr. Elder, as well as former Commission Chair, Dr. Dalmas Taylor, now Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Wayne State, for their invaluable help in processing the answers to the survey and providing us with data. We also thank Dr. Jane Boyajian, former Commissioner, for her work in designing the survey.*

Members of the Commission on Appraisal

*Helen Backhouse  
Calgary, Alberta  
Josiah Bartlett  
Austin, Texas  
Ruth Miles Bruns  
Rockville, Maryland  
Jerry Davidoff  
Westport, Connecticut*

*James A. Hobart  
Denver, Colorado  
Mark Morrison-Reed  
Toronto, Ontario  
O'Ferrell V. Nelson  
Memphis, Tennessee  
Bonnie Stauffacher  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

*Chair: David Sammons  
Walnut Creek, California*

## SUMMARY

### Lay Involvement in Local Societies

*Our respondents report that UU societies are relatively easy to find and that information about those societies is obtainable. Once they enter the doors, a majority feel “very welcome” but a sizable number do not. Opportunities for leadership are readily available and are accepted by a large number of our members, but the result is too frequently a sense of over-burden and burn-out. Lay-led societies are reporting a need for professional assistance; what is currently offered is inadequate or ineffectual.*

### How Skilled Are UU Ministers?

*The responses can scarcely be construed as a ringing vote of confidence for present ministers. Of the four top-rated skills, ministers were rated “strong” only in preaching, and that rating has declined significantly in recent years. The people-oriented skills, like counseling, repeatedly emerge as paramount needs which are consistently less than adequately met. These scores translate to the expectation that, if a congregation chooses its next minister from among the present crop, slightly less than half of possible candidates can be expected to be strong in three of the four top-rated skills.*

### Effects of Age, Sex and Race Bias in Choosing a Minister

*If you are a minister you will be most acceptable if you are a white male over 30 and least acceptable if you are young, black and homosexual. A dramatic change has occurred over the past 20 years in regards to women ministers: There appears to be little resistance to them in our societies today.*

### What Do UUs Value in a Worship Service?

*While “intellectual stimulation” remains important, even paramount, in our services of worship, the communal dimension of worship has grown in significance. Furthermore, there is a trend toward being more “overtly religious,” that is, valuing aspects traditionally associated with religious worship. This is strongest among young adults, women and other marginalized people.*

### Factors of Importance to “Vital and Growing” Congregations

*Though there are exceptions among the small numbers of anti-clerical and anti-theistic people among us, most Unitarian Universalists appear to want their societies to be specifically religious communities, focusing on good worship, fellowship, pastoral care and religious education for children. In addition, UUs would like their societies to be more diverse, though there is little evidence that much is being done about this, such as seeking out and orienting a wide variety of new members.*

*It is clear from the responses to this question that it is important for our congregations to continue clarifying their mission and sense of congregational purpose, to adopt active strategies for outreach, to develop and make good use of professional and lay leadership, and to do what is necessary to maintain excellence and depth in the central areas of congregational life as well as in the other factors listed in this question.*

### The African American Unitarian Universalist

*We have made no great inroads into the African American community over the past 20 years. Those African American individuals who have found Unitarian Universalism attractive resemble the typical UU in regard to socio-economic status. However, when we consider the worship needs, the theological perspective and expectations of the ministry expressed by many African American UUs, we notice a significant variance from the norm. This reality speaks to the necessity of changing our style of worship if we are to have a broader cultural appeal.*

### Future Perspectives

*Levels of involvement in church activities range from very high to very low. The local church or fellowship newsletter and the UU World are clearly our most utilized means of communication. Financial pledging is increasing for a majority, but one-quarter do not pledge. There is a strong concern for membership growth, both for the local society and for the Association. In the future, an overwhelming majority plan to remain with their current congregation. Future needs and interests in the church are expressed in broad generalities rather than specific issues and programs.*

### Theological Perspectives

*UUs continue their religious patterns with very little change from 1977 to 1987. For all the questions asked, the proportion of extreme responses is much the same. The middle group, especially with respect to ideas about "God", is in some ferment. In terms of age, sex, and length of membership in a UU society, it is striking that there are no significant differences among responses.*

### Frequency Responses and Demographic Data

*The report closes with the questions contained in the survey, frequency responses expressed in percentages, and demographic data in graphic form.*

## **LAY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL SOCIETIES**

Questions about lay involvement in local societies ranged from preliminary issues of getting information about the church, finding it, and initial reactions (level of feeling welcomed), to weighting of reasons for attending and data on attendance. One group of questions assessed lay leadership levels, training, and related concerns.

Several of the questions test some negative assumptions about UU congregations which the Commission on Appraisal has often heard and which have been examined informally in the earlier Commission studies "Successful Societies" and "Lay Leadership":

1. Our societies do not make their presence known in their communities; you have to dig to find out about them.
2. Once you know the society exists, you can't find it because we locate ourselves (particularly smaller societies) in obscure, poorly marked areas.
3. Visitors feel unwelcome; too many of our societies look like closed communities to newcomers.
4. Lay leadership training is inadequate.
5. Some societies are run by in-groups; newly trained leaders are rejected or ignored by the "old guard".
6. Lay-led societies need professional assistance; they lack "savvy."

For most of the questions, cross tabulations were examined for size of society and for comparison between lay-led and professionally-led societies.

### Data Analysis

Attendance (Question 12): When asked whether their church attendance had increased, decreased, or stayed the same the previous year, 33% of respondents said that attendance had decreased while 17% had increased their attendance. Of those whose attendance had decreased who listed a reason for the change, 74% named personal life issues, that is to say, reasons for which the church was not responsible. After personal life and needs, the most often named reason for decreased attendance was the minister, at 13%. Very nearly this same pattern was followed by those who reported that their attendance had increased over the past year.

Personal ranking of aspects of attending church service (Question 13): Responses rating the eleven aspects of church attendance listed as "very important" are ranked as follows with the most frequently listed first:

	<u>Lay-led Societies</u>	<u>Societies With Minister</u>
Intellectual stimulation	73%	75%
Fellowship	73%	65%
Sharing of common values	63%	61%
Personal reflection	43%	55%

<i>Group experience</i>	51%	44%
<i>Music</i>	30%	41%
<i>Hope</i>	31%	37%
<i>Vision</i>	27%	36%
<i>Motivation to serve others</i>	25%	31%
<i>Aesthetic satisfaction</i>	22%	29%
<i>Comfort</i>	9%	20%

*People in lay-led societies rank fellowship and group & experience higher than do those in minister-led societies, thus underlining the interactive nature of their experience. By contrast, personal reflection and music are listed considerably higher by people in minister-led groups; these aspects suggest a more introspective experience.*

*Does this data provide a profile of a likely candidate for a particular type of UU society? Probably not. These aspects were ranked by respondents based on their experience. A lay-led group will quite likely provide more opportunities for a feeling of fellowship, therefore fellowship is ranked more highly by members of lay-led societies. Larger churches with ministers are more likely to offer a wider range of musical and aesthetic satisfaction than lay-led societies, and these aspects are ranked appropriately higher in such churches.*

*Information about the church (Question 15): 92% of those responding to the question reported no difficulty in initially finding out about the church. Among members of lay-led groups, 89% reported no such difficulty.*

*Finding the building (Question 15): 95% of those responding had no difficulty first finding the building. 90% of those in lay-led groups reported no initial difficulty. Of course, we cannot know how many people were never successful in locating the place!*

*First felt how welcome (Question 16): 10% of our respondents felt either ignored or unwelcome when they first visited their UU society. More people felt very welcome by lay-led societies (54%) than by societies with ministers (37%). Again, we are only counting the people who stuck around. We hear stories of people who, after one bad experience, “never set foot in the place again”, but we are unable to count them.*

*How are leaders trained (Question 18): It is important to note that one-third of our respondents said they did not know how leaders are trained. Thirty percent of the people in minister-led congregations and 40% of those in lay-led societies who responded to this question felt that leadership training efforts are not effective.*

*What happens to people with leadership skill (Question 19): People who develop leadership skills are invited to use them, say 83% of our respondents. However, 40% said those people are overburdened and 15% said they are burned out. These figures go even higher in lay-led societies where 51% felt that people are overburdened and 25% felt that they are burned out. One is hardly likely to offer oneself for leadership training and service when it is perceived to be so unrewarding to the individual.*

*How are decisions made (Question 20): Responses to this question suggest that our democratic processes are working properly. Of those who feel that their participation in decision-making is inadequate, most cite reasons initiated by the individual, such as “no time” and “no desire”. Of our 1,286 respondents, only 26 individuals reported that their efforts to participate in decisions were not wanted or blocked.*

*Talents used (Question 22): 65% of our respondents felt that their talents were being used. Of those who responded negatively, their reasons were largely their own. The smaller the society, the more people feel their talents are being used.*

*Improving the local society (Question 23): This question asked about strategies to improve the quality of life in the respondents’ congregations, attention on goal-setting, and professional and lay leadership.*

	<u>Lay-led Societies</u>	<u>Societies with Minister</u>
Lay Leader Training	47%	26%
Periodic Congregational Goal-Setting	41%	36%
UU Professional Consultant	29%	13%
Other Professional Assistance	22%	10%
Call Parish Minister	40%	3%
Call Minister of Religious Education	14%	7%
Change Ministerial Leadership	2%	10%
Change Professional Leadership	1%	2%

*The notion emerges that understanding ourselves better as congregations, and training lay leaders, are more important than getting or changing professional leadership. This speaks well of UUA programs in the past, such as Sharing in Growth, and of current programs such as Minister-on-Loan and the various leadership schools sponsored by our Districts. It suggests that further emphasis should be given to developing programs for congregational evaluation, perhaps led by teams of lay people trained to do this, as was done in Sharing in Growth.*

*Clearly, lay-led societies need more services than they are currently getting. The call for assistance, particularly in lay leader training, is stated in several ways in this small group of responses. When almost 50% of the respondents in lay-led groups feel the need for lay leader training, the challenge to District and continental program planners is clear.*

*Have held office (Question 26): A high percentage of our respondents, 43%, have held office in a UU society. While we can take pride in this level of involvement, we need to reduce the sense of burnout that too many ultimately experience.*

*UU activities outside local society (Question 27): Over 50% of our respondents have been involved in UU activities outside their local society. This figure reaches 65% for members of lay-led groups.*

### Conclusions

*Several of our assumptions were not borne out by the study results, at least not to the degree we might have expected. People reported no particular difficulty in learning about our churches or in locating them. Most felt quite welcome once they stepped through the doors. The opportunities to exercise talents and participate in decision-making seem to exist without restraint or barrier for the vast majority. Our assumption that lay-led societies are suffering from inadequate services certainly is borne out by the study results. Members of lay-led groups are skeptical of the effectiveness of current efforts, feel that those efforts are inadequate, feel overburdened, and are reaching out for professional help.*

## HOW SKILLED ARE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS?

Question 14 asked respondents to rate their present minister's skills. We wanted to discover 1) what are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of UU ministers today, 2) whether and to what extent this perception has changed since a similar question was asked in 1967 (Committee on Goals Report), and 3) whether and to what extent the perceived strengths and weaknesses have an impact on other areas of church life.

Here are the 1987 respondents' ratings of their present minister:

	Very Strong	Average	Weak	Very Weak	Can't Judge	No Response	Re
Preaching	27%	27%	14%	4%	2%	5%	21%
Dealings with people	20%	27%	16%	5%	4%	6%	21%
Spiritual leadership	18%	24%	19%	4%	3%	10%	22%
Religious Education	15%	25%	16%	4%	2%	16%	23%
Community leadership	17%	20%	16%	5%	3%	16%	23%
Administration	10%	23%	16%	4%	2%	21%	23%
Counseling	11%	16%	13%	4%	2%	32%	22%
Prophetic witness	4%	9%	12%	3%	3%	40%	29%

Respondents clearly had the most definite opinions about the first two items, preaching and dealings with people, as indicated by the relatively low "can't judge" scores for both. It is not surprising that preaching is ranked first, given the concern in UU societies for intellectual stimulation (Question 13), our tradition of an educated clergy, and the importance of worship (Question 24). Respondents rated dealings with people second among their present minister's skills.

But before commenting on the respondents' perceptions of their present minister's skills, it may be useful to present their ratings of how important they feel the several skills are. Below are the results of Question 28, which asked how important the same skills would be if a new parish minister were being selected. We hoped that these responses would be free from possible reluctance to rate one's present minister. The description of skills was identical in both questions and there were, in both, six choices offered. However, the choices were labeled differently: for Question 14, from "Very strong" to "Very weak", and for Question 28 from "High" to "Low." Both had a "can't judge" category.

Apparently, our hope that Question 28 would be more free from reluctance to rate one's present minister was well-founded. On Question 14, only about half to two-thirds of all respondents provided a ranking for most ministerial skills. The highest proportion, 75%, provided a ranking for preaching. Preaching is by far the most visible ministerial skill, and one about which it would be difficult not to have an opinion. However, on Question 28, with the exception of prophetic witness (see comment on this, below), well over 90% of all respondents provided a ranking for each skill.

Here is how respondents rated the relative importance of skills in a possible new parish minister:

	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Can't Judge</u>	<u>No Response</u>
<i>Dealings with people</i>	69%	25%	3%	0%	0%
<i>Preaching</i>	60%	27%	7%	1%	1%
<i>Counseling</i>	42%	33%	16%	3%	1%
<i>Spiritual Leadership</i>	44%	25%	16%	6%	3%
<i>Religious Education</i>	27%	32%	26%	6%	2%
<i>Community Leader</i>	26%	33%	26%	8%	3%
<i>Administration</i>	13%	31%	36%	10%	4%
<i>Prophetic Witness</i>	5%	8%	12%	10%	28%

*There are marked differences between the way respondents answered Question 14 (“How skilled is your present minister?”) and Question 28 (“How important are the following skills if your church were selecting a parish minister?”). There were many fewer non-responses to Question 28, and many fewer “can’t judge” responses.*

*There are marked differences, as well, between the rankings respondents gave to the question about the present minister’s skills, and the rankings given to those skills for selecting a minister. Dealings with people, for the new minister, moves up ahead of preaching in importance. While 10% of respondents say they “can’t judge” their present minister’s spiritual leadership, and 32% say that about their present minister’s counseling skill, almost all say these are highly important in judging a new minister. The emphasis on these top-rated skills becomes even heavier when we cross-tabulate answers by sex: Women rated spiritual leadership 20% higher than men in judging a potential minister, dealings with people 18% higher, religious education 12% higher, and counseling 11% higher than did men. Otherwise, differences between sexes in rating skills were less than 5%.*

*Note that the top-ranked skills in choosing a minister are largely people-relating skills.*

#### Skills People Want. Compared With Skills They Are Getting in a Minister

*In no case do more than 9% of respondents rate their present minister as “weak” or “very weak” in any skill. If we add “average”, in no case does the percentage exceed 27%. Beyond the top-rated three skills of preaching, dealings with people, and spiritual leadership, “can’t judge” is the response of at least 10% of respondents.*

*The other top-rated skill, counseling, draws a 32% “can’t judge” score. A plausible explanation is that many respondents have had no experience with this in their relationships with their minister. This would square with other studies which report that, generally, people turn first to family and friends and professionals, before their minister, when seeking counsel.*

*3) Factors that we cannot judge enter into a respondent’s rating of a present, as against a possible future minister. For example, if the present minister is a “strong” preacher one might check “strong” as an expectation of any future one. Or “strong” in a future minister might reflect a perceived lack of strength in the present one.*

However, though fewer than 10% would rate their present minister as “weak” in any skill, and 3/4 of ministers are perceived as above average in every skill, only in preaching (54%) are present ministers seen as “strong.” And in this category, there is a decline from 1967.

In every other skill, fewer than 50% of present ministers are seen as “strong.” In dealings with people, rated as tops in importance, they get a 47% vote. But in 1967, 62% were so rated, a marked decline over twenty years.

In counseling, we must allow for a 32% “can’t judge” response. However, only 27% were rated as “strong” and “very strong” in 1987, whereas in 1967 56% were so perceived, a more than 50% drop in rating.

*Spiritual leadership:* This is of major importance to 69% of our respondents, and 42% of ministers are rated “very strong” or “strong” in this category. We have no comparative ratings from 1967.

*Religious education:* This, along with the other categories noted below, is clearly of secondary importance in ministerial skills. Here again there is a marked decline from 1967 to 1987: 65% being “strong” and “very strong” at that time, and only 40% today. Is this a commentary on the fact that, in the past two decades, religious education has received very little emphasis in theological schools, even compared with its already low priority in the 1960s?

Administration and community leadership continue to receive relatively low marks both in importance and in perceived skills. But here again, “can’t judge” percentages are so high as to render any comments of dubious validity. However, administrative skill is a paradox: despite its longtime low rating by both ministers and congregations, administration is a troublesome preoccupation. In 1956, researcher Samuel Blizzard in a famous study (“The Minister’s Dilemma,” *Christian Century*, April 25, 1956) found that administration typically takes 40% of a minister’s time, is the area ministers feel most uneasy about, and is the skill wherein they have the least training. The experience of UU interim ministers, thirty years later, reinforces Blizzard’s research. These ministers, whose specialty is to help congregations get squared away for an incoming new minister, typically devote a major portion of their work to straightening out the effects of poor administration on the part of both churches and ministers. Perhaps a balanced view comes from a pilot study, dating back to Blizzard’s research, of “Eight Successful Ministers” in the American Unitarian Association. It revealed that while each of the eight had a distinctive style, and no “x” factor of specific skill could be found, all eight were in their several ways “on top of the job.”

#### How Do a Minister’s Skills Affect Attendance?

When we consider how Question 14 correlates with attendance we see another important pattern. Of the 33% who said their attendance had decreased, there is a very significant differential in how they evaluate the skills of their current minister. This appears despite the fact that most listed personal reasons and needs for their decreased attendance.

Only 13% said the minister was the reason for decreased attendance, and yet those who decreased their attendance were more than twice as likely to rate a minister as very weak in an area. Here are the ratings of present minister’s skills by respondents who had decreased attendance in the previous year:

	Very <u>Weak</u>	Very <u>Strong</u>
Counseling	69%	26%
Spiritual leadership	64%	23%

<i>Dealings w/ people</i>	58%	25%
<i>Preaching</i>	57%	26%
<i>R.E.</i>	58%	29%
<i>Prophetic Witness</i>	46%	29%
<i>Community leadership</i>	41%	33%

*Note that the skills that show the greatest differential are the people-oriented ones: counseling, spiritual leadership and dealings with people. It may be that one's personal connection to a minister is more significant than many people wish to realize.*

*The minister's role seems to be under-realized on the positive side, as well. Those who increased their attendance, (except in prophetic witness [50%], community leadership [40%] and administration) rated the minister as "very strong" or "strong" over 70% of the time. This, despite the fact that they said the minister was the reason only 17% of the time.*

**EFFECTS OF AGE, SEX AND RACE BIAS ON CHOOSING A MINISTER**

Question 17 reads: “I believe that the following might affect the acceptability of a minister in my local UU society -help, make no difference, hinder.” This question was asked in order to check on anecdotal reports of bias toward ministers. We also wanted to see what changes had occurred since a question was asked about the acceptability of African American and female ministers in the 1967 Committee on Goals Report. We assumed there would be less of a perceived problem now than there was 20 years ago.

Here are the responses:

	<u>Help</u>	<u>Make No Difference</u>	<u>Hinder</u>
Being white	25%	75%	0%
Being a man	23%	77%	1%
Being a woman	9%	78%	13%
Being over age 55	6%	80%	14%
Being of color (except black)	2%	78%	20%
Other	44%	32%	25%
Being black	3%	71%	26%
Being under age 30	4%	57%	40%
Being lesbian, gay or bisexual	2%	33%	66%

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Ministers

It appears that the greatest hindrance to being acceptable as a UU minister is being gay, lesbian or bisexual; 66% of respondents thought this would be a hindrance. This is no surprise except perhaps how wide spread the perception is.

What we see when this response is correlated with various subgroups of respondents is the following: The shorter one’s affiliation with a UU society the less likely that homosexuality will be viewed as a hindrance (56%), but the longer one’s affiliation the more so (72%). People in rural areas tend to see it as a slightly greater hindrance (70%).

On the other hand, 41% of people aged 17-30 said it made no difference as opposed to 35% for all others. Of this age group, 55% saw homosexuality as a hindrance. Interestingly, those raised as Fundamentalist Protestants were least likely to say it was a hindrance, and most likely to say it made no difference. This was true of people with this heritage across every other group that we measured for. The religious heritage of those most likely to believe homosexuality would make a difference was Unitarian Universalist.

The 1967 Committee on Goals Report did not ask about the acceptability of a homosexual minister, but it did ask about homosexuality. In that study 80% agreed that homosexuality “should be discouraged by education, not by law.” In the recently published book *American Mainline Religion*, 90% of the UU’s surveyed found a homosexual lifestyle acceptable. This was far greater than any other religious group. How do we explain this radical change in attitude? And how do we view this in light of the 66% of UUs who think it would hinder someone’s ministry? Could it reflect the difference between our ideals and our actions?

### Age Bias

More surprising is the bias against youth. The anecdotal opinion is that it is hard to move if you're over 55. However, what we find is that being under 30 seems to be the larger obstacle. People with higher incomes, those raised Jewish, and those with higher education all said being under 30 would be a hindrance more often than did other groups. When viewing youth as a hindrance was measured against society size, there was a direct correlation. 22% of respondents in societies with less than 100 members found youth a hindrance, while 49% of those in societies over 500 judged it a hindrance.

### African American Ministers

The 1967 Committee on Goals Report asked this question: "If you were a member of the pulpit committee seeking a minister for your church, which of these statements would best describe how you would feel about a Negro candidate?"

	<u>Improve</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>	<u>Make Little</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>Hamper</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>
1967	11%	63%	27%
1987	3%	71%	26%

We should note that the percent that found being black a hindrance was literally unchanged since the Committee on Goals Report. What has changed is the number who thought that being black would be helpful—a decline from 11% to 3%. The 1967 Committee on Goals Report was done during the Civil Rights era, when people may have been more optimistic. Today's appraisal is perhaps more realistic. Among African Americans themselves and other people of color, 36% guessed being black would be a hindrance and none saw it as helpful. Those raised UU were also more skeptical than people raised outside the faith.

### Women Ministers

There is a striking difference in how acceptable women have become:

	<u>Improve</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>	<u>Make Little</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>Hamper</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>
1967	5%	48%	47%
1987	9%	78%	13%

This represents a significant change in attitude. Certainly our congregations' experience with women ministers, the changing role of women in society and the heightened awareness of feminism has had an effect. This is certainly a reflection of the fact that women have entered the ministry in increasing numbers. In 1967 there were 8 women, making up 1% of the ministry. By 1987 that had increased to 199 and 19%. Furthermore, in 1986-1987, 40% of the ministers settled were women, and currently 64% of our ministerial students are women. And there is no discrepancy in the salary packages between women and men.

In the January 6, 1988, edition of *The Christian Century* there is an article entitled "Clergywomen and the Senior Pastorate." It cites a study which indicates there is strong resistance to women heading larger churches. When Question 17 is correlated with society size, in churches of over 500 members one sees a 3.7% increase in those who think it would be a hindrance. Currently in our largest churches there are three women as senior ministers; two of these are co-ministries.

## **WHAT DO UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS VALUE IN A WORSHIP SERVICE?**

*Question 13 was a modification of one in the 1967 Committee on Goals Report and in the 1979 Media Feasibility Study. We wanted to identify what shifts had occurred over the past 20 years. Our experience told us that intellectual stimulation would be highly ranked, however, we wanted to know how other human needs, and aspects of worship which we perceive as more at the core of the religious experience, are valued.*

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>
<i>Intellectual Stimulation</i>	74%	24%	3%
<i>Fellowship</i>	65%	32%	3%
<i>Celebrating Common Values</i>	60%	35%	5%
<i>Personal Reflection</i>	53%	39%	9%
<i>Group Experience of Participation and Worship</i>	44%	43%	12%
<i>Music</i>	40%	45%	15%
<i>Motivation to Serve Others</i>	30%	53%	17%
<i>Aesthetic Satisfaction</i>	27%	52%	21%
<i>Hope</i>	37%	41%	22%
<i>Vision</i>	35%	43%	22%
<i>Comfort</i>	19%	46%	35%

*Intellectual stimulation is ranked as very important across most, but not all, sub-groups. Other aspects of the worship experience show greater variation, and consistently there are significant differentials between various groups rating these other aspects of worship. Those who have been members 5 years or less rated most other aspects higher than did long-term members; those 17-30 years old rated other aspects higher than older age groups; women rated them higher than men, and lower income groups higher than high income groups.*

*Three aspects of worship were specifically included in the survey to explore additional dimensions of worship experience: hope, vision and comfort. These were ranked uniformly of less importance.*

### How Does Today's Response Compare?

*When the response to Question 13 is compared to the response in the 1967 Committee on Goals*

*Report and the 1979 Media Feasibility Study the results are as follows:*

		<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>
<i>Intellectual Stimulation</i>	1967:	74%	23%	3%
	1979:	75%	22%	3%
	1987:	74%	24%	3%
<i>Fellowship</i>	1967:	45%	47%	8%
	1979:	61%	32%	4%
	1987:	65%	32%	3%
<i>Celebrating Common Values</i>	1967:	30%	49%	21%
	1979:	51%	43%	7%
	1987:	60%	35%	5%
<i>Personal Reflection</i>	1967:	49%	38%	13%
	1979:	57%	38%	5%
	1987:	53%	39%	9%
<i>Group Experience of Participation and Worship</i>	1967:	24%	43%	33%
	1979:	44%	45%	11%
	1987:	44%	43%	12%
<i>Motivation to Serve Others</i>	1967:	33%	47%	21%
	1979:	32%	50%	18%
	1987:	30%	53%	17%
<i>Music</i>	1967: grouped with Aesthetic Satisfaction			
	1979: grouped with Aesthetic Satisfaction			
<i>Aesthetic Satisfaction</i>	1987:	40%	45%	15%
	1967:	31%	48%	21%
	1979:	36%	50%	18%
	1987:	27%	52%	21%
<i>Hope (not asked '67 or '79)</i>	1987:	37%	41%	22%
<i>Vision (not asked '67 or '79)</i>	1987:	35%	43%	22%
<i>Comfort (not asked '67 or '79)</i>	1987:	19%	46%	35%

*The ranking of intellectual stimulation is virtually unchanged in the last twenty years. It and remains important. However, since 1967 the people who see fellowship as very important have increased by 20% and those who see it as not important have decreased by about 5%. Similarly, those who find celebrating common values very important more than doubled. The decrease in those who think it not important, from 21% to 5%, is even more dramatic.*

*Personal reflection, similar to intellectual stimulation in that its focus is more individualistic and contemplative, also showed little change since 1967. While these two dimensions of worship continue to be important, it appears that the aspects of community and worship have become significantly more important in our congregations. Music is considered more important today, as is the group experience of participation and worship. These preferences further support the premise that today the need for the communal dimension of religion is strong.*

### *Why is Comfort Ranked So Low?*

*When comfort is ranked against other aspects of worship it appears at or near the bottom for every group. Still, some interesting patterns of response are discernible.*

*The lower the income, the more often comfort is rated as very important and the less often it is rated as not important. There is a 10% difference between those earning less than \$20,000 and those earning more than \$40,000. The same pattern occurs with education. There is a 15% difference between those with 12 years or less, and those with 17 years or more.*

*The groups that rated comfort highest of all were widows, 31%, and blacks, 36%. Blacks were also the group that most often rated comfort as not important, 50%. Others who felt comfort was not important were members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship and lay-led societies, men, people with 20+ years of education, and those 46-60 years old.*

*How do we explain the low rating of comfort in our survey? There is some ambiguity in asking about comfort. People could take the question to mean physically comfortable during worship, but the pattern of response indicates that it was generally understood as it was intended. It appears that comfort is a more important aspect of the worship experience for the hard-pressed: the widowed and those of lower socioeconomic status as measured by education and income. It is valued least by males, the well educated, the affluent, those in the prime of life and those without a direct ministry in their lives.*

*Perhaps the answer is that we are an upper middle class, privileged, well educated, in charge, independent, confident group of people, or at least like to believe we are. Generally we like who we are and the positions we are in. We don't want any radical change, just some minor adjustments. We don't seek comfort because we are comfortable.*

## **FACTORS OF IMPORTANCE TO "VITAL AND GROWING" CONGREGATIONS**

*Question 24 was meant to test a list of factors often thought of as important to “vital and growing congregations,” no matter what the denomination. Our assumption was that these factors would be of importance to UUs, as well. What follows is the mean (or average) rating of the importance of these factors for the respondents, and the rating of how well realized respondents thought the factors were in their own society. The scale for responses ran from 5 for high to 1 for low.*

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Importance</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Realized</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Good Worship	4.34	1	3.95	4	-.39	10
RE for Children	4.02	2	3.97	3	-.05	18
Embrace Diversity	4.02	3	3.25	20	-.77	2
Fellowship	3.99	4	4.06	2	+.07	23
Adequate Financing	3.96	5	3.32	19	-.64	3
Orient New Members	3.95	6	3.46	13	-.49	6
Adequate Facilities	3.94	7	3.76	7	-.18	17
Understand Different Views	3.92	8	3.19	21	-.53	9
RE for Youth	3.90	9	3.44	14	-.46	8
Spiritual Growth	3.88	10	3.39	16	-.49	6
Social Concern	3.86	11	3.47	12	-.39	10
Pastoral Care	3.83	12	3.78	6	-.05	18
Aware Needs of Impaired	3.81	13	3.53	11	-.28	14
Adequate Volunteer Staff	3.79	14	3.60	10	-.19	16
Adequate Paid Staff	3.77	15	3.53	11	-.24	15
Ease of Access	3.74	16	3.93	5	+.19	16
Sense of Purpose	3.72	17	3.19	21	-.53	5
Long Range Planning	3.68	18	3.37	17	-.31	12
Let Outsiders Know	3.67	19	2.76	26	-.89	1
Adequate Parking	3.65	20	3.66	9	+.01	21
Findable Meeting Place	3.62	21	4.12	1	+.52	26
Appropriate Committees	3.58	22	3.72	8	+.14	24
Seek New Members	3.56	23	3.01	25	-.55	4
Denominational Identity	3.42	24	3.44	14	+.02	22
RE for Adults	3.38	25	3.34	18	-.04	20
Recruit Lay Leaders	3.35	26	3.04	24	-.31	12

*All the factors included were of at least moderate importance to respondents and only one factor, letting outsiders know about us, was rated as less than moderately well-realized in their church or fellowship. This is also the factor in which there is the greatest difference between its importance rating and how well respondents believe it is realized. The other area in which there is a large gap between the importance of a factor and its realization is embracing diversity. UUs would like us to be a more diverse group than our demographics show us to be.*

*Areas in which there is a lower, but still sizable, gap between the importance of factors and*

*how well people believe they are realized include: religious education for youth, adequate financing, seeking new members, having a sense of purpose, orienting new members and providing for spiritual growth. This suggests that UU congregations don't do as well as their members would like, not only in outreach and integrating newcomers, but in internal areas such as youth programming, developing a sense of congregational purpose, tending to the spiritual side of congregational life and gaining adequate financial support from their members.*

*On the other hand, our respondents rate such factors as adequate parking, denominational identity, fellowship, having appropriate committees, ease of access, and especially having a findable meeting place, as being even better realized than they are of importance.*

*That fellowship is also among these factors follows from it being among the ones our respondents believe to be best realized in their congregations. The other highly rated factors are all central to the life of a religious community. They include religious education for children, good worship and pastoral care.*

*Looking at the factors respondents believe are least well realized, our congregations seem to be doing the poorest job of seeking and orienting new members and recruiting people into positions of leadership. This may suggest a laissez-faire attitude toward newcomers which, if true, would certainly hinder congregational growth.*

### ***How the Realization of Factors Relates to Support of Congregations***

*We looked at some areas which might indicate a relationship between how well certain factors are realized and how involved people are in the life of their congregations.*

*Among respondents who increased their pledging and attendance, almost three out of four rate the factors mentioned as central to the life of a religious community--fellowship, good worship, pastoral care, and religious education for children--as being well realized in their congregations.*

*The most frequent attenders at worship, however, rate only a few factors as significantly better realized in their society than the average respondent, and neither good worship nor spiritual growth are rated as significantly better realized. Participation in worship, therefore, may have as much to do with a desire for fellowship, a need to regularly take part in such an activity, or even habit, as it does with the quality of the worship itself.*

*Those who take part most frequently in church programs other than worship, on the other hand, rate a majority of factors as significantly better realized than the average respondent although for them, too, worship is not among the factors for which there is a significant difference.*

*Those who expect to cease being UUs, as one might expect, rate almost all factors significantly less well realized in their societies than the average respondent. The factors for which there are the biggest differences between this group and the average respondent include good worship, pastoral care, spiritual growth, long range planning, sense of purpose, adequate*

*professional staff and religious education for adults. However, this group also rates a majority of factors as being of less importance than the average respondent. This suggests that those who are leaving are not only those who believe their congregations aren't providing what is expected of a religious society, but they are poor institutionalists as well. This raises the question, as does the gap between the importance and realization of a sense of purpose, as to how well we articulate our congregational missions and how well we seek to gain our congregant's commitment to them.*

### **How Being Part of a Particular Group Affects a Person's Response**

*There are several groups of people who rated factors significantly differently from the average respondent.*

*Those with children still living at home, as might be expected, rate religious education for children significantly more important than the average respondent, as do people with the least amount of education. People with the least amount of education also rate understanding different religious views as significantly more important than the average respondent. Given the high level of education among UUs, less educated people may feel somewhat like outsiders, as well as having a stronger need for help in educating their children.*

*Those who are younger or who have always been single rate social concern much higher than the average respondent, perhaps not having yet lost some of their idealism.*

*The youngest and oldest people among our respondents come out on the opposite side of several issues. Those who are younger rate understanding different religious views of much greater importance than do those who are older. Those who are older rate adequate parking much higher than those who are younger. The one area in which these groups together rate a factor of significantly more importance than the average respondent is religious education for children. Those who are older join those who are younger in caring about the well-being of the generation of the future.*

*Widowed people, who are generally among those who are older, are more concerned about pastoral care and physical facilities than are others. They also rate comfort in a worship service as more important than the average respondent.*

*Women rate such areas as pastoral care, social concern, valuing of diversity and awareness of the impaired as significantly more important than men do, and they rate no factor, not even adequate financing, of less importance. Women seem more in touch with both the personal and material needs of our societies than do men.*

*Income levels seem to make little difference in how people respond, except for those with the least income, who rate fellowship of significantly greater importance than the average respondent, and those in the highest income level, who rate fellowship, along with social concern and awareness of the impaired as of significantly less importance.*

*The religion in which people were raised seems to have a bearing on responses only for those who come from Fundamentalist, Jewish and "Other" backgrounds. Interestingly, those raised as Unitarian Universalists, Mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics show little difference in their responses.*

*Jews, perhaps reflecting the home-centeredness of their upbringing, along with an appreciation of the value of rabbi-like professionals, rate such things as professional staff, social concerns, letting outsiders know about us, embracing diversity, understanding different religious views and denominational identity of significantly more importance than the average respondent, and such things as spiritual growth, religious education for children and adequate facilities of less importance.*

*Fundamentalists, perhaps reflecting a higher degree of rebellion, take an opposite view of professional staff and denominational identity, rating them as much less important, though this group is also the most accepting of ministers who are members of minority groups.*

*Other” represents a category that includes both those from non-religious and non-Judeo/Christian backgrounds. People in this group, with, perhaps, more thirst for religion than others, rate spiritual growth as of significantly more importance than do the others.*

*Those who believe the concept of God is harmful or irrelevant rate spiritual growth as significantly less important than the average respondent, though they rate religious education for adults of high importance. Those who believe God to be irrelevant do not rate good worship as significantly less important than the average respondent. Perhaps they just understand spiritual development in a different way than do those who are theistic.*

*The size of the community in which one lives seems to matter only in that those who live in rural areas can more easily find their societies and believe their congregations to be more diverse than the average respondent, which is undoubtedly a reflection of the difference between urban and rural communities.*

*The size of the society to which one belongs seems to have a bearing mostly for the smallest societies. Respondents in societies of under fifty rated almost two-thirds of the factors as significantly less well realized than the average respondent. This group also rated almost half the factors of less importance, raising questions as to whether the lack of growth in small societies is a result not only of their not being able to do many of the things possible in larger societies, but is also a result of members not seeing many of the factors important to a vital and dynamic congregation as being of importance.*

*Those in lay led societies rate two-thirds of the factors as significantly less well realized than the average respondent, though they rate only six as being significantly less important. Perhaps this is because people don't attach importance to what they don't think they can have.*

*Those who believe that calling a parish minister would improve their society also rate two-thirds of the factors as significantly less well realized than the average respondent. The factors with the biggest differences are pastoral care and worship, followed by spiritual growth, religious education for all ages, adequate staffing, social concerns and seeking new members. A similar response, especially in relation to pastoral care and worship, is given by those who believe a change in parish ministers would help their societies. It would be interesting to find out just what it is that makes the difference between those societies that would like to have professional leadership and those that would not.*

### **THE AFRICAN AMERICAN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST**

*The Unitarian Universalist Association has not kept statistics on the racial composition of its congregations. The Commission on Appraisal felt that this was important information, so the survey asked individuals to identify their race. The sample of blacks was small (16 people), but it enabled*

us to make a demographic description of who African American UUs are and to run some cross-tabulations. Our assumption was that African American UUs are similar to other UUs. This is true, but there are also some significant differences.

In 1968 there were about 180,000 Unitarian Universalists and it was estimated that approximately 1500 were black, or less than 1%. In 1987, there were about 140,000 adult UUs and of these 1.3%, or roughly 1800, were black. The same pattern is reflected in the number of black Unitarian Universalist ministers. While their number more than doubled from 7 to 15 between 1968 and 1987, the percentage of African Americans in the UU ministry rose only from a little less than 1% to 1.4%.

The typical African American Unitarian Universalist is a male who lives in a large city in the Northeast and attends a large church. His income and educational level are slightly higher than other UUs, and he is likely to have been reared as a Baptist or Methodist. In socio-economic status the African American UU is very similar to the Euro-American UU, but the former's attitude toward worship is significantly different.

The table below compares the overall average response to Question 13 (importance of aspects of a worship service) with the black response:

	<u>Very Important</u>		<u>Somewhat Important</u>		<u>Not Important</u>	
	<u>Avg Black</u>		<u>Avg Black</u>		<u>Avg Black</u>	
<i>Intellectual Stimulation</i>	74%	47%	24%	40%	3%	13%
<i>Fellowship</i>	65%	56%	32%	37%	3%	6%
<i>Celebrating Common Values</i>	60%	69%	35%	12%	5%	19%
<i>Personal Reflection</i>	53%	43%	39%	43%	9%	14%
<i>Group Experience of Participation/Worship</i>	44%	40%	43%	44%	12%	20%
<i>Music</i>	40%	50%	45%	36%	15%	14%
<i>Motivation to Serve Others</i>	30%	31%	53%	56%	17%	13%
<i>Aesthetic Satisfaction</i>	27%	29%	52%	57%	21%	14%
<i>Hope</i>	37%	60%	41%	26%	22%	13%
<i>Vision</i>	35%	46%	43%	46%	22%	8%
<i>Comfort</i>	19%	36%	46%	14%	35%	50%

It is clear that African Americans rank many aspects of worship differently than whites. Intellectual stimulation, which has prevailed historically as the dominant feature of liberal worship, is less highly valued. Celebrating common values is most important, and hope, vision and music are much more significant aspects of worship for African Americans.

Of the 16 black UUs who responded to Question 32 about God, only one found the term God "irrelevant". The other 15 believe in some form of God. Because of the uniqueness of black

*spirituality, this striking difference bears on UU discussion of how to increase minority participation.*

*In terms of beliefs, African American UUs are more likely than average to identify themselves as Christians or Christian-Humanist: 28% as compared to 20%, and less likely to call themselves Humanist-Existentialist: 36% as compared to 54%. Almost all use the term God and are more inclined to pray.*

*It is worth noting that while characteristics like being male, highly educated and having a high income elsewhere are associated with a less “traditional” religious orientation, this does not hold up for African Americans, who appear to be much more religious traditionalists than the average UU.*

*Question 24 asked respondents to rate factors that contribute to the quality of a UU society’s life. African Americans rated the importance of worship higher than whites, even though their participation is slightly less. The importance of embracing diversity was rated high to moderately high by 87% of blacks, as opposed to a general average of 39%. Social concerns was rated similarly, 75% to 34%. This is true despite the fact that in the context of the worship service (Question 13) motivation to serve others was rated by blacks, as it was by others, as just moderately important.*

*In response to Question 16, African Americans felt ignored or unwelcome by congregations 25% of the time, while the norm was 10%. Elsewhere, 75% of the blacks involved in UU congregations indicated that they participate in decision-making, while others said this only 62% of the time. When asked if their talents were used, 34% of the respondents said no, and 53% of the blacks. Yet 53% of the African Americans had held an office as opposed to 43% in general. One can’t help but be struck by this: African Americans felt less welcomed and more under-utilized, and yet held more offices and more frequently felt that they participated in decision-making.*

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

*In one way or another, Questions 9, 10, 11, 25, 29, 40, and 41 concern and perhaps affect how we prepare for the future in our local churches and in the UUA. Respondents were asked to evaluate their activity in the local church, the ways they keep up with the denomination, level of participation in the local society, financial pledge status, level of concern for the local society and denominational growth, expectations of their future relationship with the local UU society, and their future needs and interests in the church.*

### Participation in Church Activities (Question 9)

*In each of eight categories, respondents could rate their monthly participation from zero to six.*

	<u>Less than once</u>	<u>Once or twice</u>	<u>3 or 4 times</u>	<u>5 or 6 times</u>
<i>Worship</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>less than 1%</i>
<i>Religious Ed. Program</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>less than 1%</i>
<i>Workshops! Discussions</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>less than 1%</i>
<i>Committees</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Board/Officer</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>less than 1%</i>
<i>Socials</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Church Volunteer</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>Home Volunteer</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>2%</i>

*While one-fifth of the respondents describe themselves as virtually uninvolved in worship services, four-fifths attend at least once a month. Nearly one-quarter are involved in children's religious education. Nearly three-fifths of respondents do not participate in workshops or discussion (usually the adult form of religious education). This large lack of participation is a discouraging figure for a religion premised on a growing, developing and interactive faith. Well over two-fifths take part in their church's committee work. Nearly one-fifth serve as elected officers and board members. Virtually one-half volunteer at the church.*

*These reported activities may reflect high levels of involvement in church life. But there are also high levels of non-involvement. Should we accept these as inevitable and realistic? Or do we need to seek ways of creating higher expectations of involvement from members? What impact do high levels of non-involvement have on congregational governance? Can co-equality of members exist where some are uninvolved? To what degree can we legislate involvement and to what degree must we persuade involvement? Are the majority of UUs comfortably fixed in their religious ways? Is that the import of nearly 60% non-involvement in adult education?*

#### Ways of Keeping up with the Denomination (Question 10)

<i>Local church newsletter</i>	<i>95%</i>
<i>UU World</i>	<i>76%</i>
<i>Other church newsletter</i>	<i>21%</i>
<i>Visits</i>	<i>11%</i>
<i>Other (radio, TV, tapes)</i>	<i>fewer than 5% for each</i>

*By choice or necessity, our people are almost exclusively print oriented. Virtually everyone keeps up with the denomination through their local church newsletter. Over three-quarters are informed about the denomination through the UU World. Tiny numbers of respondents mention radio and TV as significant media for information. What does this tell us? Since print media are effective, should they receive primary attention? Are radio and TV ineffective, or under-utilized and under-funded? Is there a generational issue: the involved are older and print oriented, the younger uninvolved and radio/TV oriented?*

#### Personal Levels of Society Participation (Question 11)

*Church participation was rated on a scale of 5 (very active) through 1 (inactive). Respondents were asked to compare the last year to previous years.*

<i>Very Active (5 &amp; 4 ratings combined)</i>	<i>26%</i>
<i>Somewhat Active (3 &amp; 2 ratings combined)</i>	<i>48%</i>
<i>Inactive (1 rating only)</i>	<i>25%</i>

*Equal numbers of people are “very active” and “inactive,” each about one quarter of respondents. Nearly one-half are “somewhat active.” Looking at the future, are these acceptable figures? Do we utilize limited human and financial resources to maintain these levels of participation? Or do we seek to move the “inactive” and “somewhat active” up the scale? Or do we focus on attracting new people?*

#### Financial Pledging (Question 25)

<i>Pledged</i>	81%	<u><i>Change in Pledge</i></u>
<i>Did not pledge</i>	14%	<i>Increased</i> 34%
		<i>Reduced</i> 9%
		<i>Stable</i> 37%
<u><i>Why Increased?</i></u>		<u><i>Why Decreased?</i></u>
<i>Personal life</i>	46%	<i>Personal situation</i> 90%
<i>Commitment</i>	41%	<i>Commitment</i> 3%
<i>Satisfaction</i>	10%	<i>Dissatisfaction</i> 7%
<u><i>Why not pledged?</i></u>		
<i>Personal situation</i>		83%
<i>Commitment change</i>	19%	
<i>Dissatisfaction</i>	7%	

Four-fifths of the respondents pledged financial support to their local UU society. For those who reduced their pledge or did not pledge, the overwhelming explanation was that their “personal situation changed.” Dissatisfaction rated very low as an explanation in both categories. This seems to indicate a high level of satisfaction with one’s church. Is that reflected in the experience of churches and in the experience of the UUA departments relating directly to congregations?

#### Concern for Increasing Membership (Question 29)

Participants were asked to scale their concern for increasing membership in their local society and in the denomination. In each case, the scale ranged from 5 (very much) through 1 (not at all).

	<u>Local Society</u>	<u>Denomination</u>
<i>Very Much Concerned</i> (5 & 4 ratings combined)	50%	57%
<i>Somewhat Concerned</i> (3 rating only)	28%	25%
<i>Unconcerned</i> (1 & 2 ratings combined)	21%	19%

About one-half of respondents expressed “very much” concern about increasing membership in their local society. About three-fifths expressed a similar concern for denominational growth. Is this a mandate for growth? Or is it a case of providing the expected answer? Are people ready to commit the human and financial resources necessary for growth? Will they prioritize growth in their congregation, city, district?

#### UU Expectations -- Foreseeable Future (Question 40)

<i>Remain with current congregation</i>	88%
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<i>Change to other congregation</i>	8%
<i>Ending affiliation</i>	3%

*The reasons for these choices can be categorized as positive, neutral and negative. Positively, 65% of those who responded indicated their society met their needs. Neutrally, relocation (16%) and personal situation (2%) were indicated. Negatively, dissatisfaction with the organization (2%) and discomfort with the society's political orientation (2%) were listed.*

*There is an exceptionally high and perhaps unrealistic expectation (almost 90%) that in the future respondents will remain with their current society. Mobility alone probably makes that impossible. Further, there seems to be a very large turnover of membership even in the most trouble-free congregations. If we held onto our members, our churches would grow through "come outers" from other denominations. However, there seems to be a revolving door effect in which almost as many leave as come in. The survey does not indicate a "revolt in the pews." Quite to the contrary, only 4% of respondents gave negative evaluation of their local societies.*

#### *Future needs and interests (Question 41)*

*In an open ended question, asked to evaluate future change in their needs and interests in their church, 55% expressed "growing closer," 16% "more active," and 14% "withdrawing." Only 3% indicated that needs and interest would be in relation to their children. Less than 1% chose either social/political involvement or adult religious education as future-oriented needs and interests.*

*Issues do not seem important in the respondents' evaluation of their future needs and interests in the church. The largest categories explaining future needs and interests are vague and feeling-laden generalities: "growing closer" and "more active." Any specifics: children, social/political involvement, adult RE, are mentioned by only a very small percent.*

*Noticeable by their absence are any public concerns: peace, race, ageing, family, singles, sexual orientation, the environment, feminism, human and political rights, poverty, hunger, homelessness, the nuclear arms race, nuclear and chemical pollution. Why are there no future issues? Is this lack of issues a feature of the questionnaire's construction, or are UUs "at ease in Zion": comfortable, self satisfied, and unconcerned?*

### **THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

*Several questions probe standard marks of religious behavior and belief. For example, Question 37 says, "As a UU, I would also define myself religiously as ..." an open-ended question. We labeled the responses as best we could:*

<u><i>Value Label</i></u>	
<i>Humanist/Existentialist</i>	55%
<i>Christian</i>	15%

<i>Christian-Humanist</i>	4%
<i>Feminist-Humanist</i>	7%
<i>Agnostic-keptic</i>	3%
<i>Atheist</i>	7%
<i>Buddhist</i>	2%
<i>All other</i>	9%
<i>Undefined</i>	3%

*Humanist/Existentialist is the predominant category, with over half the responses. Christian is next largest. Let us look at each of these.*

### *Humanist/Existentialist*

*There are many kinds of humanism, and no official humanist credo. However, there is a general emphasis on human values: full personhood, justice and equal rights for all. Humanists militantly rely on reason and the scientific method as the approach to truth. They reject the personal prayer-hearing God, Bible-worship, and popular notions of immortality.*

*Naturalistic humanism [has] supreme commitment to the welfare and happiness of mankind, with no belief in supernatural entities, and with reliance on the methods of reason and science, democracy and compassion .it rejects .religious concepts (God and immortality) .We accept some of the ethical ideas of Christianity; we disagree with its theology.  
(Corliss Lamont in *Free Inquiry*, Fall 1987, p. 9)*

*And the Second Humanist Manifesto, issued in 1973, emphasizes that .faith in the prayer hearing God .is an unproved and outmoded faith.”*

*With all of this, most UUs would be in substantial agreement, yet they display little interest in making humanism, as such, a faith or cause. Rather, for UUs humanism is an emphasis or approach. As our survey results will show, the old humanist-theist controversy is passe. Rather, responses indicate a new version of classic humanist religion: that is, a human-focused religiousness rooted in a sense of relatedness to trans-human cosmic process or power, not “supernatural” but continuous with humans and their universe.*

Christian

Most UU Christians are those who place special value and emphasis on the Christian roots of the UU heritage:

*Theirs is a low-keyed Christianity that focuses on the human life and ethical teachings of Jesus –the Bible interpreted with reason and modern scholarship provides the myths, symbols and stories that enable them to speak of God, and to instill moral values.*

*Who Are the UU Christians?, a UU Christian Fellowship pamphlet*

As with humanism, most UUs would agree with much of this UU Christian statement, at least with the teachings of Jesus. But, as with humanism, Christianity is embraced as an approach and flavor, not a faith as such. They probably would not accept the faith-statement from UU Christians:

*The Christian gospel is a story about something that has happened to us –come to us from the outside –a message from God about how humans ought to live.*

*The Bible, UU Christian Fellowship*

In 1967, 43% of UUs answered “yes” to the question: “Would you personally define your religion as Christian?” In 1987, the question was: “As a UU, I would also define myself religiously as –“to which 15% replied “Christian” and another 4% said “Christian Humanist” (see table above).

Jesus

In order to track changes in UU views of Jesus, we asked exactly the same question offered in the 1967 Committee on Goals Report:

*In the last hundred years, historical scholars have made a number of varied estimates of Jesus. Indicate your reactions to the ones below by circling the appropriate number on each line.*

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
<i>Jesus was essentially in the tradition of the Jewish prophets.</i>					
1967:	14%	49%	13%	2%	22%
1987:	18%	43%	9%	2%	27%
<i>Jesus, breaking with Judaism, created a new religion.</i>					
1967:	6%	37%	33%	8%	14%
1987:	10%	33%	27%	11%	19%
			Strongly rongly	Don't	St

				<u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagre</u>
			<u>e</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Know</u>	
<i>Jesus' belief in the end of the world so affected his teachings that their value for moderns is limited.</i>						
1967:	4%	18%		43%	14%	20%
1987:	5%	10%		36%	19%	30%
<i>Jesus' teachings are as true and useful now as then.</i>						
1967:	16%	52%		20%	4%	8%
1987:	20%	49%		13%	2%	15%
<i>Jesus thought of himself as a Messiah or Christ.</i>						
1967:	7%	31%		27%	9%	25%
1987:	9%	23%		22%	12%	33%
<i>After Jesus' death the church created the idea of his divinity.</i>						
1967:	30%	51%		7%	1%	10%
1987:	36%	41%		6%	2%	15%
<i>Trustworthy historical records are so scanty that we can really know little about Jesus.</i>						
1967:	21%	52%		18%	2%	7%
1987:	22%	41%		18%	2%	16%
<i>Jesus may never have lived.</i>						
1967:	3%	16%		47%	23%	11%
1987:	5%	10%		40%	29%	16%

The table of responses shows that, over 20 years, UUs have not changed in their views about Jesus. Two-thirds agree that "Jesus' teachings are as useful now as then." Four-fifths believe that "the church created the idea of his divinity." 64% in 1987 as against 74% in 1967 say that "trustworthy records are so

*scanty that we can really know little about Jesus.” On all points, “strongly agree” and particularly “don’t know” received higher responses in 1987. But the overall pattern is the same for 1967 and 1987.*



	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Know</u>
<i>Jesus' belief in the end of the world so affected his teachings that their value for moderns is limited.</i>						
1967:	4%	18%	43%	14%	20%	
1987:	5%	10%	36%	19%	30%	
<i>Jesus' teachings are as true and useful now as then.</i>						
1967:	16%	52%	20%	4%	8%	
1987:	20%	49%	13%	2%	15%	
<i>Jesus thought of himself as a Messiah or Christ.</i>						
1967:	7%	31%	27%	9%	25%	
1987:	9%	23%	22%	12%	33%	
<i>After Jesus' death the church created the idea of his divinity.</i>						
1967:	30%	51%	7%	1%	10%	
1987:	36%	41%	6%	2%	15%	
<i>Trustworthy historical records are so scanty that we can really know little about Jesus.</i>						
1967:	21%	52%	18%	2%	7%	
1987:	22%	41%	18%	2%	16%	
<i>Jesus may never have lived.</i>						
1967:	3%	16%	47%	23%	11%	
1987:	5%	10%	40%	29%	16%	

The table of responses shows that, over 20 years. UUs have not changed in their views about Jesus. Two-thirds agree that "Jesus' teachings are as useful now as then." Four-fifths believe that "the church created the idea of his divinity." 64% in 1987 as against 74% in 1967 say that "trustworthy records are so scanty that we can really know little about Jesus." On all points. "strongly agree" and particularly "don't know" received higher responses in 1987. But the overall pattern is the same for 1967 and 1987.



## God

*Question 32 is identical to one asked in 1967 and again in 1979:*

*Which one of the following statements comes closest to expressing your views about God?*

	1987	1979	1967
<i>Supernatural being</i>	4%	3%	3%
<i>Ground of all being</i>	28%	33%	23%
<i>Some natural process</i>	49%	<u>43%</u>	<u>44%</u>
<i>Sub Total</i>	81%	<u>79%</u>	<u>70%</u>
<i>Irrelevant concept</i>	18%	18%	28%
<i>Harmful concept</i>	2%	3%	2%

*There was a 10% increase in the number who found some definition of God meaningful over the years 1967 to 1987, most of the change coming 1967 to 1979. Along with this, there was a 10% decrease in those who found “God” irrelevant. Further study showed that the 1987 responses were rather uniform as between male/female, older/younger and recent membership in UU.*

*To allow for an open-ended response, we added a question not asked in 1967 or 1979, using the term “divine” instead of “God”:*

<i>The way I would describe the divine for myself is</i>	
<i>Don't know/uncertain</i>	11%
<i>Unknowable power</i>	11%
<i>Highest potential</i>	18%
<i>Creative force</i>	29%
<i>Harmony with nature</i>	11%
<i>Superior being</i>	3%
<i>Meaningless</i>	3%
<i>Harmful concept</i>	.5%
<i>Other</i>	11%

*If we add together the responses for the five value labels “Unknowable power” through “Superior being” we have 73% who find some God-concept agreeable, which agrees closely with the table above where the subtotal is 80%. Note that both questions asked only what God-concept our respondents found acceptable, not whether they, personally, believed any of them. So it would be risky to conclude that these figures show UUs as less humanistically inclined in 1987 than 1967.*

*We may say, however, that fewer find the God-concept irrelevant, meaningless or harmful in 1987 than in 1967. And it is quite clear that, consistently, UUs reject the concept of God or the divine as a superior or supernatural being: fewer than 4% would accept such a definition. Both tables of responses confirm our statement above, that the “humanist-theist” controversy is dead, in the sense of debating a personal God of the traditional sort. In addition, the responses show that UUs, though by no means agreed on what “God” means, generally agree that the term stands for something that is not “supernatural” in the old sense.*

### Prayer/Meditation

We chose to broaden the 1967 term “prayer” to “prayer or meditation” (Question 34), well aware that this would make comparison invalid. In 1967, 64% said they “seldom” or “never” prayed. The responses for 1987 indicate that we were correct in thinking that UUs do indeed “pray” if that word can include a broader meaning. Presumably, for many “prayer” connotes petitionary prayer, which UUs reject.

Findings with respect to prayer or meditation are consistent with those about God. Just as almost no UUs define God as a “supernatural being,” so only 30% define prayer as “petition for self” and 30% as “intercession for others.” Rather, they view prayer or meditation as “communion with inner self” (87%) or “self affirmation” (71%). In spite of the popular quip, UUs do not pray “to whom it may concern”; indeed very few pray to a supernatural “whom” at all. Rather, they seek to affirm, or commune with, a (presumably higher or better) “self” which--and we have no figures for this inference--relates to the “ground of being” or “natural process” definition they use of “God”; that is to say, a transcendence of the usual world-is-too-much-with-us self.

The question asked in 1967 was: “Which of the following describe the purpose or function that prayer fulfills for you? Circle all that apply.” The results:

Communion with God	12%
Petition (for self)	7%
Intercession (for others)	9%
Meditation	39%
Autosuggestion	7%
Communion with inner self	31%
Other	3%
I do not find the term useful	34%

In 1987, our survey stated the question thus:

The following describe some purposes or functions that meditation or prayer might fulfill. Indicate your agreement with each by circling the appropriate number on each line.

Communion with God	39%	“agree” or “strongly agree”
Petition for self	30%	- -
Intercession for others	30%	- -
Self affirmation	71%	- -
Communion with inner self	88%	- -
Not a useful term	32%	- -

The question was obviously different from the 1967 one: we asked only what prayer or meditation might fulfill; not “for you” but for anyone.

However, our Question 35 was “I meditate or pray: (check one)” to which we received the following response:

Never	13%
Seldom	29%
Sub Total	42%
Occasionally	36%
Often	<u>21%</u>

*Sub Total*

*57%*

Only 13% of UUs “never” pray or meditate; 57% of them do so “occasionally” or “often.”

We checked further to ask: which UUs pray/meditate? Not surprisingly, 77% of UU Christians and

77% of UU Christian-Humanists pray/meditate occasionally or often, 20 points above the UU average of 57%. Not surprisingly, UU atheists and agnostic/skeptics pray seldom (43% and 44%) or never (21% and 18%), well above the UU average.

However, 50% of humanist/existentialists, who are 54% of all UUs responding, pray or meditate “occasionally” or “often”, only 7% less than the UU average. To start with the category of those who pray/meditate “occasionally” or “often”, 64% believe in God defined as “some natural process”, “ground of all being” and “supernatural being” (the first three terms in Question 32). Even the 29% of those who find the term God “irrelevant and harmful” pray “occasionally” or “often”, though the other 71% of these “seldom” or “never” pray.

Life After Death

We broadened our question from the way it had been worded before. In 1967 it had been phrased:

*Is immortality, in the sense of a continued personal existence of the individual after death, part of your belief system?*

At that time, 89% said “No”, and 10% said “Yes.” However, we felt the question was much too specific, so we re-phrased it, aware that in so doing we would sacrifice a precise comparison. Question 36 was simply: “I believe in life after death.” This was the same question used in 1979.

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1979</u>
No	46%	53%
Not Sure	38%	27%
Yes	15%	20%

To the question thus broadened, in 1987 only 46% said “No” and 15% said “Yes” while 38% were “not sure.”

We asked, further, which UUs favored which alternative. Here are the responses according to UUs’ religious self-definition:

	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Humanist	55%	35%	9%
Christian	27%	43%	30%
Feminist	39%	46%	15%

<i>Agnostic</i>	61%	31%	8%
<i>Atheist</i>	74%	16%	11%

*There is an obvious higher “yes” and lower “no” response from UU Christians, but note that almost half (43%) of them answered “not sure”. This suggests that UU Christians are far from Christian orthodoxy, for which the resurrection is a cardinal belief.*

*FREQUENCY RESPONSES TO THE  
QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. *The religion in which I was reared was: (see page 48)*
2. *If applicable, my spouse/partner's religious preference is: (see page 49)*
3. *I first became affiliated with aUU society:*

1%	<i>Less than 1 year</i>	10%	<i>16-20 years ago</i>	9.5%	<i>36-50 years ago</i>
19%	<i>1-5 years ago</i>	11%	<i>21-25 years ago</i>	7%	<i>50+ years ago</i>
13%	<i>6-10 years ago</i>	9.5%	<i>26-30 years ago</i>		
11%	<i>11-15 years ago</i>	9%	<i>31-35 years ago</i>		
4. *I have been affiliated with my current UU society:*

3%	<i>Less than 1 year</i>	10%	<i>16-20 years</i>
29%	<i>1-5 years</i>	14%	<i>21-30 years</i>
18%	<i>6-10 years</i>	11%	<i>30+ years</i>
12%	<i>11-15 years</i>	3%	<i>Not currently affiliated</i>
5. *I have been affiliated with \_\_\_ UU societies (please state number, including Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) or Individual Member Program (IMP)).*
6. *The membership of my current society is:*

7%	<i>less than 50</i>	25%	<i>100 to 200</i>	16%	<i>500 or more</i>
13%	<i>50 to 100</i>	39%	<i>200to500</i>		
7. *I am currently a member of: (check one)*

9.5%	<i>a lay-led society</i>	4%	<i>Church of the Larger Fellowship</i>
<i>OR</i>			
765%	<i>a society with minister</i>		<i>Individual Member Program, Canadian Unitarian Council</i>
10%	<i>a society between ministers</i>		

8. *If applicable, my society's minister has served the congregation \_\_\_ years.*

*1% less than 1 year                      26% 6 to 10 years                      8% over 20 years*

*51% 1 to 5 years                      14% 11 to 20 years*

9. *In a typical month, the number of times I take part in each of the following kinds of church activities*

*is: (circle one number for each activity)*

	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
<i>Worship services</i>	21%	18%	18%	17%	24%	.5%	.5%
<i>Religious education programs</i>		76%	10%	5%	2%	5%	.5% .5%
<i>Workshops or discussions</i>	57%	27%	9%	3%	3%	.5%	.5%
<i>Committees</i>	54%	27%	10%	4%	2%	1%	1%
<i>Board or other elected offices</i>	81%	12%	4%	1%	1%	.5%	.5%
<i>Church social functions</i>		36%	45%	12%	3%	2%	.5% .5%
<i>Volunteer activities at church</i>	51%	27%	10%	3%	6%	1%	1%
<i>Volunteer activities at home</i>	71%	16%	6%	2%	3%	1%	1%
<i>Other</i>	72%	10%	5%	2%	7%	1%	2%

10. *I keep up with the denomination in the following ways: (check all that apply)*

*95% Read church newsletter                      3% Watch UU television programs*

*3% Tapes of church services                      76% Read the UU World*

*11% Am called on by UUs                      21% Read other UU newsletters*

*4% Listen to UU radio programs                      8% Other*

11. I rate my usual level of participation in my UU society as: (circle one)

<i>Very</i>				
<i>Active</i>			<i>Inactive</i>	
5	4	3	2	1
11%	15%	24%	24%	25%

15. When I first attended my present UU society, I had difficulty:

<i>Getting information</i>	8% Yes	92% No
<i>Finding the building</i>	5% Yes	95% No

16. When I first visited my present UU society, I felt: (check one)

39% Very welcome 51% Welcome 10% Ignored 0% Unwelcome

17. I believe that the following might affect the acceptability of a minister in my local UU society: (check one on each line)

<u>Help</u>	<i>Make No</i>		
	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Hinder</u>	
<i>Being black</i>	3%	71%	26%
<i>Being of color (except black)</i>	2%	78%	20%
<i>Being a woman</i>	9%	78%	13%
<i>Being lesbian, gay, or bisexual</i>	2%	33%	66%
<i>Being over age 55</i>	6%	80%	14%

<i>Being a man</i>	23%	77%	1%
<i>Being under age 30</i>	4%	57%	40%
<i>Being white</i>	25%	75%	0%

18. In my local UU society, people are generally trained for leadership by: (check all that apply)

32% *District- or Area Council-sponsored programs*

17% *UUA- and CUC-sponsored programs*

20% *Society leaders who recruit and train successors*

16% *Leadership schools*

5% *Other sources*

*Such efforts 67% have 33% have not been effective*

*43% I don't know how people are trained for leadership*

19. In my local UU society, I believe that when persons exhibit or acquire leadership skills, they are generally: (check all that apply)

81% *invited to use them* 39% *overburdened*

3% *ignored* 15% *"burned out"*

2% *rejected*

20. In my local UU society, I believe that decisions are ordinarily made by: (check all that apply)

*Professional staff* 17% *President*

47% *Minister*

19% *A certain group of people*

80% *Elected board*

6% *I don't know*

63% *Congregation at business meetings*

21. *I believe my participation in decision-making in my local UU society is: (check one)*

*62% Adequate*

*38% Inadequate*

22. *In my local UU society, my talents or expertise 65% are utilized.*

*35% are not utilized.*

23. *Strategies that might improve the quality of life and work in my local UU society include: (check all that apply)*

*9% Calling a parish minister*

*8% Calling a minister of religious education*

*9% Changing ministerial leadership*

*10% Engaging other professional assistance*

*1% Changing the professional leader*

*35% Periodic congregational goal-setting*

14% In-depth visit from professional consultant

26% Lay leadership training

15% Other

24. Here is a list of factors some regard as important to the overall quality of a UU society's life. I rate the importance of these to me. I also rate how adequately these are provided in my local society.

IMPORTANCE TO ME	HOW WELL REALIZED					Does Not					
	High	Moderate	Low	Apply		High	Moderate	Low	Apply		
a. A clear, broadly shared sense of congregation's purpose ("mission")	[5] 27%	[4] 33%	[3] 28%	[2] 6%	[1] 5%	[5] 12%	[4] 26%	[3] 39%	[2] 15%	[1] 8%	2%
b. A well-articulated, broadly shared understanding of various religious views (e.g. humanism, theism, etc.)	35%	33%	23%	5%	3%	18%	32%	33%	11%	5%	1%
c. Encouragement to spiritual growth	40%	28%	17%	9%	6%	19%	28%	32%	13%	7%	2%
d. Well-conceived, well conducted services of worship	55%	30%	10%	3%	1%	37%	33%	20%	6%	3%	1%

e.	<i>Adequate staffing (professional)</i>	28% 34% 27% 6% 4%	23% 32% 25% 12% 7%	4%
f.	<i>Adequate staffing (volunteer)</i>	26% 38% 28% 6% 2%	20% 34% 34% 10% 2%	3%
g.	<i>Pastoral care (sick calls, marrying, bury- ing...)</i>	33% 33% 21% 9% 4%	32% 34% 21% 7% 6%	4%
h.	<i>Provision for fel- lowship &amp; socializing</i>	37% <b>34%</b> 21% 5% 2%	40% 36% 18% 4% 2%	1%
	<i>Religious education for children</i>	50% 23% 13% 6% 8%	39% 33% 17% 7% 4%	6%
j.	<i>Religious education and activities for young people</i>	42% 27% 16% 6% 8%	22% 30% 24% 14% 9%	6%
k.	<i>Religious education for adults, beyond Sunday worship</i>	20% 28% <b>30%</b> 13% 9%	17% <b>30%</b> 31% 13% 9%	3%
l.	<i>Workable ways to show social concerns</i>	35% 30% 24% 6% 4%	21% 31% 29% 14% 5%	1%

24. (continued)

<i>IMPORTANCE TO ME</i>	<i>HOW WELL REALIZED</i>	<i>Does Not</i>	
	<i>High/Moderate/Low</i> <i>Apply</i>	<i>High/Moderate/Low</i>	
	<i>[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]</i>	<i>[5] [4] [3] [2] [1]</i>	
<i>m. Ways of letting out- siders know about the society and its values</i>	26% 33% 27% 9% 5%	5% 16% 41% 27% 11%	1%
<i>n. Embracing racial, cul- tural, other diversity</i>	40% 32% 20% 5% 3%	16% 26% 32% 18% 8%	1%
<i>o. Seeking new members</i>	25% 29% 30% 11% 6%	8% 23% 40% 19% 9%	1%
<i>p. Orienting and in- volving new members</i>	32% 39% 22% 4% 2%	17% 34% 30% 14% 5%	1%
<i>q. Adequate financing</i>	34% 35% 25% 5% 1%	13% 29% 39% 13% 6%	1%
<i>r. Maintaining adequate, attractive facilities</i>	30% 40% 24% 4% 2%	26% 37% 27% 7% 3%	1%
<i>s. Recruiting and train- ing lay leaders</i>	15% 31% 35% 12% 7%	7% 24% 42% 19% 8%	6%
<i>t. Appropriate committees and organizations</i>	17% 38% 33% 8% 3%	20% 42% 31% 6% 1%	3%
<i>u. Denominational iden-</i>	20% 29% 31% 12% 8%	16% 29% 40% 11% 3%	3%

*tity and connection*

v. *Long-range planning*                    24% 35% 28% 9% 3%                    14% 31% 36% 13% 5%                    2%

w. *Ease of access to meeting place*                    31% 29% 28% 8% 4%                    38% 31% 30% 7% 4%                    1%

x. *Awareness of needs of impaired people*                    30% 34% 27% 6% 3%                    23% 30% 31% 11% 6%                    1%

y. *Meeting place easy to find*                    30% 24% 31% 8% 7%                    48% 26% 19% 4% 3%                    2%

z. *Adequate parking*                    29% 28% 28% 9% 6%                    32% 29% 21% 10% 8%                    2%