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SETTLEMENT HANDBOOK

for Ministers and Congregations

Department of Ministry

Unitarian Universalist Association

March 1995

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Introduction

No choice is more important to a congregation's future or to the future of Unitarian Universalism than the selection of a minister. A thorough, fair, and dignified search process is the beginning of a partnership of lay and ministerial leaders. For both minister and congregation, the process is strenuous, exciting, and informative. It can also be frustrating and discouraging. But generations of lay leaders and ministers testify that this process, followed well, richly repays the time and effort it requires.

The congregation places great trust in its search committee. This experienced and diverse group spends time and energy to know their ministerial prospects well. Equally important, they undertake to know each other well — so they can make the best choice not for themselves as individuals but for the whole congregation. No wonder search committee members often become lifelong friends!

Search committees do not simply choose among ministers; they engage with ministers in thoughtful exploration. For ministry to be effective, both the congregation and the minister must sense a "call," a felt conviction that this match is right for both. Ministers and search committees are not adversaries in this quest, but partners.

A third partner is the Unitarian Universalist Association. Knowing the importance of effective ministry for the health of our whole movement, the UUA supports the search process through the Ministerial Settlement Office of the Department of Ministry. The Settlement Office serves both ministers and congregations by providing information, counsel, structure, and resources. Our goal is to promote excellence in ministry by helping ministers and search committees function at their best as they choose one another.

This handbook outlines the procedures recommended by the UUA Department of Ministry. These procedures reflect the experience of ministers and search committee members over many years. They are intended to be fair, thorough, nondiscriminatory, and efficient. Their use provides the search committee with a range of potential candidates. They enable the committee to use the Department of Ministry and other resources to obtain full information about each minister's experience and qualifications. Use of this process protects ministers from violating the Code of Professional Practice of the UU Ministers Association and protects congregations from inadvertent slights that may result in losing a potential candidate. Finally, these procedures lay the foundation for a happy, fruitful partnership between a united congregation and their chosen minister.

Recommended procedures for congregations

Overview of the ministerial search process

The UUA District Executive (DE)¹ assists and advises the congregation as it plans to fill a ministerial vacancy or to offer a new ministry position. Decisions about interim ministry, approximate salary level, and general duties and expectations are made by the congregation's governing board² with the DE's advice. In some cases, the board may recommend a course of action to the congregation for approval.

Once a congregation decides to seek a minister, the board arranges for a visit by the UUA Ministerial Settlement Representative (MSR). Following this meeting, the congregation selects a search committee. Meanwhile, the board prepares a budget for the ministry position and submits an Application to List a Ministry Position to the UUA. The Board also appoints a negotiating team which begins to prepare a draft ministry agreement.

After meeting again with the MSR, the search committee surveys the congregation's needs and wishes and prepares an informational packet and a Profile Statement of the qualities it believes the congregation needs in its minister. The search committee sends its packet to the MSR for review and comment. The Profile Statement and survey results go to the Ministerial Settlement Director, who prepares a Recommended List of potential candidates. This list, with each minister's Ministerial Record Sheet, goes to the MSR, who presents it to the search committee during a third visit. The committee then contacts each minister immediately and exchanges packets with those who are interested.

Following its review of ministers' packets, telephone interviews, reference checking, and consultation with the Settlement Director, the search committee selects several pre-candidates. These ministers are invited for an extensive interview, tour of the congregation's community and facilities, and a preaching engagement in the "neutral pulpit" of a nearby congregation. After hearing all pre-candidates, the committee selects one minister as its recommended candidate. After the minister and negotiating team agree on a proposed ministry agreement for approval by the board, the committee announces its candidate to the congregation.

The candidate then visits the congregation for a candidating week, which normally includes two Sundays. At the end of the week the congregation votes on a motion to call the minister on terms proposed by the board. If the call is issued and accepted (normally by at least a 85 percent to 95 percent vote) the ministry begins as specified in the agreement.

¹ Whom you may know as District Minister, Consultant or Facilitator. In some districts, many aspects of the DE's work are shared with various teams of trained volunteers. Wherever the DE is mentioned in this manual, you may find that such a team actually performs the service in your district.

² In your congregation, this board may be called Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, Standing Committee, Parish Committee or any of a number of other names.

Typical time line for search process

Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous minister (if any) announces resignation• District Executive meets with board• First visit of Ministerial Settlement Representative (MSR)• Board plans ministerial search committee selection• Board adopts search committee budget• Congregational meeting to elect search committee• Second MSR visit• Board selects negotiating team
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search committee designs and distributes congregational survey• Search committee begins to create information packet• Search committee contacts nearby UU congregations for neutral pulpit dates• Negotiating team prepares draft ministry agreement
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search committee tabulates congregational survey results• Negotiating team presents proposed ministry agreement to board for approval• Search committee completes packet• Search committee sends packet to MSR for review• Search committee sends survey result, Profile Statement and draft ministry agreement to Settlement Director
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MSR delivers initial Recommended List• Search committee members call ministers and send packets to those interested
November-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministers' packets received, circulated, and evaluated• Search committee selects pre-candidates and schedules them for neutral pulpits and interviews
January-March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-candidating
March or April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search committee selects and contacts proposed candidate• Candidate and negotiating team conclude ministry agreement• Candidate and proposed agreement presented to board• Candidacy announced to congregation and reported to MSR and Settlement Office
April or May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidating week• Call extended and accepted
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New minister settled

Preparing for a ministerial search

Most congregations in the search process are replacing a minister who has resigned, retired, or died. Others are seeking a minister for the first time, or plan to add a second or third minister to the staff. Each situation is unique, and a wise board will seek the advice of experienced professionals as early as possible in its planning.

It is tempting, while the departing minister is present, to look to him or her for counsel regarding the transition process. It is not ethical for a departing minister to suggest or recommend either an interim minister or a successor, or to participate in the search process. Your departing minister should refer questions about the transition process to the appropriate UUA staff members.

The UUA staff member best able to help you make the most basic decisions about ministry is the District Executive (DE). The DE, who may be a minister or layperson, is an experienced consultant and knows how you can benefit from the services the UUA provides to congregations. Soon after a minister's departure is announced, the DE conducts a transition interview with your board. In some districts, a transition team assists the DE in this work.

The most urgent decision is whether to employ an interim minister. Information about the UUA's interim ministry program is found in *The Interim Year*, a publication of the UUA Department of Ministry that is provided to all congregations in transition. Your DE may recommend that you consider a two-year interim ministry. This may be appropriate if you have experienced a serious conflict, or need to do some work within the congregation before you choose your search committee.

Your board needs to decide the title, general duties, and approximate compensation of your ministry position before the search committee begins its work. It is not fair to ask a search committee to fill a position whose basic outlines are not clear. Your board should study these decisions carefully and decide which of them it can make itself and which should be submitted to a vote of the congregation.

Other topics your DE may cover in the transition interview include extension ministers; yoked, part-time, and consulting ministers; assistant and associate ministers; parish ministers; ministers of religious education; and community ministers. Try not to be distracted by these many categories. Your job is to define your congregation's needs in simple language that makes sense locally; your DE can help you find the UUA resource that fits you best.

Meeting the Ministerial Settlement Representative

Once you have decided to seek a minister, it is time to meet with the Ministerial Settlement Representative (MSR) for your area. The MSR is a minister or layperson whose primary role is to help your search committee to be effective, and to represent the UUA Department of Ministry in your district. The MSR does not recommend or comment on prospective candidates, but explains the search process and assists the search committee in getting the information and impressions they will use in making their decision.

From this point on, your MSR is the primary person assisting your congregation with the search process. If you need further assistance or are unsatisfied with the help your MSR is offering, you should contact the Settlement Director in the Department of Ministry. Your interim minister, the District Executive, and other UUA staff are not permitted to be involved with search committees. (One exception is for certain part-time ministry positions, where the DE represents the UUA in place of the MSR.)

The MSR's first visit can happen as soon as the Settlement Office receives your DE's report on the transition interview. At this first visit, the MSR meets with your governing board, gives a presentation at an open forum, and delivers this handbook and the *Resource Guide for Search Committees* to the chief lay officer of your congregation.

Budgeting for ministry

The cost of ministry

The board must set a budget for the new minister sufficient to cover all costs, including salary, a housing allowance, standard benefits (health, life, and disability insurance premiums and pension plan contributions) and a professional expense allowance. Detailed information on ministerial compensation is included in the *Resource Guide*. Further information and advice can be obtained from the Office of Church Staff Finances in the UUA Department of Ministry. It is important that all board members understand that the Total Cost of Ministry (TCM) is not "salary," although too many congregational budgets present it as such.

The figure most comparable to what most employees think of as "pay" is salary plus housing allowance. If there is a parsonage, its fair rental value and utility costs (if paid by the congregation) are included. This "salary and housing" total should be summed separately in all public presentations of the congregation's budget. Benefits should have their own subtotal, ideally along with benefits for other staff. Professional expense allowances should be listed elsewhere; essential as these are, they are not part of the minister's compensation. It is the "salary and housing" figure that the board should have in mind when setting a fair budget for the minister.

What is fair? One source is the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association *Guidelines*, which lists a salary and housing level by the size of the congregation's budget and the level of the minister's experience. Remember that the amounts listed presume that the congregation also will support a full package of benefits and expense allowances. Another method is to collect information about comparable positions in your community. Local ministers and rabbis in congregations of similar size and economic status, school principals and teachers, college faculty, and trade association executives usually will provide data on salary and benefits. Another consideration is your congregation members' own economic position. In our culture, money talks. If you want your minister to be respected as a leader, you will want to pay what most of your members would expect to be paid at a comparable career stage. It is worth doing some research to set a salary you feel comfortable with.

One suggestion that is *never* fair is to increase the minister's salary by skimping on essential benefits. No responsible congregation would allow a minister to go without

pension contributions, or health or disability insurance. To do so puts at risk not only the minister, but the congregation as well.

Search committee budget

Your search committee needs a budget to work effectively. You do not want to limit your selection of ministers or to assess them superficially to save a little money. The recommended budget for a search committee is \$7,000 or 12 percent of the projected Total Cost of Ministry, whichever is greater. If your next minister stays with you for seven years, this amounts to less than 2 percent of your total investment over that period.

The search committee's budget covers the following:

- A leader and site for the search committee retreat.
- Printing and materials for the information packet.
- Committee members' expenses, including telephone, mileage to pre-candidating sites, meals, and lodging as required.
- Postage and stationery for correspondence and packet mailing.
- Pre-candidates' expenses, including travel, meals, and lodging (typically there are three to five pre-candidates).
- Candidate's expenses, including travel, meals, and lodging during candidating week.
- One visit for the candidate's immediate family, either for candidating week or at some other time.

Transition expenses

Your board also needs to plan for several other expenses of the transition. These include compensation and moving expenses for an interim minister, if you engage one, or for pulpit supply. In addition, you need to plan:

- Moving expenses for the new minister. These vary greatly, from \$5,000 to over \$15,000. It is the congregation's responsibility to cover the cost of a professional move for the minister's immediate family and household goods. Additional costs, such as packing, temporary housing, short-term loans, house-hunting trips, and mortgage assistance are also sometimes negotiated.
- The Installation of your new minister, which normally includes speakers from out of town, special music, and a reception. This normally happens during the first year after settlement. The cost might be \$500 for a small church up to \$2,000 or more for a large one.
- For ministers in their first settlement, a start-up workshop. This event gives new ministers an opportunity to reflect on ministry as they begin actually to practice it. The congregation is expected to cover the cost of this workshop, which should be budgeted over and above the normal professional expense allowance. The Office of Ministerial Development in the Department of Ministry can provide the dates and cost of upcoming seminars.

The negotiating team

Shortly after the search committee is selected, the board should appoint a negotiating team. The congregation's negotiating team should consist of no more than three persons, including at least one search committee member and one board member. The team begins immediately to study ministerial compensation, taxation, and benefits. It should meet with the board several times to achieve a clear understanding on the limits of the ministerial "package" and the plan for negotiating a final agreement. At some point, a meeting or phone conference with the MSR is also a good idea.

The board, for its part, should be prepared to support any ministry agreement negotiated within this understanding. In advance of any pre-candidating interviews, the negotiating team should prepare a draft ministry agreement for board approval. During the interview weekend, the search committee member on the negotiating team should share this proposal with each pre-candidate and make notes of his or her response. It is not necessary at this point to resolve any differences, only to acknowledge that they exist and will need to be resolved if this person is chosen as the candidate. Members of the negotiating team who are not on the search committee should not meet with the candidate at this time.

Selecting the search committee

Your bylaws may specify how to select a ministerial search committee. If not, one good way is to have a nominating committee (regular or special) propose a single slate of seven to be elected by the congregation. A single slate ensures a representative committee. If your congregation feels it must have a contested election, you might have them elect five, leaving two positions for the board to fill to ensure appropriate diversity.

However chosen, all members of the search committee should be:

- Known and respected by others in the congregation.
- More strongly committed to the congregation as a whole than to any subgroup.
- Well informed about the demands and time requirements of search committee membership. Members should promise to attend every meeting, and to give about 250 hours over the coming year.
- Balanced by sex, age, skills, interests, and tenure of membership to reflect the diversity of your congregation. Major areas of church life such as religious education, social action, property management, finance, and music should be represented by participants, not partisans.
- Not paid members of the church staff, except for a senior minister who will be supervising the minister to be called.
- Pledged to conduct a search that is fair and nondiscriminatory with respect to race, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, and national origin.
- Committed to maintain confidentiality and to seek consensus.
- Capable of both self-assertion and compromise.

- Not prone to extreme reactions to ministers. Your previous ministers' strongest supporters or opponents are rarely the best choice.

It is easier to achieve these goals by active recruiting than by passively accepting volunteers. This committee is not the way to get a newcomer more involved, or to appease a chronic malcontent. Alternate and ex-officio membership are discouraged; each search committee member should participate fully. If one or two members must resign after the committee has begun it is usually best not to replace them. During the search, members should be released from other major duties in the congregation. One member (normally the chair) should be assigned as a board liaison, but should not be a board member.

Organizing the search committee

Second visit from the MSR

The second visit of your MSR is to help your newly constituted ministerial search committee begin its work. You have many concrete tasks to complete; don't let this divert you from the equally important work of getting well acquainted and building a strong team. Every year a few search committees "crash" as conflicts surface in the course of interviewing candidates. Often in such cases, committee members had been vaguely uneasy about early signs of conflict, but decided to skip the team-building phase. When conflict surfaces, this skipped step is paid for sevenfold.

During the second visit, the MSR will also want to make sure your board has appointed a negotiating team, and to arrange a meeting or conference call with them. To maintain confidentiality, negotiating team members who are not also on the search committee should not attend the search committee session.

Retreat

The most effective program for a strong start is a one- or two-day retreat away from your homes and church. Ideally you would engage an effective retreat facilitator from outside your congregation. Your MSR may be able to suggest someone. Pastoral counselors, chaplains, social workers, and organizational consultants are often good retreat leaders. Such a retreat will set a pattern of full participation, frank communication, and high energy, and make the rest of your work easier.

Leadership roles

You need to assign specific jobs to each member of your committee. Do not do this in haste; these decisions are hard to undo, and all of them can wait until the second day of a retreat. Here is a list of roles you can adapt to your needs and talents:

- **Chair:** Schedules meetings and keeps track of assigned work. Leads meetings. Official representative of committee to board, Settlement Office, and potential candidates.
- **Corresponding secretary:** Writes to ministers to keep them informed of the committee's decisions. The importance of prompt, pleasant correspondence cannot be stressed too strongly!

- **Congregational communications:** Writes frequent newsletter columns. Schedules occasional pulpit reports on the committee's work. Prepares a bulletin board display of search progress.
- **Process observer:** Makes sure committee "checks in" with personal news before starting each meeting. Plans or assigns occasional devotional reading or meditation. Interrupts meetings to say, "We seem to disagree on this. How are we going to work toward a better understanding of each others' views?"
- **Treasurer:** Keeps track of expenses. Reports to board and asks for more money if needed. Insists that all members account for their expenses and are reimbursed, even if they intend to make an extra gift to the church to cover them. Takes care that ministers' names are not inadvertently disclosed through the reimbursement process.
- **Survey coordinator:** Drafts a proposed survey for approval by the search committee. Assigns publicity, distribution, and tabulation of the survey.
- **Packet editor:** Assigns preparation of materials for information packet. Ensures that packet presents the congregation in an honest and positive light.
- **Neutral-pulpit arranger:** Contacts potential neutral-pulpit congregations early to reserve dates. Makes sure the host congregation understands the need for confidentiality. Puts pre-candidates in touch with the appropriate persons as the weekend approaches.
- **Hospitality coordinator:** Makes sure pre-candidates, candidate, and family members are warmly welcomed, comfortably housed, and well fed. This function can be rotated, but some do it better than others.
- **Reference checker:** Organizes committee members to call references and to report on the results.
- **Negotiating team member:** Participates in the negotiating team's preparations. Presents the negotiating team's draft agreement to each pre-candidate and initiates negotiations after a candidate is chosen.

Confidentiality

Your congregation is entitled to know the process you are following and how far along you are at every point. At the same time, you need to keep confidential both the names of the ministers under consideration and the details of committee business. There are several reasons for the rule of confidentiality:

- Ministers settled in a congregation may not have told their present parishioners that they are contemplating a move. These parishioners are entitled to hear the news from their own minister at the appropriate time. To "leak" a minister's name can undermine his or her ability to serve the present congregation, and will almost certainly damage your chances of attracting that potential candidate.

- When the identities of unsuccessful applicants are known, it heightens the competitive aspect of the search process. This hurts collegial feeling among ministers and (when neighboring congregations compete for the same minister) also can create hard feelings among congregations.
- It is harder to resolve differences among the members of a search committee when factions of the congregation are looking over your shoulders. It is better to resolve your differences in private.

The congregation usually takes the search committee's lead on confidentiality. If committee members take their obligations seriously and are consistent in keeping confidential matters to themselves, others will not pry. The retreat is the time to set the tone on confidentiality, and to agree on how to deal with committee spouses, neutral pulpit sites, and congregation members who ask questions.

Deciding how to decide

At the retreat or early meetings, think ahead to some of the decisions you will make. Consensus is the goal, but you need a plan in case one or two people feel strongly that the majority of the committee has made the wrong choice. How many members will it take to reject a minister on the basis of the packet? to put a minister "on hold" while considering others? to invite a minister for a pre-candidating interview? to reject a minister? Some committees give each member an effective veto at every point; it is probably better to require a majority for this until after the pre-candidating weekend. You need to make your own rules and can do so most easily before you begin to consider actual ministers.

Other preparations

At your early meetings, you need to make definite plans for circulating ministers' packets, conducting pre-candidating interviews, and scheduling neutral pulpits. It is not too soon to start contacting nearby congregations for neutral pulpit sites, because schedules fill up early.

Relating to your congregation

Communication

The rule of confidentiality does not prevent your keeping the congregation posted on your progress. They are entitled to understand the search process and to know how you are coming along. In the *Resource Guide* are some sample newsletter columns, Sunday announcements, and ideas for a poster to help you keep your congregation informed.

You will want to explain the search process and the rationales behind it. Materials from this handbook, from the visits of your MSR, and from the Settlement Director's training seminars may be good sources for newsletter columns. Some congregations wonder why the search committee presents only one recommended candidate. Explain that the committee's task is to be both thorough and sensitive to the diverse wishes in the congregation, seeking consensus on one candidate with whom the whole congregation can be united.

While you will want to publicize the schedule you expect to follow, avoid committing yourself so strongly to a deadline that you feel pressure to select a candidate with whom you are uncomfortable.

Beyond Categorical Thinking

No religious body is more strongly committed to the principle of equality than the Unitarian Universalist Association. Of course, it is not enough to be committed to a principle. Despite considerable progress, our goal of fair access to our ministry "without regard to race, color, disability, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin" is not yet achieved. Ministerial search committees have a role to play as leaders in this effort.

The place to begin is with yourselves. At your retreat or other early meeting, set aside some time to consider your own attitudes toward ministers who differ from those you are accustomed to. Don't be afraid to admit to prejudice. What counts is that you be committed to rise above prejudice to choose the candidate who will best serve your congregation.

The *Resource Guide* contains information on the UUA's affirmative action policy and the "Beyond Categorical Thinking" program. This program helps prepare your congregation for the possibility that you will present a candidate from a group that sometimes experiences discrimination in the search process. Don't pass these programs up because you think your congregation "doesn't have a problem." They can be enjoyable and reassuring for even the most open-minded of congregations.

Nominations

Members of your congregation may suggest ministers they know or have seen. It is not best to invite this. If it happens, a good policy to follow is to accept the name and any accompanying information, thank the member, and explain that the committee will consider the name seriously but will not be able to report what, if anything, it has done about it. It is improper for ministers to "lobby" members of the congregation to submit their own or any other name; if you suspect that this has occurred, please report the details to the Settlement Director immediately.

If, after discussion, the committee would like to request the name of a minister who is not on the Recommended List, you may contact the Settlement Director. See "Recruiting," on page 16.

Congregational self-study

By the time the search committee interviews pre-candidates, its members will know a great deal about your congregation. By studying the congregation's records, analyzing survey results, meeting with fellow members, and interviewing knowledgeable outside observers, committee members can gain a broader perspective than they have ever had before. This knowledge will help you pick the best minister, and will make you a more effective member of the congregation in the future.

Factual data

The most basic information you need should be in the file cabinet of your congregation's office. Unfortunately, too many congregations' records are scattered in the homes of former officers and other leaders. You can do a service simply by collecting these in a safe place before they are lost. Using the fact sheets found in the *Resource Guide*, you should be able to reconstruct a history of membership, attendance, pledging, operating budgets, capital expenditures, and borrowing for the past twenty years.

Generally, a study of this information will correct some common notions about your congregation's history and present strength. You may wish to share some of your discoveries with the congregation through your newsletter. If you choose to include the results in your packet, your thoroughness and candor will impress prospective candidates.

Congregational survey

The congregational survey is a normal and expected part of the search process. A survey is the best way to offer every member the chance to express needs and wishes for your congregation's future ministry. Survey data also lend themselves to quantitative analysis, and can give a factual basis to support or correct vague impressions of your congregation's make-up or direction.

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind the limitations of a survey. Although search committee surveys often get a good response, it is rare, especially in a large church, to get more than two-thirds of the surveys back. It is important to check how well the responses represent the total congregation in age, sex, interests, and length of membership. A comparison with your congregational directory will help.

Remember also that a head-count only tells part of the story. A ministry can be destroyed by a small but passionate group. On the other hand, successful ministers often differ from large groups in the congregation in theology, political persuasion, or preferred worship style. Much depends on the interpersonal skills on both sides.

Another limitation of the survey is the degree to which it often reflects the congregation's feelings about the previous minister. People who liked the last minister sometimes want his or her twin. Other people's first wish is for the next minister to be strong where the last was weak, while taking the last minister's strengths for granted. This rear-view outlook is normal, but it is the search committee's job to move beyond the past to think about the congregation's future.

For all its limitations, the survey is your basic source of information on the present composition of your congregation and their preferences. It is up to you to interpret what this information means about the most effective kind of minister for your congregation in the future.

Group meetings

An effective way of giving members of your congregation a chance to voice opinions on the ministerial search is to meet with them in small groups. The groups can be committees, neighborhood potlucks, randomly selected "focus groups" or groups gathered on the basis of a common interest. Some search committees make themselves available

after the worship service to meet with interested members. To avoid an unpleasant experience, you need a definite agenda for small-group discussions.

A group discussion not only lets the search committee learn from participants, it also lets participants learn from each other. People often assume that others think and feel as they do. Group discussions open up the congregation to its own diversity; this prepares members for the fact that any new minister will need to meet the needs of others as well as their own.

Interviews

Early in the self-study process you should assign members of the search committee to interview key persons and report on what they learn.

Lay leaders who were not selected for the search committee will be reassured if you take time to interview them. This includes those leaders in every congregation who may not hold office at the moment but whose counsel is sought and respected when major decisions are made.

You should interview any paid staff members, especially those who will continue with the new minister. Especially in the case of staff members who were in conflict with the last minister, you will hear strong feelings. You may not be able to accommodate all of their wishes, but one of your goals should be creating an effective and harmonious staff team. It is important to ask how ongoing staff expect to relate to the new minister in terms of supervision, communication, and support, and to clarify any discrepancies between their expectations and the board's.

You can learn a surprising amount about your congregation by asking key outsiders for their observations. Your District Executive is one obvious example. Others might be local clergy and other leaders who can tell you how your congregation is viewed in your community. You may find out you have a better reputation than you think!

Presenting your congregation

Information packet

The Information Packet you send to prospective candidates is no doubt one of several they receive, so you will want it to represent your congregation well. A poor packet suggests a lazy, careless congregation. An attractive packet speaks of skillful members who are proud of their church. A thorough, honest presentation of the facts lets ministers know that you are willing to face and solve your problems as well as to boast of your strengths. A slick, artificial-looking packet conveys the impression that you care more about surface appearances than about spiritual depth.

You need to make about fifteen packets initially. A good plan is to make at least twenty prints and photocopies, then buy expensive items like notebooks as they are needed. It is worth the time and cost to make sure each packet you send out is in "new" condition. The following items should be included:

- An introductory letter from your search committee, with a photo and personal information about each member.

- Results of the congregational survey.
- Your Profile Statement (see p. 14).
- Details of your proposed ministerial compensation and any other contract provisions that are either unusual or especially important to your congregation.
- Pictures of your building or buildings, including the worship space, minister's study, and parsonage if any.
- A brief history of your congregation, with dates. Ministers will pay particular attention to the way you detail your relations with past ministers.
- Historical membership, attendance, pledging, and budget information.
- A copy of your current operating budget, plus the actual results of your most recent fiscal year.
- A report of any current capital spending.
- A current balance sheet showing all property, endowments, and debt.
- Your bylaws.
- Your most recent religious education prospectus.
- Recent newsletters.
- Orders of worship for both "regular" and special services. Be sure to include some from *before* your interim minister arrived!
- The most recent annual report.
- Information about your community. The Chamber of Commerce can give you materials from which to choose.

Profile Statement

The most important piece of material you send to the Settlement Director is your Profile Statement. This one- or two-page statement draws on information you have gathered in your research, survey, meetings, and interviews, but it is more than a summary. It is a statement of the conclusions you as a committee have drawn about the skills and qualities that are most important in your next minister. After drafting your Profile Statement, you may wish to publish it for comment by members of your congregation.

It is tempting simply to list all the virtues of a perfect minister and leave it at that. Your statement will be more helpful if it gives guidance about trade-offs. What if you had to choose between a scholarly preacher who was a bit cold and a weak preacher who was an inviting counselor? To what extent do you depend on your minister to hold the office operation together? Do you have specific expectations as to lay participation in worship, the minister's involvement with children and youth, or home visitation?

Another approach would be to define the major tasks you expect your congregation to face in the coming years. Do you need to heal after a division? Are you eager to grow? Do you hope for a more worshipful Sunday service? Do you have a building project in the

works? Do you hope to build a more effective and cohesive staff team? Your answers will suggest priorities that will interest some ministers more than others.

The Profile is the place to state any additional requirements you wish to impose, such as a certain amount or type of experience. You will want to be flexible; an exceptional minister who does not meet rigid criteria might still be a good match. It is inappropriate to restrict your position by race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, or national origin.

Writing a Profile Statement is a difficult assignment. To do a good job will probably require several drafts and several meetings. Because the Profile Statement is the primary document used in selecting your first Recommended List, so it is worth the trouble to produce one that is thorough and realistic.

The Recommended List

The following items need to be sent to the Settlement Office before the Settlement Director can prepare a list.

- Survey results and analysis
- Profile Statement
- Draft ministry agreement

You also need to have your packet ready for review by your MSR. If you wish, you can send some or all of your packet to the Settlement Director, who will review it before making up your list.

Normally a Recommended List can be mailed within two weeks of the receipt of a completed application. However, at some times of the year it can take longer. A good procedure is to have your MSR call the Settlement Office to secure a definite commitment, and then schedule a meeting with your committee to deliver the list.

With the list itself is a four-page Ministerial Record Sheet for each minister. This standard resume contains basic information about the minister's education and experience, and an essay on the minister's understanding of church and ministry.

The initial list is sent to your MSR, who presents it at a meeting with your search committee. Subsequent lists are sent directly to the contact person designated by you.

The Settlement Director keeps a current roster of all Unitarian Universalist ministers who wish to be settled in congregations. These ministers provide information on their geographic restrictions, compensation requirements, preferences, and skills. In a majority of cases, ministers have practical reasons (often involving the spouse or partner's employment) for restricting their search to a particular region. Many ministers also have strong preferences for a style of congregational life, theological position, and size of congregation that would be a "match" for them at this point in their career.

In preparing your Recommended List, the Settlement Director first eliminates those ministers whose salary or geographic criteria clearly rule them out. Others may be deleted because they said they would not consider a position of the type (assistant, associate, etc.) or specialty (religious education, community ministry) that you are offering. If your Profile

Statement restricts your search to ministers of a certain style, theological position, or minimum experience level, this too will be respected.

From the names that remain, the Settlement Director selects, with attention to your profile statement and the other materials you have sent, an initial Recommended List of about twelve names. The intention is to create a diverse list of ministers likely to include the one with whom you ultimately will make a happy match. Selection criteria include the following:

- **Track record:** Priority is given to those ministers with a sustained record of effective service in ministry.
- **Diversity:** To the extent possible, your list will include ministers who vary in style and personal characteristics.
- **Desire:** Ministers who want a position like yours are given preference. This factor is especially important at low and middle salary levels.
- **Match:** The Settlement Director's perception of the likely "chemistry" can sometimes play a role.

The Recommended List does not mean that each minister's track record is free of problems, or that the Settlement Director thinks each minister is equally well qualified for your position. It does mean that given all the facts of your situation the Department of Ministry feels that you should give each name on the list serious consideration.

If graduating students appear on your list, they normally will not receive Preliminary Fellowship until they graduate and complete other requirements. The Department's recommendation in these cases is contingent on the actual granting of Preliminary Fellowship.

At the same time your list is sent, the ministers are notified that they have been recommended to you by the Department of Ministry. This notice includes your Total Cost of Ministry figure and the name and address of your committee's contact person. Ministers are permitted at this point to contact you directly, but customarily they wait for you to be in touch first.

Recruiting

Sometimes search committees wonder why they must be restricted to the ministers on their Recommended List. Particularly those members with experience in secular hiring feel that it would be better to recruit actively. Actually, it is all right to pursue candidates who are not on the Recommended List, so long as this is done through the Settlement Office. If your committee, after discussion, wishes to consider ministers who are not on the Recommended List, submit their names to the Settlement Director, who will do one of three things:

- Recommend the minister.
- Write the minister on your behalf, inviting him or her to enter the search process.
- Decline to recommend the minister, explaining why not, if this can be done without violating the minister's privacy.

Most ministers have good reasons either to be searching or to be staying where they are, and a recruited settlement is the rare exception.

AMR and ACR

Your Recommended List may include one or more names marked AMR (At Minister's Request). This means that a minister has insisted that the Settlement Director submit his or her credentials. Accompanying your list will be a letter stating why the minister was not recommended by the Department.

Similarly, your committee has the right to insist that ministers' credentials be sent ACR (At Congregation's Request), provided that the minister agrees, is in Fellowship with the UUA, and could accept your position without violating the Rules of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Both the AMR and ACR designations are used rarely and should be regarded as a last resort. In almost every case, ministers and search committees can come to an understanding with the Settlement Director about which matches are appropriate. If you are dissatisfied with the names on your list, contact the Settlement Director and be as specific as you can about the type of minister you hope to find.

Supplemental lists

Until you request otherwise, the Settlement Director will send additional names from time to time as appropriate ministers enter the search process. Other ministers may be recommended later because their qualifications are significantly less than those on your initial Recommended List, or because the search committee has modified its selection criteria and communicated this to the Settlement Director. If possible, give the ministers on supplemental lists the same careful consideration given those on the initial list.

You may reject — or be rejected by — a number of the ministers on your initial list. If at any time it looks as though you may not have three or four interesting pre-candidates, contact the Settlement Director to request more names. It helps if, along with your request, you provide information about which candidates you rejected, which withdrew, and which are still under consideration. At this stage you probably will have learned some things about your preferences that will be helpful to the Settlement Director in preparing your new list.

Pre-candidate selection

Reading packets

The search committee should contact every minister on the Recommended List by telephone to see whether or not he or she would like to exchange packets. This should be done promptly; remember that the ministers know they have been recommended and expect your call. It is customary for the search committee to send its packet first; the ministers either return it (indicating they are not interested) or send their own.

As ministers' packets arrive, circulate them and make notes. Remember that the ministers may wish to reuse the packets, so handle them with care. In taking notes it is important to include seemingly trivial distinguishing characteristics — if you note only profound points, the ministers will blend together after you have read a dozen packets.

It is important, as you reduce your list of possible pre-candidates, that you promptly return the packets of those you reject. It is not fair to the ministers, most of whom are on other congregations' lists, to keep them waiting more than three weeks after they have sent their packets. If you decide to put a minister on hold, it is courteous to write promptly, saying when you expect to make a definite decision.

Reference checking

Most ministers offer, either in the packet or on request, the names of three or four persons you may call for references. In addition, you may call the District Executive in any district where the minister has served. It is a good idea to call references before choosing your pre-candidates. After checking references, you should be able to answer the following questions for each position the minister has held in the last ten years:

- What contributions did the minister make in this position?
- What did the minister do especially well?
- What were the most frequent criticisms of the minister? How did the minister respond to criticism?
- Did the congregation or employing institution prosper during this ministry?
- How and why did the ministry end?

When your prospect is a graduating student, these questions should be answered with respect to the internship and other ministry positions held while preparing for the ministry. If the internship supervisor is not listed, the committee should request this name.

It is not necessarily the minister's fault if a church declines in size or budget or falls into a conflict. Even a dismissal or negotiated termination does not necessarily reflect poor ministry. But you are entitled to know your prospects' past accomplishments and difficulties so you can explore further what they imply for your decision. You should discuss your impressions with the minister directly in the interview.

The references are normally persons who hold the minister in high esteem. Nonetheless, it usually is possible to get at least a hint of any problems. If you feel you are getting a one-sided picture, or would like a more balanced reference before offering pre-candidacy, you can ask the minister for the name of a responsible critic.

It is not appropriate or wise to call persons not listed as references without the minister's approval. Clandestine reference-checking may violate the feeling of trust that is so important at the outset of a ministry. In the case of a settled minister, it also can make it difficult to continue ministry in his or her present congregation. Furthermore there is no need to investigate in secret; you are in a position to insist on talking with more references if you decide you need to.

When you have selected your tentative pre-candidates, you are encouraged to call the Settlement Director for comment. Be prepared to share the reasons for your choices. If your impressions seem one-sided or incomplete, the Settlement Director will suggest questions for you to pursue either with the minister or with references.

Problems

A few ministers on your list may have serious problems in their track records. This can range from violations of professional ethics to a style of leadership that has led to a series of unhappy ministries. In extreme cases, ethical violations can lead to removal of Fellowship. A poor track record can lead the Department of Ministry to stop placing a minister on Recommended Lists. Most of the time, though, ministers are given a second and even a third chance. This is out of fairness to the minister and because experience shows that a minister who has difficulty in one situation may do well in others. It is not in the best interest of your congregation to reject ministers summarily because their records are not flawless.

Ministers are expected to complete the Ministerial Record Sheet honestly. This means that if a past ministry is described at all, and there were major problems, the description should not ignore or misrepresent these. If you find, as you check references, that a Record Sheet is misleading, please report this to the Settlement Director.

It is your responsibility to acquire a full picture of each pre-candidate's track record. Normally this is not difficult if you take the initiative. The Department of Ministry will do all it can to help you when you ask and will not knowingly conceal anything about a minister that is of legitimate concern to you in serving your congregation.

Pre-candidating weekend

Once you have selected your pre-candidates, the next step is to schedule each one for a pre-candidating weekend. Typically the minister arrives on Friday evening, interviews with the committee most of Saturday, tours your building and community and has a social dinner with the search committee. On Sunday the pre-candidate appears in the "neutral pulpit" of a nearby UU church. After lunch with the committee, the minister departs on Sunday afternoon.

For each pre-candidating weekend, a committee member will need to be responsible for each of the following:

- Transportation
- Housing
- Meals
- Tour of community
- Moderating interview
- Neutral pulpit arrangements.

Interviewing

To prepare for the pre-candidating interview, a mock interview with an experienced minister is helpful. Your interim minister (who may seem to shun the search committee to avoid even the appearance of "tampering") will probably be glad to serve in this capacity. A minister or rabbi from a nearby congregation can provide a refreshing perspective in a mock interview. One or more mock interviews prevent the embarrassment of using your first pre-candidate for "practice."

One good plan is to assign each committee member a topic area, for instance worship, religious education, social action, self-care, administration, or finance. Brainstorm a list of questions you want answered by each pre-candidate, and then bring checklists with you. Keep the interview itself informal, with each committee member free to ask any question or to probe for further clarity. The chair can call on each committee member in the course of the day to make sure all the questions have been answered.

Before the interview begins, negotiate the day's schedule with your pre-candidate. This is a mutual discussion, and the minister expects some time to ask questions about the congregation. If, in the course of the day, concerns or questions arise in your mind, it is best to voice these directly so the minister can respond. Plan for plenty of break time; a good match can be spoiled if people get worn out and testy.

Neutral pulpits

Planning for the neutral pulpit visits should begin several months in advance. You don't need to wait until you have selected your pre-candidates to schedule neutral pulpits. As soon as you can estimate when you will need them, call neighboring UU congregations to reserve three or four Sundays. *You will need to promise to supply a worship service even if you do not have a pre-candidate.* Most congregations have one or more laypersons who can lead one or two services a year; perhaps they will volunteer to keep a few Sundays free just in case. Another approach is to have the lay speakers lead your congregation's worship while your interim minister fills the neutral pulpit. All this must be done discreetly, without violating confidentiality.

Once a minister accepts a pre-candidating date, the obligation to fill the pulpit on that date shifts from the search committee to the minister. No honorarium is necessary or expected; if one is offered, it may be retained by the minister. You should also remember that the minister's first obligation is to the people of the host congregation. It should count for and not against a minister that he or she accommodates their customary style of worship.

If a pre-candidating interview is canceled either by the minister or search committee, the minister is still responsible for filling the pulpit, or for finding a substitute. The search committee is still responsible for the minister's travel expenses. Especially if the search committee canceled the interview, you should do all you can to help the minister in filling the pulpit, but the final obligation rests with the minister.

Neutral pulpit arrangements should be made directly with the host minister or, if there is no minister, with the program chair. As few people as possible should know the reason for the visit.

In selecting neutral pulpits, it is best to avoid other congregations that are searching for a minister. This is because a minister who appears in a congregation with a ministerial vacancy becomes ineligible for that vacancy. Ideally, the neutral pulpit congregation should be similar in size and style to yours. Because this is not always possible, non-UU churches have sometimes been used.

If the pre-candidate is serving a nearby congregation, it is all right for the committee to visit a service there so long as the minister approves. Unannounced visits, even by one member of the search committee, weaken trust and are strongly discouraged.

Arrangements

The search committee is responsible for the pre-candidate's expenses, including auto mileage, air fare, lodging, and meals. Offering home hospitality may seem a good way to reduce pre-candidating expenses, but should be used only as a last resort. A long interview, pulpit appearance, and social meals are exhausting enough without the additional stress of being a guest in someone's home. Many ministers will accept home hospitality with apparent gratitude; few honestly prefer it. The cost of a hotel room is a good investment in good will.

The minister's spouse or partner may decide to come along on the pre-candidating trip or to visit your community at another time. Only the pre-candidate's expenses must be covered, however some search committees offer to cover a trip for the spouse as well. It is a welcoming gesture to offer hospitality and assistance in the spouse's investigation of your community. It is also in the congregation's best interest to help the candidate and partner to get an accurate view of the church and community they are considering. You will want to take care not to give the impression that you expect him or her to be part of the ministerial "package."

Presenting your candidate

Selecting a candidate

When all pre-candidates have been interviewed and heard, the search committee must reach a decision on a candidate. Sometimes the drift of the committee's feeling has been clear for weeks; going through the motions in these circumstances can be excruciating. Do it anyway. Your candidate will be stronger if you can assure the congregation that you seriously considered several others. It also will be useful to ask each search committee member to write and share his or her particular reasons for choosing this candidate. The reasons will be different — sometimes even mildly conflicting — and will suggest the diverse reactions your candidate will encounter in the congregation.

Most of the time, one candidate will not emerge as everyone's first choice. This need not prevent consensus on the best candidate for the whole congregation. The first step in this case is to hear and respectfully acknowledge each committee member's appraisal of each pre-candidate. It can help to try to summarize the views of those who disagree with you, and ask them to correct your understanding.

Allow plenty of time. Pressure for an early decision can push strong feelings underground, where they may erupt later on. It can also change honest differences into personal conflicts. Sometimes renewed discussion at a later meeting shows the matter in a different light. Your MSR and the Settlement Director are ready to consult with you if need be. You may need to resort to your earlier decision about what to do if you cannot reach consensus. The concerns of dissenting search committee members should be taken seriously, but an individual should not be allowed to hold the congregation hostage for reasons not shared by many others in the congregation.

Once a decision is made, the person selected should be notified promptly. Both your offer and the minister's acceptance should be contingent on your resolving any differences on the major terms of the ministry agreement. One way to achieve this is for the minister

and a representative of your negotiating team to initial a copy of the negotiating team's draft ministry agreement, with any agreed changes marked. Once this is done, you can announce the candidacy to your congregation. Other prospects should also be notified promptly. At this point all the ministers who have been recommended to you by the Department of Ministry should have been told that they are not under consideration. This frees them to pursue other opportunities. The Settlement Office also needs to know of your decision so that they can stop sending your candidate's name to other congregations.

Candidating week

When your chosen candidate has accepted, schedule a mutually acceptable candidating week. This week, which normally runs from Saturday evening through the following Sunday afternoon, is the climax of the ministerial search. For information about candidating week activities, consult the *Resource Guide*.

After meeting your candidate in a variety of contexts, your congregation votes on whether or not to extend a call. Although almost all candidacies succeed, it is important not to take the congregation's support for granted. Most ministers hope for a 90 to 95 percent vote; the Department of Ministry normally discourages ministers from accepting a vote of less than 85 percent.

The minister should not be present for your congregational meeting. Do not be surprised if the minister chooses to be away from the building, and not to accept any call until the next day. That way, any hesitation (based, for example, on the need to learn the reasons for a weak vote) will not be misread as lack of enthusiasm for the congregation. It is best to prepare the congregation to expect a short delay as a normal part of the search process.

The congregation traditionally invites the candidate's spouse or partner, if any, and other immediate family members to come along for candidating week. If, as often happens, this is not possible or desired, the congregation should offer to pay for a visit at another time.

The congregation should reimburse all the expenses of the candidate and family for all candidating week expenses, including auto mileage, air fare, lodging, and meals. The candidate should not be expected to accept home hospitality.

Remember that candidating week is grueling for both ministers and their families. Ample unscheduled time should be provided for house hunting, rest, and recreation. At least one search committee member should attend each of the candidating week events. Listen for concerns or criticisms from members and mention these to the candidate as they arise so they can be responded to immediately.

Winding up

If all goes well

If the call is offered and accepted, your work as a search committee is almost over—you still have a few more things to do. Notify the Settlement Office and your MSR of your success. Destroy any leftover Ministerial Record Sheets, minutes of committee debates, or other records that could reveal confidential information. Return the Notice of

Call form with a copy of the ministry agreement to the Settlement Office. Have a party; you deserve it. And enjoy having your weekends back again.

For the congregation, the transition continues, and you may need to remind the leadership that there is much to do. If you have an interim minister, it probably is time to think about saying good-bye to him or her. The Board will need to make sure it has budgeted enough money for the minister's moving expenses and Installation service.

The board should contact the DE to schedule a Startup Weekend during the first months of the new ministry. This event for minister, staff and lay leaders is an opportunity to set goals, exchange expectations and deepen the implicit contract between minister and congregation.

If all does not go well

After all this work, you may find yourselves among the small minority of search committees each year that do not settle a new minister.

- You may find that the ministers available to come to your community at the salary offered are just not up to the expectations that you have. In this case either the salary or the expectations may need to change.
- You may not agree on a candidate. In spite of your best efforts at consensus-building, your committee may not be able to muster even a strong majority for any candidate. You may wonder whether you ought to resign and let a new committee try.
- You may agree on a candidate who then turns you down. Try not to let pride alone stop you from calling your first runner-up. But you may have neither a realistic fallback candidate nor time to start with a fresh list.
- Or you may go all the way through candidating week, only to achieve a vote that is too weak, and the candidate declines the call.

All of these situations are discouraging, to put it mildly. You will want to ask advice from the Settlement Director, your MSR, and your DE. If the problem stems from intractable personal or philosophical divisions in your committee, or between the committee and the rest of the congregation, resigning may be the best course. In any case, your congregation probably is looking at another year in search.

A personal word to search committee members

Search committee membership, rewarding as it is, is not without its hazards. Aside from the long hours, hard work, and emotional stress involved, search committee members sometimes get disillusioned with the congregation itself. Sometimes search committee members actually quit the congregation—often, oddly, angry at the very minister they had so large a part in choosing.

In part, this is a side effect of the good education search committee members get. By the time your work is done, you will know as much about your congregation as anyone. You will have a clear idea of its challenges, and some strong convictions about how it

should meet them. And you will have grown accustomed, in your year of service, to holding a good piece of its future in your hands.

And then the search is over. You have called and welcomed the new minister. He or she may fulfill only imperfectly the potential that you first perceived. Some of your best friends may be among the minister's first critics. You feel obligated to defend the minister — after all, aren't you responsible? If you think the criticisms have merit, you may approach the minister with suggestions. If these are not followed it gets harder next time to offer a defense. You are in the "triangled position": a third party trying to keep things fixed between the congregation and the minister. If you are on the board or ministry committee that position only intensifies the feeling that you ought to be able to do something.

Some advice: while you're serving on the search committee, keep in touch with all the things that you find satisfying about being part of your congregation. You will not be able to carry major responsibilities, but continue to participate as you can. Sing in the choir. Help teach the second grade one Sunday. Spend time with friends. Attend a meditation group. Don't allow yourself to become merely a "task" Unitarian Universalist.

Then, when your work as a search committee ends, have a party. Don't invite the minister. Celebrate not the beginning of the great new era, but the end of your hard work as a committee. Give yourselves permission to become private citizens again. Remember: your responsibility has ended. It is not up to you to make sure your new minister is a success. You have no special obligation to defend or mediate or give advice. Your obligation to support your minister is no greater than any other member's.

You have given much. Your congregation and the whole community of Unitarian Universalism owes you thanks and a hearty welcome back into the fold.

Recommended procedures for ministers

Changing jobs is hard. It involves the loss of familiar surroundings and routines, the stress of uncertainty, and the potential for family conflict. This guide to the UUA ministerial settlement process will not eradicate the stress, but it does offer what security can come from knowing proper procedures and professional requirements. It will give you the tools you need to play an active role in finding a ministry that "fits."

The Code of Professional Practice of the UU Ministers Association states, "I will inform myself of the established candidating procedures of the UUA, and I will strictly observe them." When a minister accepts Ministerial Fellowship, he or she agrees to abide by the procedures established by the UUA Department of Ministry. You should be familiar with both sections of this handbook and follow its procedures closely.

At first glance, this process may seem complicated and the rules intimidating. Actually, just as the volumes of statutes defining various kinds of theft could be summarized as "Thou shalt not steal," the settlement process boils down to "Treat congregations with respect, and colleagues likewise." The rules and customs of the settlement process are the result of generations of experience. They exist to foster a ministry of excellence — where ministry is understood not simply as a career but as a partnership, as work ministers and laypersons perform together.

The most important point to keep in mind is that the settlement process itself is ministry. Even with the search committees of congregations you will ultimately not serve, your conduct in the search process reflects on the Unitarian Universalist ministry. You will also touch the life, for good or ill, of each search committee member you encounter.

Entering settlement

Before new ministers can enter settlement, they must be approved by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and cleared by the Ministerial Education Office of the UUA Department of Ministry. The Ministerial Education Director will explain what is required in each particular case.

Most parish-based UU ministers move during the summer. Although there are exceptions to this rule, most congregations on the *Opportunities for Ministry* list expect their new minister to arrive August 15, plus or minus a week or two. Ideally, you should contact the Settlement Office about a year before you wish to move.

If you are now settled in a congregation, you should tell at least one or two trusted leaders that you are in search when you begin the process. Normally you will list these same persons as references. When you accept candidacy, you should tell your Committee on Ministry immediately, then your church officers and board. It is a good idea, each time you tell a new group that you are leaving, to have someone present who already knows, as this reduces the impression that you have been sneaking around. After you tell the board, it is a good idea to inform the congregation by letter mailed so it will arrive on Friday or

Saturday. This avoids the drama of a pulpit resignation, which is not only unkind to fragile people but can cause some members to commit themselves to angry (or joyful!) first reactions.

If you take a sabbatical, you should serve at least one year after you return unless there is a prior written understanding that you may leave earlier.

If you are now under pressure to resign, or if there is anything in your personal or professional history that is likely to become an issue were it revealed or discovered, you must be candid about this with the Settlement Director. The Settlement Director will work with you to plan how to present yourself honestly, but so that any problems or difficulties are not blown out of proportion. On the other hand, the Department of Ministry will not conceal anything of legitimate interest to a search committee. It is in your best interest to come to a mutual agreement with the Settlement Director about how and when any particular matter will be disclosed to a search committee. In many cases you will be asked to raise any such matter by "noon on Saturday" of the pre-candidating weekend.

Ministers who work in another career after achieving Final Fellowship go into Associate Fellowship. Such ministers may be returned to Full Fellowship by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee when they wish to seek ministerial settlement. If the period in Associate Fellowship has been longer than five years, the minister must first propose to the Ministerial Development Director a program of "retooling" to update his or her academic and practical knowledge in fields necessary for effective ministry.

Completing the forms

Before recommending you to congregations, the Settlement Director must have the following forms as appropriate:

- **Student (green) form.** This form is for students cleared for Settlement who have not yet graduated. It must be signed by the dean or president of the school you attend.
- **Ministerial Record Sheet.** This four-page biographical résumé should be updated annually if you are seeking settlement, every three years if you are not. It is the search committee's first introduction to you as a minister and should be neat. Straightforward, personal responses are better than terse, formal, or cute ones.

If you have had a negotiated termination or other major difficulty in one of your former settlements, you may not report your history deceptively. You may simply list the place and dates, but if you describe the settlement you must do so in a way that represents what happened fairly.

If you wish to prepare your Record Sheet using a computer, you may do so, either by simulating the entire form or by pasting your responses onto a blank form and submitting a photocopy. The Settlement Office will not send out a form of more than four pages.

- **M-1 (pink) form.** This form is for the Settlement Director and is not shared with search committees. It provides information about your salary requirements, geographic preferences and restrictions, theological views, and the type and style of ministry you prefer. The M-1 must be resubmitted each year if you remain in search.

It is your responsibility to list on this sheet any open congregations you are ineligible to consider under the Rules of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The M-1 is also the place to list those churches you would *like* your name sent to. The Settlement Office carefully records such requests (in what traditionally is called "the Book of Hope") and fulfills them whenever it can, consistent with its obligation to be responsible to search committees and fair to other ministers.

- **Application for an Interim Ministry.** This supplement to the M-1 is for those ministers who would accept an interim ministry. For fall interims, lists normally begin to go out the previous March. Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship should note that only one interim ministry may count toward Final Fellowship. The search process for interim ministries is like that described in this handbook, only much less elaborate. Experienced ministers interested in practicing interim ministry as a specialty should obtain *The Interim Year* from the Settlement Office.

Extension ministry

Extension ministry is an alternate route to employment for ministers committed to membership growth. The basic requirements are Ministerial Fellowship and recommendation for Extension Ministry by the Ministerial Settlement Director. You may pursue both settlement and Extension Ministry simultaneously until a search committee makes you a candidate or the UUA Department of Extension appoints you to a congregation. At that point, you must withdraw your name from all other active possibilities. Further information and application forms for Extension Ministry are available from the Extension Department.

Community ministry

Community ministry includes most ministries in settings other than congregations, such as hospital, military and academic chaplaincy, advocacy ministries, and seminary teaching. Each form of community ministry has its own channels of communication about job opportunities. Ministers who wish to seek a community ministry position should seek advice from ministers experienced in their specialty. The Settlement Director can assist ministers in finding such advice. The M-1 form also has a check-off for ministers who would like to receive periodic announcements of community ministry positions.

Preparing your search packet

A minister should prepare a search packet before sending the M-1 form to the UUA. It is never in your best interest to keep search committees waiting. The packet should provide an honest and thorough presentation of your style, skills, and experience.

It is helpful to view several packets used by colleagues who have been settled recently. The Ministerial Settlement Office has several recent ministerial packets for review. A sloppy or dog-eared packet never makes a good impression; the best approach is neither casual nor too elaborate or slick. Above all, the style of the packet should represent your best ministerial style.

Include a cover letter and a brief biographical introduction, five or six sermons on a variety of themes, worship services and rites of passage you have composed, some newsletter columns, the outline of a workshop or religious education class, any published writings, and several good pictures of you. All major aspects of ministry should be covered; where artifacts are not available, it may be helpful to write a brief statement on an area that might otherwise be neglected.

Some ministers choose to include audio or video tapes. If you do, make sure these present you in a better light than text alone; an amateurish video is painful to behold. An audio tape whose first twenty minutes consist of a distorted organ prelude and an inaudible children's story does not show good judgment.

The Recommended List

The main factors that affect whether your name will be on a particular list are:

- Your search criteria as shown on the M-1 form.
- Your experience, style, and track record, relative to the congregation's needs expressed on the Profile Statement.
- Your wish to be on a specific list (the so-called "Book of Hope").
- The need to present a diverse list with an appropriate variety of ministers for the search committee to consider.
- The number of other ministers whose claim to be on the list is as strong or stronger than yours.

You should feel free to speak with the Settlement Director about your feelings as the search goes on. He or she will not normally be able to say why your name is not on a particular list (the real reason is simply that someone else is on the list instead!). But you should be able to come to a common understanding of the type of opportunities you are ready for, and what you can expect. If you feel the Settlement Director underestimates your potential, it may be helpful to enlist a colleague, internship supervisor, or another member of the Department of Ministry to help you. Another resource is the Subcommittee on Settlement of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, which oversees this area from a policy viewpoint. The names of current members of this Subcommittee are available from the Department of Ministry.

Ministers in Fellowship have the right to compel the Settlement Director to send their credentials to a search committee without the Department's recommendation. This request must be in writing and must use the words "At Minister's Request." Such names go no sooner than the first Recommended List and carry the designation AMR, for At Minister's Request. They are accompanied by a letter to the search committee, with a copy to the minister, explaining why the Department does not recommend him or her. It is usually preferable to concentrate on other opportunities until the search committee requests a supplemental list of ministers whose qualifications are more similar. At that point, serious consideration by the search committee is more likely.

Exchanging packets

When the Settlement Office sends out a Recommended List, each minister also is sent a notice that he or she has been recommended. Within a few weeks a member of the search committee should call to initiate an exchange of packets. (Note that the initial list does not go to the committee but to the MSR, who may not deliver it immediately.) Customarily the search committee sends its packet first, and the minister responds if interested. Prompt and pleasant communication from this point on can be the difference between a successful candidate and the first runner-up.

If you are not interested, it is important to convey this message in a way that reflects well on our ministry. Remember that it can be demoralizing to a search committee when a minister withdraws. As a rule, it is best to avoid giving even constructive feedback unless it is requested.

You may want to contact the Settlement Office to adjust your criteria if they have changed or have been recorded in error. It is also helpful to report now and then (preferably in writing) on the outcome of each search committee contact: whether you were interviewed in person or offered candidacy, if you withdrew or were rejected, and anything else you think the Settlement Director should know.

Pre-candidating interviews

When you are invited to a pre-candidating interview, you should think carefully about your interest in the congregation. If you have any reservations that might lead you to reject candidacy if it were offered, you should voice these now, before the search committee pays for you to come. If you would require a higher salary, say how much higher. If you have doubts about the cost of living or other geographic factors, explain. Naturally you may later withdraw for reasons you cannot foresee. But it is up to you to candidate in good faith, and that means raising any such concerns as early as you reasonably can.

As with any employment interview, it is wise to come prepared. Study the congregation's packet thoroughly. Ask the search committee for more materials if something is omitted. Speak with the District Executive. Go to a public library and find information on the community. Identify the major issues and trends that seem to face the congregation and be prepared to discuss these in your interview.

You might want to ask for time during the pre-candidating weekend to raise questions of your own with members of the search committee. Be prepared to propose an activity that will encourage committee members to express their differing hopes for the congregation. Above all, try to give the search committee an experience of what it would be like for you to be their minister.

All costs of your pre-candidating trip are borne by the congregation, including travel, meals, and lodging. Traditionally the minister's spouse and children do not come until candidating week; for a variety of reasons, some families find a trip at another time more practical. One visit by the family is at congregational expense.

Negotiating the ministry agreement

When a search committee invites you to be a candidate, it is important that no public announcement be made until the essentials of the ministry agreement are settled. If the congregation's negotiating team has done its work, you will have seen a copy of the draft ministry agreement during the pre-candidating interview. At that time, any items needing further negotiation should have been identified. If all this has been done, negotiating the final agreement should go smoothly: indeed, it may amount to no more than exchanging corrected and initialed copies of the congregation's draft.

The temptation, in this moment of euphoria, is to gloss over any difficulties and assume that the agreement can be churned out during candidating week. Actually, extra effort now, before the pressure of publicity sets in, will pay off in good will later. An extra meeting with the negotiating team may be advisable, especially if you still need to resolve important issues. The cost of such a trip is appropriately shared between the minister and congregation.

If there are problems, the MSR, District Executive or Settlement Director may be called upon for help.

As soon as the essential points of an agreement are set down in writing and approved, inform the Settlement Office that you are the candidate. Contact any other search committee that is considering you and withdraw your name.

Candidating week

Candidating week is usually a full and stressful time, especially for new ministers. Be sure to insist on enough private time for rest and family, and to prepare for the second Sunday service. Participate with the search committee in planning the week, making sure no important group in the congregation is slighted.

Encourage the search committee to be your "eyes and ears" during candidating week. If concerns or questions arise, it is usually best to address these as soon as possible. Consult with the MSR or the Settlement Director for advice in this event.

Although candidating week is for mutual appraisal, ministers should be reasonably certain that they would accept a call if it is offered by a strong vote. It is poor form to decline a call for reasons that could have been foreseen before candidating week. Still, it is better to decline now than to accept and have a brief or conflicted ministry.

Generally any vote over 90 percent is not a problem, though you may wish to ask about any dissent expressed during the discussion. Between 80 and 90 percent, it is a good idea to talk with the search committee and the Settlement Director before accepting. If the vote is less than 85 percent, the Department of Ministry will normally discourage you from accepting. You should not be present at the congregational meeting.

Do not plan on accepting a call right after the vote. Although this does no harm if the vote is strong, a congregation that expects an immediate acceptance will be disappointed if you hesitate. It is much better to say from the beginning that you will not in any case accept a call until Monday morning. Then be on your way to the airport when they vote.

After you accept a call, be sure to send the Notice of Call form and a copy of your ministry agreement to the Settlement Office. Also notify the Office of Church Staff Finance in the Department of Ministry that you have moved so they can make any necessary changes in your insurance and pension records.

Settlement rules and policies

As a minister, you are expected to respect the confidentiality of the search process, the independence of congregations, and the special role of the search committee. You are not permitted to be in direct conversation with search committees or members of searching congregations until their credentials are presented by the Settlement Office. Anyone who makes improper overtures to you about a ministry position should be directed, politely but firmly, "That is very flattering, but I always work through the Department of Ministry and I hope you will, too."

It is collegial to be discreet in trumpeting your fortunes in settlement. We all need a few close friends and colleagues to listen to us in this stressful time, but it is not necessary or desirable to make collegial gatherings competitive by flaunting one's prowess.

You should be candid with search committees. Misrepresenting your track record or concealing anything that a committee needs to know to serve the congregation is a serious offense. Agreements with the Department of Ministry about how and when to disclose information to search committees must be honored.

The rules and policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (available on request from the Department of Ministry) define several circumstances when you may not accept a ministry position. The following summary reflects these rules and policies as applied by the Settlement Office:

- **Three-Year Rule:** For three years after the completion of an interim ministry, a minister may not accept any professional position in the same congregation. This rule also applies to ministerial interns, student field workers, student ministers, summer student ministers, ministers-on-loan, stated supply ministers (filling a pulpit in a society that is in the search process), and new congregation organizers who were already settled in the new congregation when it entered the new congregation program.
- **Professional Appearance Rule:** A minister who visits a congregation in any professional capacity after the past minister has announced his or her resignation

to the congregation becomes ineligible *for that vacancy*. For a new ministry position, this rule applies from the date the congregation or its board votes definitely to create the position. For retirements announced far in advance, the Settlement Office will apply this rule only for three years preceding the actual departure of the previous minister. "Any professional capacity" includes an in-person interview for an interim ministry, a visit as an MSR, leading a class or workshop, or performing as a musician. If in doubt, check with the Settlement Director for clarification *before* accepting the engagement.

- **Inside Candidate Rule:** A minister who is a member or staff member of a congregation is an "inside candidate" for any ministerial vacancy in that congregation. An inside candidate may not accept a call after the Department of Ministry has submitted a Recommended List. In practice this means that an inside candidate must apply to the search committee early in the process, and the search committee must make a yes-or-no decision before looking at other candidates.

It is your responsibility as a minister in Fellowship to adhere to these rules and to be in touch with the Settlement Office *in advance* about any gray areas or exceptions. In most cases exceptions must be made by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee itself, so it is wise to allow plenty of time.

A personal word to ministers

The ministerial settlement process is no doubt one of the most stressful and disorienting moments in a minister's career. It places strains on family relationships. It is important to be realistic about the toll a transition takes on you and those you love. Take time to talk about your plans and to enjoy yourselves together. It may help to employ a counselor for you and your family to clarify your reasons for seeking a move and to identify the aspects of a new situation that would be ideal. As always, you are encouraged to call on the Department of Ministry for help if you need it.

Ministers in settlement need to be prepared to have their personal and professional history examined in some detail. Even when there is nothing to be ashamed of, you may feel shame, embarrassment, and indignation. It can be helpful, if you feel too much under the microscope, to say so. It can be appropriate at times to set a limit to what you are willing to discuss or reveal.

If you are now serving a congregation, it may feel false to live in close relationship with them while seeking a new call. Because the search process demands time and energy, you may feel guilty about shirking your present duties. As you disclose your plans, you will most likely encounter anger and hostility from the very people who value your ministry most. While some of their criticisms are no doubt valid, behind much of the feeling is grief over the loss of a beloved minister. If this happens to you, it may help to know that this is a chance to show by example that both pain and joy can be borne with grace.

Remember that you have a right to move. Ordination is traditionally a lifetime vow, but your commitment to a particular church or other place of ministry is temporary. If

your search is successful, your congregation will soon ask other ministers to invest time and energy in *their* search. The search process is not free; it has both costs and benefits for all concerned.

It is the experience of our colleagues through the years that many of the hopes that motivate a move are realistic. If you would like to change your style or habits, a new place gives you a good chance to succeed. If you would like to find a congregation that appreciates you as you are, your candor in the search process will help you find one. If you suspect that you would prefer a congregation of a different size or emphasis or in a different place, you may be right. You will no doubt find some of your old problems in new guises. But in most cases the experience of moving, strenuous and wearing as it is, becomes an opening to growth and more effective service.

Questions and Answers

Questions from search committees

Hearing a pre-candidate in his or her own pulpit

Q: We are considering a minister whose present congregation is nearby. Can we go listen to her on her own turf?

A: Only if the minister concurs. It is never a good plan to spy on a potential candidate; mutual consent should govern all of your relations with your prospects.

Personal questions

Q: I work in personnel and am aware of many laws governing employment interviews. Can we ask about the spouse and children, health problems, addictions, disabilities, sexual orientation, and other personal matters?

A: In both the United States and Canada, churches are allowed wide latitude in the selection of their spiritual leaders. The relationship between minister and congregation is more than an employment contract. You are entitled to know the minister personally and to know how the minister presents his or her personal life in a professional context. Also, to the extent that a personal matter is publicly known in another congregation you will need to be prepared for the possibility that it may surface in yours. Personal conversation that would be out of place in a business setting is accepted when a search committee interviews a minister.

At the same time, as Unitarian Universalists we are committed to equal opportunity for everyone, and do not want even to appear to discriminate. You will want to reassure potential candidates that you respect their need for privacy and do not regard ministerial family members as auxiliary church staff. If there is something of a personal nature that is of concern to you as a search committee, think carefully about how to phrase your question. If possible, base your query on something the minister has said or written. Be sure not to ask a woman anything you would not ask a man, or an African-American minister anything you would not ask a white one. Relate your question to the minister's professional performance.

For instance, rather than asking, "Will your wife's career require you to take time away from work to take care of your children?" ask, "How do you balance the demands of parenthood and ministry?" Rather than, "Do you think, with your background, that you would fit into a wealthy white suburb?" ask, "What special challenges do you see in ministry to our community?" Don't ask, "Don't you think a gay minister will scare away young parents?"; ask, "How would you help us to respond to people who are frightened about having our first gay minister?"

As a rule, it is better to let the minister bring up a personal topic first. If, after interviewing a candidate for several hours, you are still concerned about a personal matter that might affect his or her reception by the congregation, by all means ask. When asked a personal question, most ministers will respond candidly or explain gently why they prefer

not to. Remember, though, that what you are legitimately interested in is not the minister's personal life, but the way that life affects the ministry.

Low-ball salary offers

Q: Where I work, job openings always list a range of salaries, depending on the qualifications of the person chosen. We would like to list our ministry position that way, too. Can we?

A: Yes, but it's probably not a good idea. A company hiring people into a class of comparable jobs will list a range. But the same company, when it hires a CEO, most likely tries to find the best person and then ends up paying the most they can afford. Your best course is to set a realistic but ambitious salary level and then find a person who feels like a bargain at that price.

Once in a while, a search committee will set out to find a seasoned minister and end up choosing a new graduate. They then offer a lower salary, only to learn that the minister has other offers in the higher range. Search committees almost never choose ministers because they are cheap; they choose them because they think they are the best.

If you do want to make a salary offer that is below the top of your range, you should mention this to the minister before the pre-candidating weekend. Likewise, a minister who expects to ask more than your maximum should say so before coming to pre-candidate.

Joint pre-candidating visits

Q: Several congregations in our area are looking at the same time. Can we save some money by sharing pre-candidating visits?

A: Probably not. Pre-candidating takes a whole weekend. Since few search committees can meet on weekdays, it is hard (and, for the minister, exhausting) to squeeze two interviews into a single visit. One exception might be if the candidate lives nearby; then the committees could witness the same pulpit appearance and still each have a full weekend for the interview.

You do need to be aware, if a neighboring congregation is also in search, of the disadvantages of using one another's pulpits for your pre-candidates. A minister who appears as a pre-candidate in a congregation with a ministerial vacancy becomes ineligible to fill that vacancy. If you do use the pulpit of a searching congregation, it is courteous to ask the pre-candidate if this will be a problem.

General Assembly

Q: Should we send some members of the search committee to the UUA General Assembly?

A: Yes! GA is a great opportunity each June to learn about the diverse types of congregations in our movement, to see a variety of ministers conducting worship, and to meet the Settlement Director.

It can even be an opportunity to hold informal interviews, though this is usually not appropriate for several reasons. By June, most search committees have not yet completed their survey and self-study or clarified their Profile. Generally it is not possible to send more than one or two members of the search committee to GA. And the Settlement Office

does not have a full complement of ministers available for settlement at that time of the year. The Settlement Director does send out a mailing each year in advance of General Assembly, hosts a GA event for search committee members, and keeps a schedule of appointments.

Couples in co-ministry

Q: I've heard that married couples sometimes share a ministry position. Might we get such a couple on our list?

A: Yes. Any pair of ministers, married or not, may apply to share a position. Along with their two Ministerial Record Sheets, you will receive a one-page statement about the team. Some congregations, having two ministry positions open, invite teams to apply.

If you consider a co-ministry team, remember that you are looking at three entities: two ministers and the team. Each has its own track record, personality, and strengths. Each should be allotted full attention in your interview, neutral pulpit, and candidating week plans.

Ministerial ethics

Q: Are there rules for ministers? Can they be punished when they break them?

A: Yes. Like most professional organizations, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA, not to be confused with the UUA) has a Code of Conduct (available through the UUMA office at the UUA) and can reprimand, suspend, or expel its members for violations. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA, which grants Ministerial Fellowship, can reprimand, suspend, or remove ministers' credentials for "conduct unbecoming of a minister or other specified cause." Removal from Fellowship means that a minister will no longer be recommended to congregations by the Department of Ministry. In lesser cases, violations can lead to restrictions on the Department's willingness to recommend the minister.

Ministerial competence

Q: Are ministers ever taken off the market simply for incompetence?

A: Yes. The rules provide that when a minister's "overall record seems to indicate that his/her continued recommendation for positions ... by the Department of Ministry is not justified," the Department can present that minister's name to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for "special review." If the committee approves, the Department will no longer recommend that minister to congregations.

Ministers not in Fellowship

Q: I thought we were free to call and ordain any minister we wish. Why are we limited to ministers on the Recommended List?

A: The UUA Bylaws guarantee each congregation "the exclusive right ... to call and ordain its own minister or ministers." Your congregation is free (subject to its own bylaws) to consider ministers who are not recommended by the Settlement Office or who do not hold Ministerial Fellowship with the UUA. The UUA does not recommend that you do this, and we would not be able to assist you as effectively in learning about the

minister's track record or in resolving any difficulties that arise later. However, no retaliation or sanctions would result.

If you do consider a minister who is not in Fellowship, the Settlement Office asks that you conform your process to the one described in this handbook, so UU ministers will feel fairly treated. We also suggest you ask such ministers whether they would apply for Fellowship if called to your church and consider their answer carefully in the light of what it says about your congregation's relationship to the Unitarian Universalist movement.

Telephone interviews

Q: Are there any special guidelines about telephone interviews?

A: Telephone interviews may help you narrow your list of possible pre-candidates. Remember that the ministers will judge your congregation partly by the consideration you show in interviewing them. To call suddenly at mealtime and announce that your committee is around a speaker-phone may feel to the minister like an interrogation in a dark room. Some ministers will have the poise to handle the challenge well, but few will think better of you for it.

The first rule in any interview is to negotiate the format. A phone call in advance to ascertain the minister's preferences goes far to ensure that your prospect feels relaxed and is prepared to give you a good interview.

If you wish to include the whole committee in a phone interview, it probably is best to designate one or two members to do all the talking. Others can contribute questions and hear the answers. Another way is to have several individual phone interviews with reports to the whole committee.

Videotapes

Q: Why don't more ministers include a videotape with their packet?

A: Most videotapes make the ministers in them look horrible! Seriously, a committee that needs a video or audio tape to decide whether to interview a minister probably needs to stiffen its spine and make some decisions. Even the most professional tape is quite different from a "live" encounter — and truly professional tapes are expensive. If you are serious enough to need a tape, you probably are serious enough to want a live interview.

Questions from Ministers

Asking committees to wait

Q: I am a minister who has been asked to pre-candidate by several search committees. Before all my interviews were complete one committee has offered me candidacy. Can I ask them to wait till I have completed my other interviews?

A: Yes. You are free to ask them to wait, and they are free to withdraw their offer of candidacy. They may also continue to receive names and interview candidates while they wait.

Ministers of Religious Education

Q: I am a minister of religious education. Are the procedures different for me?

A: Not really. The rules and policies are the same, with few exceptions. Naturally, pre-candidating and candidating week will be designed to reflect the duties of the position—for an MRE this might mean less preaching and more intergenerational services, adult classes, and children's programs.

Track switching

Q: I am a parish minister. Can I apply for a position in religious education?

A: Under the "track-switching" provisions of the MFC rules, ministers in Fellowship are permitted to apply for positions outside their current category, provided that they agree to follow a plan of continuing education leading to Fellowship in the new category. Ministers interested in switching tracks should contact the Department of Ministry for advice.

Canceled pre-candidating interviews

Q: I accepted a pre-candidating invitation, then another congregation asked me to be their candidate. I would like to accept, and call off the interview. Can I? Who pays for the nonrefundable plane ticket?

A: Yes, you can accept, and should call off the interview. When a pre-candidating weekend is canceled by either party, the search committee is responsible for travel costs and the minister is responsible for filling the neutral pulpit, either personally or by finding a substitute. Why? As the employer, the congregation is responsible for all costs related to its search. (Besides, the ticket was nonrefundable in the first place to save the search committee money!). The minister, having agreed to preach for the "neutral" congregation, has a professional obligation to see that it is taken care of.

Part-time ministry

Q: I am a minister interested in part-time ministry. How should I proceed?

A: Many congregations offering part-time ministry positions work with the District Executive. You should file a Ministerial Record Sheet and M-1 with the Settlement Office, and also be in touch with the DE of any district where you might like to serve.

Questions from both ministers and search committees

Reaching the Settlement Director

Q: I keep calling the Settlement Office and the Settlement Director is not there. How can I get my question answered?

A: Because of travel, interviews, meetings, and heavy telephone traffic, it is actually rare that the Settlement Director is available at the moment you call. This real problem results from trying to provide first-class service to a great many people with limited staff.

Fortunately, the support staff in the Department of Ministry are exceptionally competent and trustworthy. Please tell whoever answers the phone exactly what you need, or leave a thorough message on voice mail. If anything can be done to help before the Settlement Director can return your call, it will be done. If you leave a phone number that is attached to an answering device, it may be possible to meet your need without playing

further "phone tag." In an emergency, the Settlement Director or another member of the Department of Ministry professional staff is always accessible within a few hours.

How to complain or praise

Q: How can I complain about or show appreciation of the Ministerial Settlement Office or the settlement process?

A: Any minister or layperson who has a complaint is encouraged to take it up immediately with the person who inspired it. The next step would be to speak to that person's supervisor: for an MSR that is the Ministerial Settlement Director; for the Ministerial Settlement Director it is the Director of Ministry.

If the concern is about broader matters of policy or principle, it is appropriate to bring these to the Subcommittee on Settlement of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The MFC has oversight of the settlement process and makes rules to govern it, subject to the approval of the UUA Board of Trustees. Communications to the Subcommittee should be addressed to the Director of Ministry, who serves as Executive Secretary of the MFC.

For the names and addresses of the above persons, call the Department of Ministry at 617-742-2100.

Oh, yes: all of the above procedures for complaints apply as well to compliments, which are equally welcome!