

SPECIAL UNITARIAN COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSALIST-UNITARIAN UNION
25 Beacon Street
Boston 8, Massachusetts

October 16, 1949

To the Chairmen and Ministers of all Unitarian Parishes:

This material is of an extraordinary nature. It pertains to a vote which every Unitarian parish is asked to take prior to May 1, 1950 at a duly constituted Parish Meeting, either a Special Meeting called for the purpose, or your Annual Meeting, in which case it should be included in the call to the Meeting.

The General Conference of the A.U.A. meeting in Portland, Oregon adopted the recommendations of the Joint Universalist-Unitarian Commission on the Study of Church Union by a unanimous vote. These recommendations were in essence that there being no insurmountable obstacles to federal union of our two fellowships, a vote should be taken immediately in all parishes to determine the will of the constituent parishes as to whether they wish a plan for Union drawn up and presented to them at a later date for either approval or rejection.

This vote must be taken before next May 1, 1950. If 51 per cent of the parishes by that time signify their wishes that a plan for federal union be drawn up for consideration by the local parishes, the Annual Meeting of the A.U.A. will be asked to authorize a commission to work out a specific plan, said plan then to be submitted to all churches.

Therefore the present vote which you are asked to take is not a final or decisive vote, nor does it bind your parish in any way. It merely seeks to ascertain whether there exists at present a wish to explore the field of Church Union. The procedure adopted at Portland assures you that no action will ever be taken without the consent of the constituent parishes and that any decisive action will require an overwhelming endorsement. Nothing can be done however unless a very large percentage of the parishes consider this matter prior to May 1.

This may very well turn out to be one of the great religious ventures of our time: the creation of a single channel of liberal religious advance in America! You may use the enclosed form resolution to indicate the vote in your parish.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures for your information:

Dr. Eliot's "Horizons" reprint
Digest of Rev. Lewis' memorandum
Form resolution

Rev. George N. Marshall, Chairman
Rev. William W. Lewis
Rev. John N. Mark
Rev. Chadbourne A. Spring
Mrs. Edward I. Walkley
Dr. Merrill E. Bush

Memorandum on
Unitarian-Universalist Cooperation
(Digest of a more detailed statement prepared by Rev. Wm. W. Lewis)

DID YOU KNOW THAT UNITARIANS AND UNIVERSALISTS

1. Published HYMNS OF THE SPIRIT, which has had a larger sale than any hymn book published by either denomination separately?
2. Form 16 successful federated churches from Portsmouth, New Hampshire to Riverside, California and from Detroit, Michigan to St. Petersburg, Florida?
3. Prepare for the ministry at Meadville, Tufts, Harvard and St. Lawrence theological schools?
4. Recommend "Beacon Courses" for Religious Education through their respective Departments of Education?
5. Carry on many joint youth projects through AUY and UYF, including a combined work camp project in Europe (1948); conferences at the Shoals, Murray Gove (N. J.), and Camp Seeley (Cal.) this past year; observer representation on each other's national committees (voting representation is in the immediate offing); joint social action and international religious fellowship committees; and publication of a Youth Sunday folder and the "Liberal's Challenge"?
6. Are conducting a successful four week teacher training program in New Hampshire, meet annually in New Hampshire for a three day minister's seminar, and meet in combined ministers groups in many other areas such as the Western Conference, Maine, Essex Conference (Mass.)?
7. Form one State Convention in Vermont and combine in the local conference level in the Cape Cod Conference?
8. Cooperate in joint service committee projects?
9. Have an increasing number of ministers (now about 1/5 of the total) who hold reciprocal fellowship in both denominations?
10. Published a joint edition of the 1949 Lenten Manuel, written by Rev. Robert Killam, minister of the Unitarian-Universalist First Church in Cleveland?