

Session #2



Relationships are consensual and never coerced

Covenant

Begin with The Rabbi's Gift – Story by Scott Peck
Told by Connie Goodbread

<http://www.community4me.com/rabbisgift.html>

Covenant

Michael W. Hennon

We covenant with one another
and do bind ourselves together
in the presence of this religious community
To express our deepest and most cherished convictions,
as they are borne by each person
to find a common vision for a better world;
To seek the life of the spirit,
as it is known by each person,
choosing with reverence its name;
And to walk together in the way of truth and love,
as it is shown to us and to all people,
in word and in deed.

Inspired by the Salem Covenant of 1629

Source: 1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection

Congregational Covenant Sue Stukey,
Second Unitarian Church, Chicago, IL

"We covenant to build a community that challenges us to grow and empowers us to hold faithful to the truth within ourselves.

We will be generous with our gifts and honest in our communication, holding faithful to a love that embraces both diversity and conflict.

Called by our living tradition, we will nurture spirituality within a vision of the eternal, living out our inner convictions through struggles for justice and acts of compassion."

**A covenant once developed for the
Universalist congregation at Gloucester, MA
somewhat modified:**

*Mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge,
of love and compassion ever exceeding our practice,
reverently we covenant together,
beginning with ourselves as we are,
to share the strength of integrity
and the heritage of the spirit,
in humanity's unending quest
for reality, justice, love and human wholeness.*

The Ames covenant

by the Rev. Charles Gordon Ames Philadelphia 1880s
modified variously by other congregations.

*Love is the doctrine of this church
the quest of truth is its sacrament,
and service is its prayer.*

*To dwell together in peace,
to seek knowledge in freedom,
to serve humanity in fellowship,
to the end that all souls shall grow
into harmony with the Divine –
thus do we covenant with each other and with God.*

Unitarian Universalist congregations are
covenantal not creedal faith communities

What is a covenant?

- *The realization that we truly are all in this together.*
- *A deep abiding promise between equals – to partner with each other and that which is bigger than ourselves, to work for a just and loving community.*
- *Manners*
- *Deliberate develop of cultural norms*
- *Built on respect and honoring the inherent worth and dignity of every human being*
- *Laying a foundation upon which to build*

Why do we need a covenant?

Behavioral Covenants start with manners and ourselves.

How do we begin?

Leadership

Staff transitions

- *Discussion*
- *Discernment*
- *Development*
- *Practice*

Discussion - talking to one another about why we would do this - what is the purpose?

Discernment - what are the things we need to list - what do we need to say to each other - what are the behaviors we want to model?

Development - what are words we will use – wordsmithing to get it right - reworking it and living with it and reworking it again.

Practice - calling ourselves and each other back into covenant over and over.

After a time when leadership has struggled with what a covenant is and how it is best used - we may begin the process to develop a congregational covenant.

Using the same process:

- *Discussion*
- *Discernment*
- *Development*
- *Practice*

Covenant as Poetry

*Mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge,
of love and compassion ever exceeding our practice,
reverently we covenant together,
beginning with ourselves as we are,
to share the strength of integrity
and the heritage of the spirit,
in humanity's unending quest
for reality, justice, love and human wholeness.*

A covenant is a tool not an end

*Unitarian Universalism striving to build
communities where faith and acceptance coexist
in harmony.*

Is this the way of the world?

Congregational Covenanting Tips

**Compiled by the Rev. Susan M. Smith, Connie Goodbread
and Eunice Benton**

From REACH packet September 1995 by Judith Frediani:

Group Covenant

It is invaluable for any group, whatever its primary focus, to agree on expectations for behavior in their work together. Whether you call those written expectations covenants, agreements, or guidelines, they include a range of issues such as arriving on time, keeping confidentiality, the right to pass, "no put-downs," etc. Ongoing groups like standing committees can review and renew their agreements annually or whenever new members are added.

Short-form covenanting

A time-efficient way to help a group agree to guidelines is to prepare a draft on newsprint before the first meeting and ask participants to respond. Invite them to add, delete or modify until everyone understands and accepts the expectations.

Long-form covenanting

Have the group generate its guidelines from scratch. Although it takes a little longer, it is more participatory and may foster more of a sense of ownership. One approach is to say something like: "Think of a time when you were a member of a productive and safe group. What would make this group productive and safe for you?" List responses and encourage discussion until consensus is reached. Then ask, "What do you think should happen if our behavior is not in keeping with our agreed-upon guidelines?" Discuss.

Why bother?

- A group covenant provides at least three benefits:
- Expectations are clarified so that misunderstandings are less likely;
- The agreement makes it clear that everyone, not just the leader(s), is responsible for the effectiveness and enjoyment of the group-experience; and

- The guidelines provide a valid and specific reference for addressing problematic behavior. Leaders or participants can speak to a group member privately or within the group about their concern that a behavior is not in keeping with the agreement.

Notes from *Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Difference* by Gil Rendle (Alban)

Important points about covenant:

- Covenants are promises to follow, not rules prescribing punishment.
- Covenants describe behaviors, not personality changes.
- Covenants are a daily, spiritual practice.
- Covenants can be used to monitor behaviors of leaders by periodically reviewing the covenant.
- Covenants can be used by leaders to model healthy and faithful behavior to others in the congregation and the community.

Process:

- Lead a discussion about the behavioral covenants that leaders in your congregation should practice in the future for the health and faithfulness of your congregation and as a model of holy manners (civility) for your members and the community.
- Write suggested covenant behaviors on newsprint for the full group to review as they are offered.
- Stress that the covenants are to be positive statements of behaviors that will be followed and not statements of what is wrong from the past.
- Remind participants that they are focusing on behaviors, not on personality characteristics or individual people.
- Have a statement drafted by one or two members, which can be adopted by the larger group.
- Decide if and how to let others know of the covenant.
- Decide how and how often to do a review of the effectiveness of the covenant.

The Ministering Congregation

A "ministering congregation" is one that has a communal sense of call, knows the community that it is aiming to serve, mobilizes its resources and programs to respond to the diverse ministry needs of its gathered congregation and surrounding community, and provides a formation process to engage its membership in this shared ministry.

A ministering congregation:

1. is mission focused
2. is committed to spiritual growth and development of its membership and the congregation.
3. knows it's surrounding community and is responsive to the community's needs for ministry.
4. is clear about its ministry focus groups.
5. has outreach that is intentionally coordinated with all the congregation's programs
6. has small groups that are a source of pastoral care, religious education, membership assimilation, and leadership development
7. conceives its programs as "ministries" to the congregation and the surrounding community
8. has an intentional and ongoing "shared ministry program" [process for helping lay people discover their gifts and live out their ministries in the church's ministries and in their daily lives]
9. understands religious education as a formation process for the ministry of the laity
10. is able to reach out to and serve more diverse populations within the community
11. is committed in word and action to anti-racism, anti-oppression and to being a Welcoming Congregation
12. has responsible stewardship and engages in a mission budget process that is informed by its sense of mission as a congregation within a particular community
13. is "Association-al" and has covenantal relationship with other UU congregations in the area, district and continent
14. engages with other faith communities in common social ministries, advocacy or service.

*(These materials are from only one of hundreds of resources available at uua.org that explain **The Uncommon Denomination** program. Though the advertising component of this program is the best well-known, the website materials associated with it provide outstanding tips for best practices in healthy congregations.)*

Why Do People Come to Church?

In the last 30 years, the following changes have taken place in our society:

- 1) erosion of denominational loyalties;
- 2) the emergence of mega churches with seven-day-a-week ministries;
- 3) the enhanced vitality large Protestant congregations;
- 4) new approaches to ministries with families that include young children;
- 5) the frustrations created by increasingly severe economic pressures on the small-membership church,
- 6) the impact of television on the way information is sent and received;
- 7) the emergence of a different generation of young people born in the 1969-82 era with new kinds of church needs;
- 8) the proliferation of churches that are offering a growing array of resources to congregations;
- 9) the expansion of the agenda in theological seminaries so that preparing people to become parish pastors is only one of a lengthening list of responsibilities; and
- 10) an unprecedented demand by people, especially those born after 1940, for a meaningful teaching ministry that will help them on their religious pilgrimage.

More important has been the impact of these and other changes on the life of the worshipping community. This is especially meaningful for those congregations seeking to reach and serve the generations born after 1955. For this discussion four changes stand out.

The first is the search for meaning, community, and identity is at the top of the individual's agenda. This is very different from people who grew up in the depression era whose agenda was focused toward survival.

A second has been the replacement of the emphasis in our society on functions, tasks, and assignments with a new focus on relationships. This can be seen in the priorities of the advertising of consumer products, and in the contemporary definition of a "good marriage."

A third change can be seen in what church shoppers seek as they search for a new worshipping community. The average size of a Christian congregation in North America, both Catholic and Protestant, has tripled since 1890. The number of mega churches has at least quadrupled since 1960. People are looking to join a large church. In a world filled with anonymity, an obvious choice for a church home is the small congregation modeled after the television program "Cheers." We all treasure the affirmation that comes when people can call us correctly by name, when they are genuinely glad we came, and when we can find comfort in discovering that all our troubles are the same. But we are also a society that emphasizes quality and has taught people that they have a right to select from among a broad range of highly attractive choices. So, does the church shopper choose the intimacy of the small church or the quality and choices offered by a large congregation?

The answer is a fourth change. Today, people expect both. A church shopper has the expectation that every congregation should be able to offer a friendly atmosphere, an affirmation of the importance of one-to-one relationships, a high quality ministry, and a wide array of attractive choices.

When we look for a church we look for a group where we know securely that we belong: Surrounded by a feeling of love and security our spirit is infused with hope. People still “repair to the church on Sundays.” That’s an old word, repair. It means, “to return,” “to go often and customary.” But the word also catches up the deeper meaning of why people return to church--namely, to feel “repaired,” to have the pieces of their lives put back together again. We all feel restored when we gather around a loving community and feel the humanizing presence of one another. Those needs are not functional ones but relational ones. The principal break in people’s lives is their hearts. Hearts are broken when relationships are broken. People repair to the church looking to be healed. They seek restoring relationships that soothe them and fortify them for the abundant life they know is possible.

More specifically, people enter the church yearning to feel understood. They search for pastors and parishioners who are willing to listen and know what they are going through. They look for someone who can reach sensitively through their isolation and touch their hearts. People turn to the church yearning to understand. They seek meanings that can soothe their fears and give life order. They make themselves receptive to guiding explanations from pastors and lay leaders that can help them find their way through their constantly changing world. This looking to leaders is why it is so important that all our church leaders model “loving community” and a knowledge of having figured out some of life’s questions.

People come to the church yearning to belong. They long for the companionship of kindred souls, who can assure them that they are acceptable and not alone. They are eager to be connected to a faith community that upholds values and standards while also affirming that “we’re all in it together.”

People repair to the church yearning for hope. They thirst for visions and stories that confirm the significance of their yesterdays, encourage them to put one foot in front of the other, and model that promises will be kept of a world where people are good and love one another.

The future faithfulness and wellness of congregations rests in large measure on how empathetically we recognize and minister to the needs of people. Today, individuals of all ages will look for a church home that touches their deepest yearnings to feel connected. These yearnings, more than physical proximity to a church, community prestige of a church, denominational loyalty to a church, or family tradition church, will determine where persons choose to worship and serve.

Responding to these needs, however, should not be undertaken as a means of “keeping the church alive.” As we enter a new century, I hope we can be liberated from the

pervasive survival anxiety that so badly dominates much of our thinking in the small church. Instead of responding to persons' needs because they might give a bigger donation, we respond because our values and principles call us to do this.

Furthermore, responding to these needs should not be undertaken as a means of preparing for the "real" work of the church, whether that be service to others, evangelism, or church growth. Nurturing the human bonds within the congregation empowers the congregation and individual members to extend themselves lovingly to the entire world. But the building up of supportive relationships within the congregation is itself the church's mission. It could even be argued that it is the church's primary mission. Nurturing relationships within the congregation should be the dedicated undertaking of clergy and lay leaders today.

Many churches have a functional rather than a relational orientation. This functional attitude can be recognized in a church that reminds their minister, "You're just a hired hand here," and in a case I studied where a Board declared to their new pastor, "You are here to take care of us: we're not here to take care of you." Or when potential members are looked upon as "enrollment enhancers," individuals are viewed as "pledging units," and "attendance" is expected for the success of instituted church programs.

A functional orientation ultimately estranges us not only from one another but also from our principles. Such functional inclinations blunt the forces and energies that emerge as spiritual moments in people's lives. A focused concern with people and their needs, and a ministry principally organized around supportive relationships, is compromised if not essentially abandoned when a functional mentality takes over.

People can become their fullest selves, and a means of grace and inspiration for others, as they enjoy loving responses to their human needs. Furthermore, when a congregation acts as a relational community it becomes a sustainable community and can focus on individual people and individual places while also keeping the regional and global world firmly in mind.

The weakness of a relational church community is that because some parishioners have desperate needs within relationships, it is possible for congregations to become excessively preoccupied with relating to these people, to the near exclusion of everything else connected with the ministry of the congregation. This happens when power struggles between individuals, families or groups within the church absorb the majority of the church's energy. We can avoid this by being aware of whether we pay attention to healthy behavior or unhealthy behavior because attention is rewarding. Be assured that newcomers watch where we put our attention and make a mental note that is where the priorities of the church lay.

Healthy newcomers know that a church is not a mental health institution and are looking for a healthy congregation. As the story told, we can be in loving relationship even when we are in conflict. We just need to be intentional about how we relate to one another. If we want to grow we must work on being in healthy relationship with one another.

While being loving to one another it would be good to remember the six spiritual needs of Americans today as found in a recent Gallup poll. This is what we need to offer one another within our relationships here in this congregation;

- 1) the need to believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose;
- 2) the need for a sense of community and deeper relationships,
- 3) the need to be appreciated and respected;
- 4) the need to be listened to, to be heard;
- 5) the need to feel that one is growing in faith;
- 6) the need for practical help in developing a mature faith.

Guided by our understanding of the central relationship needs of parishioners and coupled with an understanding of how congregations can slip into a functional orientation, we can work towards ways for our preaching, teaching, Board work, lay leaders and general congregational life to become more deeply personal, thus relational.
Amen



NEW THEORY SUGGESTS PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO RELIGION FOR 16 REASONS

COLUMBUS, Ohio – People are not drawn to religion just because of a fear of death or any other single reason, according to a new comprehensive, psychological theory of religion.

There are actually 16 basic human psychological needs that motivate people to seek meaning through religion, said Steven Reiss, author of the new theory and professor of psychology and psychiatry at Ohio State University.

These basic human needs – which include honor, idealism, curiosity and acceptance – can explain why certain people are attracted to religion, why God images express psychologically opposite qualities, and the relationship between personality and religious experiences.

Previous psychologists tried to explain religion in terms of just one or two overarching psychological needs. The most common reason they cite is that people embrace religion because of a fear of death, as expressed in the saying ‘there are no atheists in foxholes,’ Reiss said.

“But religion is multi-faceted – it can’t be reduced to just one or two desires.” Reiss described his new theory – which he said may be the most comprehensive psychological theory of religion since Freud’s work more than a century ago -- in the June issue of *Zygon*, a journal devoted to issues of science and religion.

“I don’t think there has been a comprehensive theory of religion that was scientifically testable,” he said.

The theory is based on his overall theory of human motivation, which he calls sensitivity theory. Sensitivity theory is explained in his 2000 book *Who Am I? The 16 Basic Desires that Motivate Our Action and Define Our Personalities* (Tarcher Putnam). Reiss said that each of the 16 basic desires outlined in the book influence the psychological appeal of religious behavior. The desires are power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical exercise, and tranquility.

In fact, Reiss has already done some initial research that suggests the desire for independence is a key psychological desire that separates religious and non-religious people. In a study published in 2000, Reiss found that religious people (the study included mostly Christians) expressed a strong desire for interdependence with others. Those who were not religious, however, showed a stronger need to be self-reliant and independent.

The study also showed that religious people valued honor more than non-religious people, which Reiss said suggests many people embrace religion to show loyalty to parents and ancestors.

In the *Zygon* paper, Reiss explains that every religious person balances their 16 basic human needs to fit their own personality.

“They embrace those aspects of religious imagery that express their strongest psychological needs and deepest personal values.”

One example is the desire for curiosity, Reiss said. Religious intellectuals, who are high in curiosity, value a God who is knowable through reason, while doers, who have weak curiosity, may value a God that is knowable only through revelation.

“People who have a strong need for order should enjoy ritualized religious experiences, whereas those with a weak need for order may prefer more spontaneous expression of faith,” he said.

“The prophecy that the weak will inherit the earth should appeal especially to people with a weak need for status, whereas the teaching that everybody is equal before God should appeal especially to people with a strong need for idealism.”

If religion and personality are linked, religion must provide a range of images and symbols sufficiently diverse to appeal to all the different kinds of personalities in the human population, Reiss says. Religious imagery potentially accommodates everybody because in many instances the images and symbols are psychological opposites.

“How we value and balance the 16 psychological needs is what makes us an individual, and for every individual there are appealing religious images,” he said. “The values that guide a personality with a strong need for vindication are expressed by a God of wrath, or a war God, while the values that guide a personality with a weak need for vindication are expressed by a God of forgiveness.”

“The values that guide a personality with a strong need to socialize are expressed by religious fellowship and festivals, while the values that guide a personality with a weak need to socialize are expressed by religious asceticism.”

The need for acceptance makes meaningful images of God as a savior, while its opposite inspires the concept of original sin, according to Reiss. The need to eat motivates some people to value abstinence and others to value sustenance.

“Because this theory can be tested scientifically, we can learn its strengths and weaknesses, and gradually improve it,” Reiss said. “Eventually, we may understand better the psychological basis of religion.”

Reiss emphasized that the theory addresses the psychology of religious experiences and has no implications for the validity or invalidity of religious beliefs.

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HOW TO LISTEN SKILLFULLY

1. STOP TALKING: To others and to yourself. Learn the still small voice within. You can't listen if you're talking.

2. Imagine the other person's viewpoint. Picture yourself in her position, doing her work, facing her problems, using her language, and having her values. If the other person is younger or more junior, remember your early days in the (church).

3. Look, act, and be interested. Don't read your mail, doodle, shuffle, or tap papers while others are talking.

4. Observe non-verbal behavior, like body language, to glean meanings beyond what is said to you.

5. Don't interrupt. Sit still past your tolerance level.

6. Listen between the lines, for implicit meanings as well as explicit ones. Consider connotations as well as denotations. Note figures of speech. Instead of accepting a person's remarks as the whole story, look for omissions — things left unsaid or unexplained, which should logically be present. Ask about those.

7. Speak only affirmatively while listening. Resist the temptation to jump in with an evaluative, critical, or disparaging comment at the moment the remark is uttered. Confine yourself to constructive replies until the context has shifted, and criticism can be offered without blame.

8. To ensure understanding, rephrase what the other person has just told you at key points in the conversation. Yes ... this is the old "active listening" technique, but it works — and how often do you do it?

9. STOP TALKING. This is the first and last, because all other techniques of listening depend on it. Take a vow of silence once in a while.

From the "Team Learning" chapter of The Fifth Discipline Handbook, p. 391.

Core Values – Foundational work for a strong and healthy system.

Values to Mission Process For UP! Unlimited Potential

Based on work out of the Chrysalis Way

Rev. Susan Smith and Connie Goodbread

Revised by Eunice Benton and Connie Goodbread 10/2008

The true community does not arise through people having feelings for another (though indeed not without it), but through, first, their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Center, and second, their being in living mutual relation with one another. The second has its source in the first, but is not given when the first alone is given. Living mutual relation includes feelings, but does not originate with them. The community is built up out of living mutual relation, but the builder is the living effective Center. . . . Marriage, for instance, will never be given new life except by that out of which true marriage always arises, the revealing by two people of the Thou to one another.

—Martin Buber

It is the “living effective center” that we wish to connect with in this exercise.

As Unitarian Universalists we have many values that we share. When you read the Seven Principles you see the values that we hold dear. While the Seven Principles speak for the entire body, each congregation is unique. It is important that we understand the higher reasons for the existence of our faith community. Values discernment is an important first step in building the beloved community, and in understanding our ministry and mission.

Announce a congregational meeting. Make sure that you are getting the word out. Children over 8 and youth should also be invited and welcome.

Start with this

Chalice Lighting – or pick one of your own

We are unique.

Each of us is made of star stuff. We are the best the Universe has to offer.

Each of us is part of something larger. Our families, friends, towns, country, planet, solar system, Universe...

Each of us can feel that larger organism if we take the time, reach out and think outside of ourselves, we feel it living and breathing all around us, We feel in tune with it, a part of it, affected by it, effecting it.

Together we are more than we could ever be as lone individual parts.

This community of faith, that is part of the body of humankind, living within the organism Earth is also unique.

What is the highest reason for the existence of this Faith Community?

Please meditate on this question.

What is the highest reason for the existence of this Faith Community?

Break the congregation up into groups of no more than 10. Mix children and adults together in the groups. However, if you have several children put a couple together in each of the groups. Do not make one group a group of children. Fix them in but also, if you can help it, don't have one child be the only child in a group.

Each group quickly appoints or elects a facilitator and a scribe/reporter. The Facilitator must make sure that everyone is heard from and will help to keep track of the votes. The Scribe/reporter will record all of the values, and captured negatives. In the role of reporter their job is to be accurate and brief when reporting back to the larger body. They will report values and captured negatives.

Read all of the instructions before you begin. Read all of the instructions before you ask questions of the coaches. (While reading make sure that you are listing your questions for the conference call)

All results will be posted along with worksheets and captured negatives.

Captured negatives are not on the list of values but will come out during the conversation or are known by leadership. They may be unspoken but present

in the culture. Example: We say we are very accepting of all religious ideas, concepts and beliefs. But in actuality a guest comes to our worship service holding a Bible and people react badly. This would be a captured negative truth about your congregation. It is important that we try to deal openly with these cultural bad habits. Naming then is the beginning of dealing openly with them.

Put two pieces of newsprint on the wall. Title one "Values" and the other "Captured Negatives".

15 minutes - Pass out the values list. Individuals circle 5 values that are or could ideally be shared by the congregation. Try to think beyond yourself. If an important value is not on the list, add it (or them) under other.

15 minutes - Scribe lists on newsprint every value that the individual participants have marked or added. Facilitator leads the discussion and helps clarify.

15 minutes: Facilitator leads brainstorm - are there any other values we have not thought of that we should add? Scribe adds them to the list.

Brainstorming rules

1. Postpone and withhold your judgment of ideas. -- Use your brainpower to generate new ideas rather than judge the ones that are presented.
2. Encourage wild and exaggerated ideas. -- Thinking big sparks other ideas.
3. Quantity counts at this stage, not quality. -- No discussion except the minimum needed for clarification.
4. Build on the ideas of others. -- Listen and expand and follow thought trends.
5. Every person and every idea has equal worth. -- Everyone has something to contribute. These ideas belong to the group, not the person who speaks them.

Scribes - be sure to list negative traits and norms of your group on a separate sheet of newsprint titled "Captured Negatives".

First Vote

15 minutes: everyone votes by hand for their favorite 5 values, only 5

Scribe records the values

Facilitator leads the discussion, keeps order and helps keep track of the votes

Eliminate no's and lowest votes

Do not combine ideas. You could say that purpose and mission are very similar - but pick the word that best expresses the group's values. This is not meant to be easy. Values discernment is making choices between things we think are important. The struggle and wrestling with each of the items is very important.

15 minutes: Seek an advocate to speak very briefly for each of the remaining ideas that are on the list but got no votes. If no advocate can be found, eliminate the value. You do this by saying would anyone like to speak for keeping safety (an example) on our shared values list if no one wants to advocate for that value it is removed from the list. Move on.

Second vote

5 minutes: everyone votes by hand for their favorite 5 values each person gets 5 votes while facilitator helps the voting flow and helps individuals keep track of their votes - scribe records. If needed, drop no's and lowest votes and vote again if your list is too large. Remember don't just cram values together in order to get more values on your list. More shared values is not better. They become more difficult to uphold. Three values are easier to uphold than five but don't go under three you will lose diversity.

10 minutes: Rewrite if needed and list results on a sheet of newsprint.

Come back to the larger group and report (scribe/reporter) your groups shared values.

Large group scribe or workshop leader - on a separate piece of newsprint list all of the values that are on the group lists and put hash marks beside them for how many groups came up with them. If you have more than five follow the instructions below. Or if you have five but want to whittle the five down to three follow the instructions below.

Each group should also share the "Captured Negatives". Do they show up in more than one group? Below is a suggested process about how to address these issues. Tell the group about the plan.

At another time:

These would be good topics for Covenant Groups (small group ministries) - how do we address _____ and then name an issue that was one of the "Captured Negatives". Is the issue a topic for the Board of Trustees or the Committee on Ministry or the Membership Committee? If your congregation is small enough break up into groups of three to five people and discuss the issue. Also suggest ideas on how to address the issue and share them with the larger group. Then begin to change your behavior. Practice. When you forget remind yourself and others about the changes you are making.

Third Vote - happens in the larger group

15 minutes: everybody votes by hand for their favorite 5 values only 5 values that are on this list.

Scribe for larger group or the workshop leader records the votes - each individual gets 5 votes

Eliminate no's and lowest votes

15 minutes: Seek an advocate to speak very briefly for each remaining ideas that are on the list but got no votes. If no advocate can be found, eliminate the value. You do this by saying would anyone like to speak for keeping safety (an example) on our shared values list if no one wants to advocate for that value it is removed from the list. Move on.

Post the congregation's shared values in a prominent place.

Also post the "Captured Negatives" and the worksheet.

Chalice Extinguish - or pick one of your own.

Go now in Peace, Go now in Peace - May the spirit of Love surround you everywhere, everywhere you may go.

As these values hang in the middle of your Faith Community pay attention to

what people say about them. If there is great disagreement take time for another discussion and vote. Once again post them in a prominent place.

After some time has past announce to the congregation that the shared core values are and that now we will move toward writing a mission statement based upon our values.

Moving to Mission

Eunice Benton and Connie Goodbread

Remember that mission should be based in the values and speak of our doing in the world. It is a call to action.

Chalice Lighting

Five Smooth Stones upon which we build our faith.

Revelation is open and continuous

Relationships are consensual and never coerced

Establishment of a just and loving community

We deny the immaculate conception of virtue.

Good things are brought about by hard work done by human hands

**Resources are available –both human and divine –
that can help to bring about the changes we seek
These resources are a cause for ultimate optimism**

James Luther Adams

Writing A Values Based Mission Statement

Give the shared values list to a poet or wordsmith to write a Values Based Mission Statement that evokes the sentiment and meaning of your values. The statement should evoke the spirit, meaning and passion of the words.

Example: Values - Gratitude, Work and Justice

Values Based Mission Statement "Gratitude for our abundance moves us to work for a just world."

Example: Values - Growth, Community and Love

Values Based Mission Statement "Knowing we are never finished we grow the beloved community."

Example: Values - Compassion, Covenant and Community

Values Based Mission Statement "Hand in hand with great care, love and respect we build the Beloved Community."

Example: Values are - Compassion, justice and service

Values Based Mission Statement: "Moved by compassion we are called to serve justice."

Example: Values are - Love, community and respect

Values Based Mission Statement: "Building the beloved community, we covenant to make a difference."

Last Steps

Call a congregational meeting - make every attempt to get as many members as possible. Include children and youth.

Poet or wordsmith brings the statement or statements back to the whole congregation and presents them. The artist understanding that they do not own these statements. The statements belong to the congregation. The congregation discusses the statement(s) - do changes need to be made? Vote on the mission statement.

This Mission Statement should be in the beginning of the bylaws and the covenant.

This Values Based Mission Statement should be beautifully written, framed and hung in a prominent place.

Readdress the "Captured Negatives"

This can become a very positive experience if they are seen as something we can do something about.

A suggested process:

These would be good topics for Covenant Groups (small group ministries) - how do we address _____ and then name an issue that was one of the "Captured Negatives". Is the issue a topic for the Board of Trustees or the Committee on Ministry or the Membership Committee? If your congregation is small enough break up into groups of three to five people and discuss the issue. Also suggest ideas on how to address the issue and share them with the larger group. Put your ideas in practice.

Values Based Missions

The first Step in writing a Values based mission is to do values discernment work – what 3 to 5 values will be at the foundation at the core of the service done by the congregation.

Directions – enter into this work in covenant. Speak from your heart. Listen deeply. Be respectful. Don't rush the process.

1. Make a long list. Take time and involve as many people and groups as possible in creating a list of the values that you hold most dear.
2. Cull the list. Again - take your time do not rush the process and involve as many people and groups as possible. Discern no less than 3 and no more than 5 values that are important to you. This is from your personal point of view.
3. Come back together as an entire group see what values you have in common.
4. Struggle gently with one another as you mark off words until you pare the list down to no fewer than 3 no more than 5 values. This is from the group's point of view. Be open and honest with each other.
5. Sit with these words for a while. Talk about them as often as you need to.
6. Once you are certain that these are the words that are at the heart of this congregation – have one person write a values based statement using your words. This statement should be one sentence, deep, moving and meaningful – poetic.
7. Come back together and review the statement. Wordsmith it if you must.
8. Live with it a while.
9. Make it your own.
10. Do not put it in a drawer. It is a tool. Use it to examine how you will be together and what you will do in the larger community. The questions are - Are we living our values? Are we putting our values into action?

Putting the Mission to Work

Eunice Benton and Connie Goodbread

Plug in your mission to answer these questions.

Start with leadership. Come up with a plan that will help you to present what the leadership comes up with but present the plan that will address these questions in a way that is empowering and expansive. Do not let any one individual or issue hijack the process do allow for great vision and wisdom.

1. What does a congregation with this Mission Statement look like?
2. What would the bylaws look like?
3. What policies would be in place?
4. How does a community with this Mission Statement celebrate, worship, mourn, teach
5. What do new members need to learn about us to function well?
6. What are the external manifestations of our Mission?
7. Where does our Mission intersect with those of the larger community?
8. Where is our Mission needed to transform the larger community? UU and non-UU.
9. What actions or events would best make our Mission real in your community?

Six Principles for Leading Adaptive Work

From "The Work of Leadership" by Ronald Heifetz and Donald Laurie, Harvard Business Review, January-February 1997.

Get on the Balcony. Understanding the bigger picture: "...leaders have to be able to view patterns as if they were on a balcony. It does them no good to be swept up in the field of action."

Identify the Adaptive Challenge. Does the nature of a presenting threat represent a technical challenge or an adaptive challenge? Would expert advice and technical adjustments within basic routines suffice, or would people throughout the organization have to learn new ways of doing business?

Regulate Distress. People can learn only so much so fast. Leaders must attend to three fundamental tasks:

- Create a holding environment
- Provide a safe environment (provide direction, protection, orientation, managed conflict and the shaping of norms)
- Personal presence and poise (model the emotional capacity to tolerate uncertainty, frustration, and pain)

Maintain Disciplined Attention. Diversity is valuable because innovation and learning are the products of differences. When sterile conflict takes the place of dialogue, a leader has to step in and put the team to work on reframing the issues; deepening the debate with questions, unbundling the issues into their parts rather than let the conflict remain polarized and superficial.

Give the Work Back to the People. Getting people to assume greater responsibility is not easy. Letting people take the initiative in defining and solving problems means that management needs to learn to support rather than control.

Protect Voices of Leadership from Below. Giving a voice to all people is the foundation of an organization that is willing to experiment and learn. But, in fact, whistle-blowers, creative deviants, and other such original voices routinely get smashed and silenced in organizational life. The voices from below are usually not as articulate as one would wish.

Resources of Leadership in Adaptive Change

Adapted from Leadership Without Answers, Ronald Heifetz, Belknap Press, 1994.

- 1. The use of relationships to provide a holding environment for containing the stresses of their adaptive efforts.** A holding environment consists of any relationship in which one party has the power to hold the attention of another party and facilitate adaptive work. The strategic task is to maintain a level of tension that mobilizes people (keeping the heat turned up but not letting the pot boil over).
- 2. Commanding and directing attention to issues.** Attention is a currency of leadership. Getting people to pay attention to tough issues rather than diversions.
- 3. Use access to information – the vantage point of leadership.** Because authorities are expected to know, they are given access to information. They can use that information to gain a better vantage point and test reality.
- 4. Controlling the flow of information.** Decide what issue(s) the person/group is ready to face and then frame the issue so it is addressable.
- 5. Orchestrating conflict and containing disorder.** The use of conflict management skills: separating people from the issues; helping groups learn and understand each other's "language;" reforming boundaries to help people engage each other; and searching for "interests."

MANAGING THE BEING-DOING POLARITY

Adapted for Religious Educators by

Laurel Amabile, Lifespan Program Consultant

Based on the Alban book: The Spiritual Leader's Guide to Self Care,

Introduction by Roy Oswald, Sr. Consultant, Alban Institute

Roy Oswald presents the “doing-being tension” as one example of a polarity: “an unsolvable problem that can only be managed.” In a concept developed by organizational development consultant, Barry Johnson, called Polarity Management, quadrants are used to represent the “upside” and the “down side” to each pole of the problem.

On the DOING pole, the upside (+) behaviors include active service in one's profession. In the case of religious educators, this would include:

- +Planning and implementing programs
- +Advocating for the religious education program and its participants
- +Involvement in worship services
- +Attending training events
- +Accountability to the organization and/or supervisor
- +Networking

The down side (-) of the pole is DOING too much, which often results in burnout for the religious professional. This pole is characterized by the following:

- Over-commitment and overwhelm
- Neglecting self, family and friends
- Becoming cynical and/or depressed
- Exhaustion and physical illness
- Humorless and/or irritability

The problems of the down side of DOING are balanced by the upside of BEING:

- +Rest, revitalization & spiritual renewal
- +gaining perspective
- +Setting appropriate limits
- +Self acceptance and esteem
- +Feeling centered

When the state of BEING is overemphasized (-), the result can be:

- Self absorption and isolation
- A loss of concern for others
- Losing sight of one's mission or sense of purpose

The way out of this imbalance found in the down site of BEING is to focus on others' needs and to engage in service.