The First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Ann Arbor

The Story of Our First One Hundred Years

by Marjorie Reade

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor and myself, I wish to thank the other church members who have contributed so generously to the publication of this history: Shirley Daly who researched and prepared the initial draft of the history of the first five years of the Erwin A. Gaede ministry, Kip Miller for putting the document in the computer and for directing the publication process, Virginia Hayes who edited and refined the history, and to the Reverend Kenneth Phifer who gave advice and counseling on content and sources.

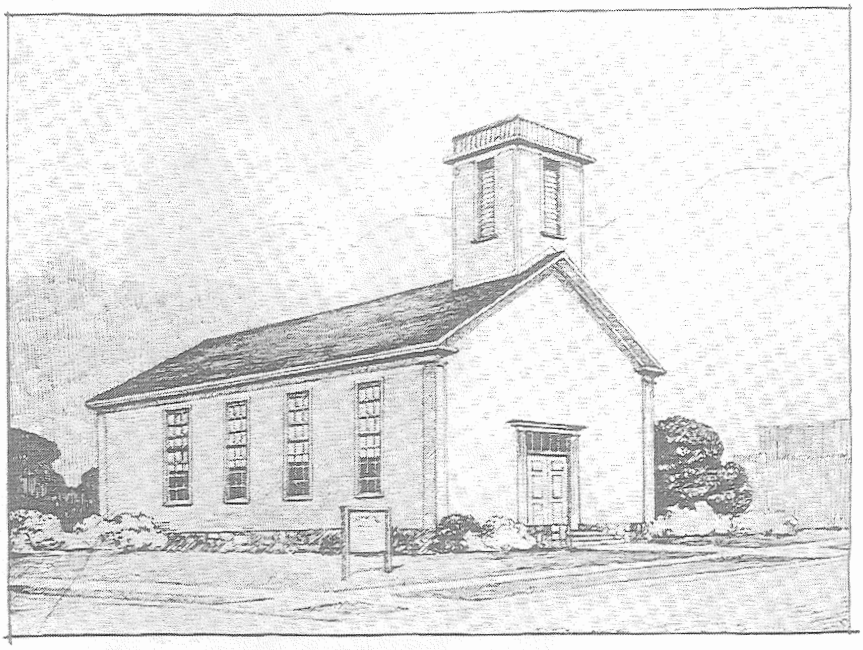
The members of the Ann Arbor church have always been concerned with the social issues of the day. A great deal of the impact of the church on the local and larger communities has been due, not only to its ministry, but also to the convictions and active participation of individual members. Unfortunately, the church records give only occasional glancing accounts of these activities and it is beyond the scope of this history to research them adequately. The record since the 1950s is more complete but still too sketchy for historical purposes. So the activists of the church remain largely unsung, but they were there and they made their contributions to the liberal traditions of the church.

As I finished up this history, I realized that there is very little account of the religious education program in the church and the philosophy which has defined the program through the years. Since it has always been important to the church to reach out to the youth of the community, and it is our religious education program which brings so many young families into the church, I believe such an account should be written, either to stand alone or to be incorporated into a revised edition of the history.

Except for Eliza Sunderland, the church records give little account of the contributions of the ministers' wives to the life of the church. Since many of us know from personal experience of the energy and commitment of recent ministers' wives, we may presume earlier wives were also active. We know that Florence Kollock, the wife of Joseph Crooker, was an ordained Universalist minister, but we have no knowledge of her ministerial or social activities.

However, in spite of the limitations of the written record, what does come through is the perseverance of what was often a very small community to liberate itself from the evils of the past and to find new ground for better living and loving. UUs have this undaunted optimism about human worth and potential which holds them together and keeps them going.

—M. Reade



The church building purchased from the Methodists in 1866.

It was located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Ann Streets

History of the
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor

In researching the history of the Ann Arbor church, I find that three histories have been written previously. The latest one, written in 1965 by Mavis Greene, was published and a few copies remain in our files. The Rev. Joseph H. Crooker wrote the first history early in his ministry, probably about 1902. It was also published, but I know of only one copy and that is in the church files in the Bentley Library. The second history was written by the Committee on Appraisal of the Ann Arbor church in 1936, but the words are primarily those of the Rev. Harold P. Marley, we believe, although the document is unsigned and exists only in typewritten form. I have drawn heavily on the two early histories as the material is so fresh and alive, and very often it is all the record we have.

The Early Universalists

Professing "God's Unity and parental love to mankind; Christ's work of reconciliation, and perfect obedience rather than vicarious, sacrificial atonements; man's individual responsibility for sin, his moral competence to seek and respond to the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit,"[1] Universalism was close in concept to the Unitarianism of the early 19th century. The difference was that the Unitarians retained enough of their old Calvinistic legalism and the authoritarianism of the Puritans to object to the idea that those of evil character might not suffer terrifying punishment for their unrepentant ways.

The pioneers, bold and courageous as they opened up new areas in the wilderness, were just as boldly seeking a new order of justice and opportunity. Many had gone to great lengths to break away from a class servitude in cultures which gave them no hope for better lives. In the United States, both Unitarianism and Universalism arose as a part of the new political and intellectual idealism. The insistence in both movements on man's right to identity, education, and freedom from exploitation added to the political ferment of the times.

The Rev. Nathaniel Stacy

In Rev. Crooker's history he writes, "Liberal religion began in Ann Arbor in 1835. At that time there were a sufficient number of like-minded people to join together to write to the Reverend Nathaniel Stacy, an itinerant preacher of the Universalist denomination, asking him to come to Ann Arbor, stating that they felt they could support 'sustained preaching.'"[1]

According to O. W. Stephenson's history, *Ann Arbor—The First Hundred Years* (1927), the Universalists owned a building in an oak grove, probably near where St. Andrews Episcopal Church now stands, as we know that area once contained a large stand of oak trees.

> "Mr. Stacy had spent most of his strenuous life as minister to outlying settlements, first in central New York state and later in the middle west. In the early spring of 1835 he received, to quote his memoirs:
>
> > 'An invitation to remove into that country, and take pastoral charge of the society in that place (Ann Arbor). I had been then four years and a half itinerating this wild and trackless country; and although improvements in roads, as well as in agriculture, and everything else pertaining to civilization, were progressing with as much rapidity as could be rationally expected, still it was almost impracticable to travel in carriages of any kind, and it was truly a severe task to perform my monthly labors. And considering my advanced years and increasing infirmities, I felt justified in changing my position, so that I might enjoy, at least, a temporary release from the extreme fatigues I had so long endured.'

Crooker continues,

> "By the sturdy pioneer gods, here is a man! His notion of an easier job is to found a new church in a backwoods town! He accepted provisionally, saying that he would come for four Sundays in July.

"Taking a steamboat in Erie, Pennsylvania, he arrived in Detroit thirty-six hours later. Then, taking passage on the stage the next morning, a ride of forty miles over very bad road, for at least half of the way, brought me a little before nightfall to the, place of my destination.'

"He found that the only finished meeting house in the village was a property of his prospective parishioners. These were of respectable numbers and several of the members had known him in central New York.

"Mr. Stacy's rest and relaxation from the infirmities of old age was to go after the other ministers of the town, tooth and nail, as soon as he and his family had settled. The question of Universal salvation, the moot point, he seized upon in the columns of the Weekly Argus and the State Journal, the two weeklies published in Ann Arbor. He challenged them to 'Christian discussion' in his own church. This gauntlet was not picked up by his brothers of the cloth.

"Promptly he threw another at their feet. It was picked up reluctantly by the Episcopalian minister, who wrote an article for the papers declining 'to commit theological suicide by debating on the Rev. Stacy's own subject at his own church.' He intimated further that his instruction in matters theological had been comprehensive but if the Rev. Stacy was interested in learning the truth, he might come to him for it and it would be gladly given."

From records in the Bentley Library, we know that on January 14, 1838, Preacher Nathaniel Stacy delivered a lecture in the Universalist Church of Ann Arbor, designed to scripturally illustrate and defend the doctrine of universal holiness and happiness. This was the 20th lecture in a series begun in 1837 in the "cause of Pure Christianity." It is an indication of their general interest to the public that this lecture, and probably all the others, were printed in the *State Journal.*

Dr. T. C. Adam, Dr. Snead, and Dr. S. Miles

Crooker writes further, "The Rev. Mr. Stacy stayed in Ann Arbor for five years, until 1840. On retiring, he secured the services of Dr. T. C. Adam, a retired physician, who had been educated in the University of Edinburgh. Unfortunately for the Universalists of Ann Arbor, Dr. Adam was so conscientious that, to quote Stacy, 'His labors proved too severe for him ... he preached himself sick.' A Dr. Snead took up the work and then a succession of ministers of whom we have no record. When the Rev. Mr. Stacy returned to Ann Arbor on a visit in 1847, he found Dr. S. Miles, again an unknown, in charge of the parish."

R. Thornton

In 1843, the first volume of The *Primitive Expounder,* a monthly Universalist newsletter, began publishing in Ann Arbor, with R. Thornton and J. Billings as editors, and with A. H. Curtis and C. P. West as corresponding editors. The publication was a combination of sermons, notices, and news items from Michigan congregations. Foremost in the sermons was the insistence that the endless state of punishment is not consistent with a God who is infinitely good and wise. These sermons preached the doctrine of "Primitive Christianity" and decried the embellishments which men have added over the centuries.

Volume II of The *Primitive Expounder* began with the issue of November 28, 1845, but was published in Alphadelphia, "a working man's mutual self-help settlement," of which the Ann Arbor Universalists appear to have been the leading founders. The location of the colony is not clear, although there are some indications that it was located in Galesburg, Michigan. A news item in the first issue of this volume states that the Ann Arbor church was without a preacher in 1846 when R. Thornton moved to Alphadelphia.

In March of 1846, R. Thornton reported via the *Expounder* that the Alphadelphia Association had folded because of lack of unity as "they let join people whose only aim was to make money." The publishers returned to Ann Arbor.

In this volume were given the numbers for the Universalist movement in the West:

One General Convention
One State Education Association
Four State Sunday School Associations
Eight high schools or academies
1028 Societies
315 Meeting Houses
655 Preachers

Volume III was published in Ann Arbor, with R. Thornton and J. H. Sanford as editors and E. H. Curtis, C. P. West, W. W. Hebberd, and I. George as corresponding editors. In this volume, the editors bemoan suffering the evil of "pretenders" preaching their religion ruinously. They also took the State

University to task for using public funds to build up "Partialism" (prejudiced in favor of trinitarian Christianity). And, speaking of Unitarians, "Unitarians have taken to themselves the appellation of liberal *Christians;* and in some respects they certainly merit the title for excepting on one point (their belief in the Divine Unity) they turn a smiling face and embrace in their liberal arms and fond caresses the believers in nearly every faith. They are composed of Partialists, Universalists, Restorationists, Destructionalists, Swedenborgians, Infidels, the believer in the present, and the believer in future rewards and punishments, the believer that man's condition is fixed at the resurrection, and the believer in infinite progression. When they do try to preach a doctrinal sermon, they leave the people as much in the dark as before."

Volumes IV and V came out in 1847 and 1848, but the publication was in serious financial difficulties. Although editor Thornton announced the publication of Volume VI, no copies have been found. In 1851, The *Primitive Expounder* was put under the direction of John H. Sanford, who had moved to Lansing. During his editorship, Sanford incurred the wrath of even his own readers when he polemicized against the Sabbath, saying he could see no reason why he should observe the seventh day of the week over any other.

In March of 1852, Sanford left the *Expounder* and it ceased publication. The Universalists thereafter kept in touch with one another through the *Star of the West,* published in Cincinnati.

Although Volume V of The *Primitive Expounder* announced that a thriving congregation in Ypsilanti under the direction of Brother John Brewer had built a free church "32' by 44', with a steeple and a nine-foot basement," there was no further mention of a Universalist congregation in Ann Arbor after 1852.

Throughout the Midwest the lack of tested and trained Universalist ministers weakened many of the established churches, and seriously retarded the spread of Universalism. There was some rapprochement between the Unitarians and the Universalists, however, as the eastern Unitarians moved away from their strong moral conviction of God's punishment for the unrepentant and from their advocation of a strong central government of the denomination.

Unitarian concepts were being modified, particularly in the west, by other similar denominations arising among the energetic and free-thinking pioneers, as these small liberal sects looked to one another for allies. An increasing number of Universalist students attended the Unitarian seminary at Meadville, with the result that earlier hostility changed to mutual respect and cooperation.

Unitarianism Comes to Ann Arbor

The Unitarian Missionary Movement met a receptive group of people in Ann Arbor in the early 1860s. At least three members of the former Universalist congregation were among the founding members of the Unitarian Society which began services in a rented room in the County Court House in 1865: James B. Gott, an attorney and secretary to the Board of Education for many years, and Mrs. E. L. Sanford and T. S. Sanford, proprietors of the Unity Block. A most active member of the group was George D. Hill, formerly a Quaker, a prosperous farmer and civic leader (his apple orchard was bordered by what is now Hill Street and Packard Street; the Hill Opera House was located on North Main Street). Other prominent founding members were Moses Rogers, a dealer in agricultural implements; Jacob Volland, harness dealer; and Emma, Richard, and Robert Glasier, farmers east of town. These names are familiar to us today for the streets, buildings, or subdivisions named in their honor.

The original Articles of Association were signed on May 14, 1865:

> We, the undersigned, desirous of securing to ourselves and our families the advantages of religious instructions and fellowship do hereby associate ourselves together under the name and title of the First Congregational Unitarian Society of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for the purpose of maintaining religious worship and conducting the temporal interests of a religious society in accordance with the Statute of the State of Michigan.

The following persons signed in the order given:

Jacob Volland
R. Schafer
G. D. Hill
Jno. E. Clark
Sophie Polland
James B. Gott
Emma Glasier
Mary G. Mott
Joseph W. Linley
Murray A. White
Richard Mott
C. B. Thompson
James F. Avery
Moses Rogers
George Clark
Mrs. William Welleny
G. B. Dows
Jay W. Cowding
Harriet M. Waite
G. Hooker
L. Porter
Mrs. Sybil Lawrence
E. Lawrence
Mrs. Ann Traver
Mrs. William Fisher
Mrs. Catherine Smith
Mrs. Joseph Whitlock
Arnold M. Pierce
A. A. Ormsby
Mrs. E. L. Sanford
T. S. Sanford
J. B. Jackson
B. A. Jackson
Richard Glasier
Robert Glasier
Rufus Cope
Henry K. White

Not only were these men and women drawn together by the liberal tenets and intellectual interests of the Unitarians, but locally they had struggled together during the Civil War period over concern and care for the wounded and displaced by providing support for the Western Sanitary Commission, an organization largely sponsored by Unitarians, which later evolved into the American Red Cross.

Unitarians were and are traditionally antiwar, but in the Unitarian Conference of 1862, they adopted as their battle cry "Mercy to the South—Death to Slavery." Western Unitarian ministers, if young enough, joined the army or worked for the Western Sanitary Commission or the Soldiers' Home.

The Rev. Charles Henry Brigham

During the summer months, sermons were delivered by the Reverend A. G. Hubbard of Detroit and by the Reverend Charles A. Farley, while the American Unitarian Association arranged for Charles Henry Brigham to take the pastorate. Mr. Brigham was then pastor of the First Congregational (Unitarian) Society in Taunton, Massachusetts. A vigorous and brilliant man, Mr. Brigham was a powerful, logical minister with a deep background of learning and travel. A stockily built, active man, he had been in the Taunton ministry for more than twenty years, his first pulpit after graduating from the Harvard Divinity School.

He began his work in Ann Arbor on the first Sunday in September 1865. In a letter to friends some months later, he wrote:

"Scores of students have expressed personally their interest, and I have been told by several that they have been saved from infidelity by hearing the Unitarian Lectures. Of these I have given 16 ... They closed last Sunday evening. They have been fully attended from the beginning and for the last half dozen evenings densely crowded ... The tactics of our Evangelical bretheren have been not to oppose us openly but to treat our movement as a mere ephemeral and short lived excitement. Almost every prominent man and woman in town has attended our meetings, and many come frequently, who have no idea of becoming Unitarian or of leaving their own Churches…"

The Reverend Charles Henry Brigham

In the Rev. Crooker's history of the church he writes:

"In order to understand the First Unitarian ministry in Ann Arbor, it is necessary to know something of the Unitarianism of that day. The liberal teachings of Emerson and Channing had had their effect in lightening the dead weight of centuries of dogmatism and superstition among the more intelligent people but the great masses of the country had not yet been reached by the principle of reason in religion. The work of the Unitarian minister of

that day was extremely difficult and even uncomfortable from a social viewpoint.

"The Bible was more than a great book. It actually constituted the living thought of the time. It was the final authority, the fountain of all wisdom. It was so closely interwoven in the mental structure that the only possible way that large numbers of people could be reached was through it.

"The first qualification of even a liberal minister, then, was a full and comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. If he could interpret it well enough to avoid ruffling the delicately balanced but deeply rooted prejudices, he had some chance of inoculating the people to his doctrines.

"Then, too, there must be a gift of oratory without which no minister in the middle of the last century could hope to hold any important pulpit.

"In Ann Arbor the problem was intensified by the presence of more than a thousand students at the great State University. These must be reached by a minister of extraordinary power and personal charm. A man must be found who would be admired by the students and at the same time carry the Unitarian message to them."

Mr. Brigham was admirably suited to this rigorous post. His preaching was very conservative, even for that time. However, as a speaker he was mesmerizing. The Reverend S. A. Eliot, in a biography, says that Brigham had a fine memory and because of his wide reading was able to speak with authority on almost any subject. He had traveled in Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land which gave him much material of interest to his listeners. He was so accomplished a conversationalist that even his informal exchanges became almost monologues, so eager were his hearers not to miss anything.

In the spring of 1866, the old Methodist Church at 5th Avenue and Ann Street was up for sale and the congregation determined to buy it. On January 21, 1867, the building was dedicated and the First Unitarian Society of Ann Arbor became incorporated. A board of six trustees was established, each to serve a three-year term, with the first terms staggered so that two trustees' terms would expire each year.

Mr. Brigham was in the Ann Arbor pulpit for twelve years. In the late summer of 1877, he suffered a breakdown and went to the home of his sister in Brooklyn, New York, where he died two years later.

Ann Arbor's congregation was typical of Western Unitarianism in its intellectual activity and influence. Since no public library existed in Ann Arbor at that time, some members supported the civic effort which created the Ladies Library Association. The Association built up a book collection to be circulated on a subscription basis; in due course it had its own building on Huron Street. Unitarians demanded reforms in the country's attitude toward the Indians, insisting on efforts to eliminate poverty, and above all, illiteracy of the natives. Unitarians were also concerned with the treatment of animals. It was the work of Western Unitarians to establish the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Many members were active in the Unitarian Temperance Society (during a reform period in the 1870s, the number of saloons in the small town of Ann Arbor was cut from 80 to 32).

The Rev. Joseph Henry Allen

From the fall of 1877 to September of 1878, the Reverend Joseph Henry Allen filled the ministry of the church. Neither a scholar nor a crusader, he served adequately as an interim minister but he made little impact on the church or the community.

The Sunderland Era

The Reverend Jabez T. Sunderland came to the Ann Arbor pulpit in the fall of 1878. Both he and his wife, Eliza, came from a Baptist background, he being a graduate of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Chicago. The Sunderlands were a most unusual couple in the strengths of their intellect and their commitments. Indeed, the ministry of Dr. Sunderland should be called a double ministry because of the role Eliza Sunderland took in the church and the denomination.

Quoting from the Rev. Harold P. Marley's history:

"The Sunderland ministry not only built the church at State and Huron Streets but it modernized the Bible for countless students long before Dr. Fosdick dedicated himself to the task in the East. Five complete generations of students came and went—each taking with

them a new sense of religion and perhaps a few of the many American Unitarian Association pamphlets which bear Dr. Sunderland's name. In 1893 he preached a series of sermons on the Great Labor Problem and gave a series of studies to the Ladies Union on such topics as Labor and Capital, Wages, Machinery, Unions and Socialism. Dr. Sunderland, ever an orator, had a sense of capitalizing on the happenings of the day...Foundations were laid for an efficient church library by getting a moderate endowment and a number of book contributions. In the days before the University had set up its lecture series, the *Unity Club Lecture Course* was established and season tickets for one dollar were sold. Members of the faculty spoke on biography, art, and travel, thus showing that a church need not always confine itself to the Bible and narrowly religious subject matter."

The church library of which Mr. Marley writes was established in 1882 and given the name *The Charles H. Brigham Reading Room*. With books covering every question of the day, the library was open to any reader. It was readily accessible to students and its heavy use was a matter of great satisfaction to the Sunderlands and the congregation.

To understand the Ann Arbor church of that time, we need also to explore Dr. Sunderland's work in the whole Unitarian movement. At the time of his appointment to the ministry of the Ann Arbor church, J. T. Sunderland was also appointed to the office of State Missionary—and shortly brought into being churches in Mount Pleasant, Muskegon, Osceola, Saginaw, Jackson, Grand Haven, Charlevois, and Charlotte.

The Rev. Sunderland was upset to find in the churches of the Western Conference an effort to do away with traditional worship features. In his view, their custom was not to preach a religion but to lecture, denying personal immortality and a personal God. With its congenital independence and radicalism, the Western Conference had adopted the motto, "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion." Sunderland thought the motto lacked "an historic connection with the past—with what is highest, sweetest, most vital in Christianity."

Like other Eastern traditional ministers, Sunderland found Western Unitarian churches to be gatherings of lower middle class radicals with nothing of reverence and nothing but moral lessons in the Sunday Schools.

In 1884, Sunderland took a two-year leave of absence to become Secretary of the Western Conference. He found a substitute for his Ann Arbor pulpit, the Rev. J. T. Bixby, and entered upon a series of visits to local churches, state conferences, and to the A.U.A. offices in Boston.

The churches established in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, in central New York, and in the southern ports of the Great Lakes composed the early Western Conference of Unitarianism. Its formal entity began in May of 1852 when forty or so lay and ministerial members, representing twelve churches, large and small, met in Cincinnati to establish the *Conference of the Western Unitarian Churches.*

There were, however, no sharply defined boundaries for Western Unitarianism. Syracuse, New York, and Northumberland, Pennsylvania, represented its eastern boundaries. Societies in New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; and Nashville, Tennessee, were a part of its constituency. As the decades passed and the country became settled, with railroads providing transportation, conference reports came in from Denver and from new societies on the Pacific Coast. During the Sunderland period in the Ann Arbor church, the Western Conference apparently included this full area. Even in 1951, seventy-odd years later, the Western Conference was described as stretching from Toledo to Denver.

In 1885, Sunderland reported to the Western Conference that their churches were organized on so broad a basis that they included believers and nonbelievers, and that the children were taught nothing but ethics. It was no wonder Unitarianism was not gaining in proportion to the population growth. He felt the Western Conference Secretary and the Western Agent of the A.U.A. should be united in one person. He said if reelected to the Secretaryship he would accept and recommend to churches only liberal *Christian* ministers. Sunderland was reelected for one year although there was protest that his report showed "disbelief in the fundamental principles of Unitarianism" and that he "was of a reactionary character" and did not represent the bold, progressive spirit of Western Unitarianism.

Because of his insinuations regarding the more radical ministers, he was asked to resign as an

editorial contributor to *Unity*, (a Unitarian periodical launched in 1878, and composed, published and circulated in the West). After his resignation, he worked to start a new periodical which began in January 1886, *The Unitarian,* with Sunderland and the Rev. Brooke Herford as its editors, "a magazine that shall hold to our old freedom from dogmatic creeds and yet stand clearly for belief in God and worship and the spirit of Christ."

The real issue behind this struggle between the Christian standard bearers and the more radical "ethical" ministers came down to the missionary movement and the source of funds to support the small struggling churches in the pioneer communities. Not only did the A.U.A. Board wish to quietly follow Sunderland's policy and allot aid only to those churches and missionaries in the West which were avowedly Christian Theists, but they were legally bound to do so by the terms of their endowments.

The conflict came to a head at the Cincinnati meeting of the Western Conference in 1886. Just before the meeting, copies of a pamphlet, *The Issue in the West,* written by Sunderland, were mailed to ministers and issued to delegates.

Charles Lyttle writes in his book, *Freedom Moves West,*

> In the pamphlet Sunderland repeated his accusation that a united, purposive, determined group of men—'men we all honor and love'—want to remove Unitarianism off its historic base to Free or Ethical Religion. 'Those of us who believe Unitarianism to be Christianity, who believe that to remove it off its Theistic base is to seal its fate as a religious movement would be sinning if we remain silent longer.' The issue is not the importance of ethics, or the choice between radicalism and conservatism, dogma or no dogma, creed or no creed, freedom of fellowship or limitation of fellowship, except in the question of the pulpit. 'Shall our pastorates be open to known disbelievers in Christian Theism?' The idea of a Unitarian church which counts nothing essential but ethics and free thought, hence being reduced to virtual Free Religion, is a very recent growth.

His eloquent argument added further that to open pulpits and membership to all on the sole condition "that they be men and women of reputable moral character—as well undertake to organize the west wind ... the result must inevitably be to cut off a large part of missionary revenues…there is peace in one direction and only one—and that is what the A.U.A. stands for."

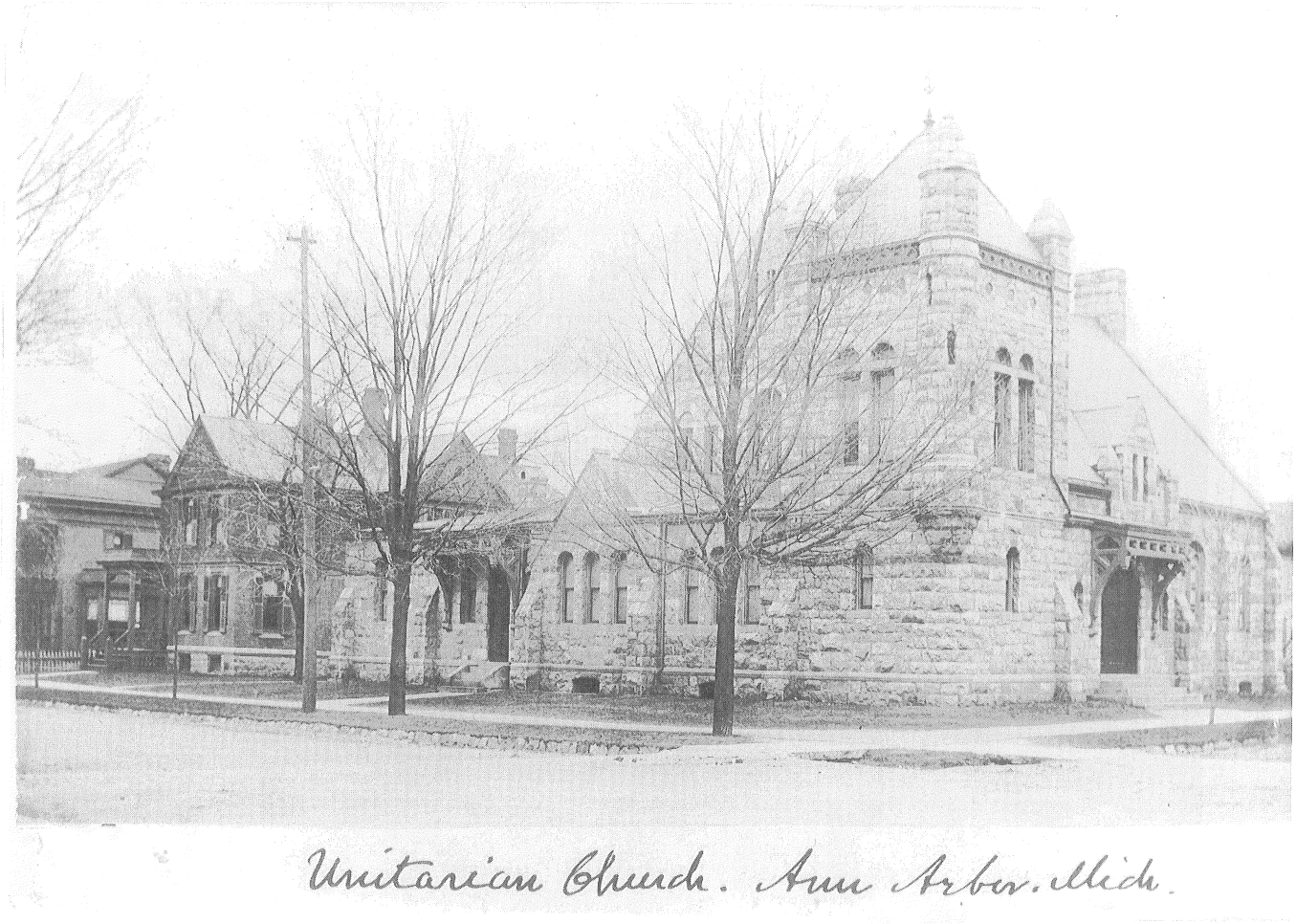
In spite of Sunderland's eloquence and his many supporters, his resolution did not carry the day. The resolution which finally passed stated that "The Western Unitarian Conference conditions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests but welcomes all who wish to join it to help establish Truth, Righteousness and Love in the World."

As a result, the conservatives organized to form a new Western Unitarian Association which came into being in Chicago on June 21, 1886. The purpose of the new Association was a "more definite cooperation with the A.U.A. in its Western work to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity."

The irony and tragedy of the schism were deeply felt by most of the board of the A.U.A. Sunderland attended its July meeting and was awarded $250 for his services and a vote of thanks for the "energy, faithfulness and interest with which he has performed his duties as Western Agent," but his appointment was not renewed. That left the Western Association without a General Secretary, and the Rev. Sunderland moved back to the Ann Arbor church, taking *The Unitarian* editorial desk with him. This distinguished monthly publication constituted his protest against the "Ethical Basis."

The Conference action of 1886 agitated the Unitarian body and the religious press throughout the country. The following year was alive with controversy. The A.U.A. requested the Western Conference either to administer its missionary work and funds on the basis of pure Christianity or to transfer all missionary work to the A.U.A., both of which they refused to do.

At the Conference of 1887, the Rev. E. S. Gannett proposed a statement of "Things Commonly Believed Among Us," which was adopted "on the understanding that it did not bind a single member by declarations concerning fellowship or doctrine, the Statement being always open to restatement and to be regarded only as the thought of the majority." Although the Statement was broad, magnanimous, and beautifully written, meant to heal the differences between the two factions, Dr. Sunderland found it faulty in not being a positive commitment of the Conference to "pure Christianity."[2]



First Unitarian Church, Huron at State. Courtesy of Hobbs & Black Associates, Inc.

During the following decade, torrents of publications on every side of the issue flowed from the liberal presses. The flood of discoveries in the various sciences and the new theory of evolution proposed by Darwin and his studies excited and agitated the whole population. The open minds of the congregation of the liberal churches hastened the momentum of change.

The Unitarian question focused on whether the synthesis of science with reverence, with stress on moral values and quests, was a sufficient fellowship bond for churches. Did that really spell out atheism? Did the Western motto of "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion" with its aim, "Truth, Righteousness and Love," connote a disregard of God, immortality, and worship? Dr. Sunderland believed it did.

The struggle continued for the missionary leadership, the funds, and the hearts and minds of the congregations until 1892 when Dr. Sunderland, conceding that it was time that the separation ceased, prepared as an olive branch a "Supplementary Resolution" for the Conference. Its purpose was to give the A.U.A. the excuse it desired for aiding Ethical Basis churches of the West, and was interpreted to mean that the A.U.A. could now legally give aid to the churches and ministers that did not accept the statement of 1887.

At the National Conference in Saratoga in 1894 the two forces were finally reconciled. The new harmony was based on the work of the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, where it was made obvious that world unity in religion could rest only on a universal Ethical Theism. The Eastern Christian faction recognized the vision and hope of the Ethical Basis preachers of the West and this faction was willing for the sake of unity to couch their statement of belief in Christian terms.

When Jabez and Eliza Sunderland arrived in Ann Arbor they found the church occupied an old building, much too small for the crowds who came for their sermons and lectures. Nor was it convenient to campus. Dr. Sunderland proposed they build a new church and the congregation set about it enthusiastically.

Dr. Sunderland encouraged building fund contributions through the *Christian Register*. The women of the church, under the direction of Mrs. J. W. Langley, worked to arouse interest and to raise funds to be matched by the National Conference. The effort was successful and ground was broken in 1881. Donaldson and Mier of Detroit were the architects for the handsome stone building which was erected by a Mr. Stone of Jackson, Michigan.

The church, completely fitted out, was dedicated on November 21, 1882. Many of the furnishings were paid for in memory of Dr. Brigham by his friends in the East. It should be added here that in February of 1882, the A.U.A. agreed to grant a mortgage in the amount of $15,000 to the Ann Arbor church, interest free, and payable whenever the church building ceased to be used for purposes approved by the A.U.A.

The pamphlet *Ann Arbor Historic Buildings,* published in 1978, says of this building, "The Romanesque design is strongly reminiscent of the work of the influential Boston architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. The tower is much like that on Boston's Trinity Church. The new house of worship contained an audience room or chapel, Sunday School rooms, a parlour, and a spacious and well-furnished reading room. A legacy left by Judge Ezra C. Seaman of Ann Arbor provided for the establishment of a Liberal Religious Library, 'to be accessible to all persons who desire to read the best liberal religious thought of the age.'"

THE REVEREND JABEZ T. SUNDERLAND, PREACHING IN THE CHURCH BUILT DURING HIS MINISTRY ON HURON AT THE CORNER OF STATE.

The Reverend Crooker wrote in his history,

> Some key to the type of Unitarianism preached in Ann Arbor in those days is found in the creed painted on the new walls:
>
> In the vestibule, the words of Dr. William E. Channing: 'To free inquiry and love of truth do we dedicate these walls. Let Heaven's unobstructed light shine here.'
>
> In the library and reading room, from Charles H. Brigham: 'Unitarians hold their doctrine not as a finality or perpetually binding creed but as ready always to revise and improve it as the spirit of God shall give them more light and knowledge.'
>
> In the main auditorium over three arches: 'All men brothers.' 'All truth sacred.' 'All duty divine.'
>
> Over the pulpit are the words: 'Oh, Worship the Lord.'
>
> On a tablet at the rear of the pulpit, from the Bible: 'To us there is one God, the Father.' 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' 'Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven but he that doeth the. will of my Father who is in Heaven.'"

Soon after the church was completed, the Sunderlands campaigned for and secured funds to build the parish house adjoining the church. They were able to move in with their family in 1884.

The Sunderland Family, c. 1878
From the left: Mrs. Sunderland, Edson, Florence, Gertrude, The Reverend Sunderland

The Tiffany Stained Glass Window

In 1896, one of the younger couples in the church suffered great sorrow when they lost a child during its birth. A close friend of the grieving mother, Mrs. Francis Crane Lillie, arranged to have Tiffany and Company create and install a large glass window for the church as a memorial to this child. A life-size angel in the guise of a lovely young woman is suspended in the clouds over a small town, cradling an infant in her arms.

The window, when installed, replaced one of the original ornamental windows of the building. In 1930, during a modernization of the building, it was moved to the north wall and artificially lit. Later, in the 1930s, the window was covered over with a protective box as the theme of the art work gave offense to a congregation which had become thoroughly humanistic in its approach to religion. There is a story, unconfirmed, that one of the stronger minded among the congregation actually used an ax to destroy many of the other theistic

symbols in the structure and adornments of the church.

As far as the author can tell, the window was thereafter lost to the awareness of members of the church or the officials of the A.U.A. The Grace Bible Church was probably unaware of their hidden treasure. The architects' firm of Hobbs and Black purchased the building from the Grace Bible Church in 1985 to be converted into offices for the firm. During the renovation they were delighted to discover the window buried in the wall. Hobbs and Black brought in experts from Tiffany and Company to restore the window and proudly placed it in the east wall of their reception center where all who enter may enjoy it. [Pictured on the back cover of this edition].

In describing the Sunderland ministry, the Rev. Crooker wrote:

> From Dr. Sunderland's sermons we get a complete picture of the man. There was no movement for social betterment of which he was not a staunch advocate. Temperance, higher education, social reform, clean politics, public improvements—all found in him a strong supporter.
>
> The Sunday morning service was primarily designed to reach the townspeople and faculty. It was well attended. In the evening, Dr. Sunderland held another service which was intended to bring his message to the students. Of course there was no sharp line and many students came to the morning service as well and quite a number were in the habit of coming in the morning and staying for the Bible class at noon.
>
> The evening services, aiming at education as well as moral and spiritual guidance, fell very naturally under large subject headings which frequently covered a whole year's work. Many things were discussed here. Biography, philosophy and other subjects were subdivided so that each Sunday a different phase was elucidated.

Eliza Jane Read Sunderland

We still have in the church today the life-sized bust of Ralph Waldo Emerson which was presented to the Church and Society by the Unity Club in November of 1894. Unity President Robert Phillips made the presentation which was accepted by William H. Pattee, President of the Board of Trustees. The bust was done by Professor Sidney H. Morse of Chicago, a personal friend of Mr. Emerson's for more than twenty years. Professor Morse was invited to the presentation to give a talk on Mr. Emerson and his philosophy.

Eliza Jane Read Sunderland

As stated earlier, the church was greatly enriched by what was essentially a double ministry in the Sunderland era. Although Eliza Sunderland was never ordained, her career was that of a minister and teacher with a highly active role throughout the denomination.

Eliza was born in a small town in Illinois in 1839. After graduating from Mt. Holyoke College in 1865, she turned down an offer of a teaching appointment at Mt. Holyoke for family reasons and returned to her native state where she took a teaching position in Aurora. She soon became the high school principal, keeping that position until her marriage to Jabez Sunderland in 1871. Their first two children were born in Northampton,

Massachusetts, Edson in 1872 and Gertrude in 1874. Their third child, Florence, was born during Dr. Sunderland's tenure at the Unitarian Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1876.

After setting up their household in Ann Arbor in the summer of 1878, Eliza became very much involved with the work of the church in Ann Arbor and of the Western Unitarian Conference. Her weekly Bible class constituted an extended systematic study of the Old and the New Testaments, Jewish History, the life of Jesus, and the origins of Christianity. Because of this class, which often attracted hundreds of participants, she found students and parents appealing to her for counseling and help for all kinds of problems.

She was often invited to fill the pulpit in other churches of the Western Conference and to speak to Conference assemblies in Chicago. In 1881, she became the head of the Women's Auxiliary of the Western Unitarian Conference.

She began teaching history in the Ann Arbor High School in 1883. While she was often praised for her stimulating teaching, she could never convince the School Board that history teachers were entitled to the same remuneration as mathematics teachers. From time to time she taught Latin and English Literature as well, and it is not surprising that her literature specialties were Browning and Ibsen.

In 1886 she helped to organize the Women's Auxiliary of the A.U.A. In that same year she was appointed head of the Committee on Education in the Association for the Advancement of Women. Throughout her life she worked to have women accepted in teaching and in the other professions with the same opportunities as men.

She was also an active member of the Michigan Equal Suffrage Association.

In 1887, starting with the University of Michigan hospital, she began to study and promote better medical and health care for women. It was one of the bitter experiences of her administrative efforts in various organizations, that qualified, well trained women would take a post, only to have their health break down because of the problems associated with childbearing. She felt strongly that the medical profession was not dealing adequately in research or practice with women's suffering and special health problems.

In 1888, at the age of 49, Eliza Sunderland applied for admission to the University of Michigan graduate school for a degree in philosophy and political economy. Under the direction of Professor John Dewey, she completed her degree work in 1892 and successfully defended her thesis on "Man's Relation to the Absolute According to Kant and Hegel." She also published a religious book that year entitled *Upward Look*.

During this time she continued her Bible classes, her occasional sermons in Ann Arbor and to nearby congregations, and was often invited to be a speaker at the national and western A.U.A. conferences. She corresponded with many prominent Unitarians: Augusta Chapen, Robert Collyer, Samuel A. Eliot, William C. Gannett, Edward Everett Hale, Jenkin Lloyd Jones. From 1886 to 1895 she served on the National Board of the Association for the Advancement of Women.

In 1893 she was invited to speak at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago for the World's Congress Auxiliary, Women's Branch. Her lecture, "The Importance of a Serious Study of all Systems of Religion," delivered to an audience of 3,000, was reported in the Chicago and local newspapers.

In 1894 friends petitioned the University of Michigan to appoint Eliza Sunderland to a vacancy existing in the Department of Philosophy. She was supported by John Dewey and many other notables. The record does not indicate what happened here. Perhaps she preferred to join her husband on a thirteen month tour of Europe which they began in the summer of 1895.

Jabez Sunderland resigned his editorship of *The Unitarian* in December 1894, claiming that "the recent action of the denomination at Saratoga, placing it unequivocally on the Christian basis" released him from this task. Dr. Sunderland had taken a very active part in the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 in Chicago, and had been caught up by the profound religious philosophies of India. In 1895, he was given a leave of absence from the Ann Arbor church to go to India as the ambassador of the American Unitarian Association to the Brahmo-Somaj Theistic Society. Filling the pulpit during his absence were the Reverends T. B. Forbush and J. C. Kimball.

Before his departure, the Board and the congregation changed the bylaws of the church to

provide for a board of trustees of nine members, each serving a three-year period. The Board was to elect its own officers, and to maintain standing committees to manage finance, music and the library.

The Sunderlands left in the late summer of 1895. In this intensely exciting and ambitious year of travel, Eliza took pains to see that the family saw and heard as much as possible in art, architecture, music and history. She shared her delight with the Ann Arbor congregation in long monthly letters.

Their first stops were in England where they were both essentially on a lecture tour, visiting friends and various Unitarian groups. The British Unitarian Association, learning of Jabez's impending visit to India, asked him to report back to them on the educational, social, and religious conditions there. Eliza and the young Sunderlands did not go to India but stayed in Berlin where Eliza studied European history and philosophy, son Edson attended the University, and the two daughters, Gertrude and Florence, studied music.

In March they rejoined Jabez in Egypt, then traveled to Palestine where they traveled the whole length of the country on horseback, visiting the biblical locations.

Needless to say, these experiences had a profound effect and directed their thoughts and activities for the rest of their lives. The Ann Arbor congregation welcomed them back in the late summer of 1896 with a grand party. Both Jabez and Eliza were more in demand than ever for lectures on their travels.

When the Sunderlands left Ann Arbor in 1898 to take a post in California, Eliza suffered a breakdown in her health and was forced to rest for a year. However, after her recovery she continued to lecture and to promote equality for women. Since their son, Edson, became a professor of law at the University of Michigan, they often returned and kept in touch with their friends in the church they had served so brilliantly for twenty years.

Eliza's obituary, March, 1910, in Hartford, Conn. where Jabez was pastor of the Unity Church, noted her brilliant career as a preacher, lecturer and writer, but also stated "how well fitted she was for the home, devoted as a wife, faithful as a mother, and all heart and sympathy" for her friends and co-workers. This concern for others is well illustrated in the collection of her correspondence in the Bentley Library. The Bentley collection also includes copies of 100 or more of her sermons.

To round out these portraits of Jabez and Eliza Sunderland, we quote here some paragraphs from an obituary for Dr. Jabez Sunderland, written in August of 1936 by Charles Frederick Weller, Editor of *World Fellowship*:

> We used to think that Mrs. Sunderland was rather more of the masculine type of mind, Dr. Sunderland more feminine—together an ideal couple whose comradeship was, and is, one of the lasting inspirations of my life. Mrs. Sunderland told me she had never heard a single cross word from her husband...
>
> In the World's Parliament of Religions, in 1893, at the time of Chicago's first World's Fair, Doctor and Mrs. Sunderland took the lead in efforts to extend or continue, the Parliament of Religions in several countries. It was the war in 1914 that killed the definite, effective arrangements he had made, with leaders in Japan, China, India and elsewhere, to hold liberal Parliaments of Religions in those countries.
>
> In 1933, in our "First World Fellowship of Faiths—a Second World's Parliament of Religions" during Chicago's second World's Fair or Century of Progress Exposition, Dr. Sunderland delivered two addresses in which he reviewed the very notable achievements of the first Parliament, recounted the efforts to continue or extend it, and discussed the vital differences between 1895 and 1933, indicating the world's great forward movement, spiritually, during these forty years.

The Rev. Sunderland served in other ministries after Ann Arbor. A poet as well as a minister, he was beloved by his parishioners and highly regarded nationwide for his writings on many subjects, his most famed being his books on India, its political problems and struggles for freedom.

The Rev. Joseph H. Crooker

The Rev. Joseph H. Crooker, friend and protégé of Dr. Sunderland, took over the ministry of the Ann Arbor church in the fall of 1898. Beginning his career as a schoolteacher in Napoleon, Michigan, Mr. Crooker became a self-made minister without an academic degree. He was, however, scholarly in

his sermons and his many written tracts and distinguished in his ministry. He studied briefly at the Ypsilanti Union Seminary and served his early pastorates in Baptist churches. Before coming to Ann Arbor he served in Unitarian churches in Indiana, Montana, New York, and Madison. His wife, Florence Kollock, was also a trained minister in the Universalist denomination. Crooker was 48 years of age when he arrived, a tall, bearded man, meticulous in appearance, wearing always a silk hat. He felt very strongly that education was a builder of character, and his mission was to integrate the Unitarian philosophy into the life of the University in such a way that one would supplement the other in completing the student's outlook on life.

Many of his tracts and books were published by the American Unitarian Association. Perhaps the most widely read pamphlet was "The Unitarian Church" (1900), a treatise to help college students solve their perplexing religious problems, which was subsequently translated into several languages. He also wrote on the Spanish-American War. The Anti-Imperialist League published his pamphlet "The Menace to America," where he argued that a strong nation had not "the right to conquer, subjugate, control and govern feeble and backward races and peoples without reference to their wishes or opinions."

He also took issue on the question of being intellectually honest and remaining in a religion whose creed you did not believe. He strongly advocated keeping the Bible and its interpretations out of the public schools.

However, like his predecessor, he maintained a strongly theistic basis in the religion which he preached, whereas many members of the congregation were becomingly increasingly liberal and "socialistic" in their thinking. This eventually brought Mr. Crooker to resign from the Ann Arbor ministry in 1905.

The Rev. Henry Wilder Foote

Mr. Foote was born in Boston, the son of the Rev. Henry William Foote, minister of King's Chapel there, and the former Frances Anne Eliot, sister of Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard. After a year of travel in Europe following his graduation from Harvard, he returned to the Harvard Divinity School where he obtained the degree of S.T.B. (Bachelor of Sacred Theology). He came to Ann Arbor from the First Unitarian Church of New Orleans, with his wife, the former Eleanor T. Cope.

Gifted as an organizer and administrator, Mr. Foote founded the Young People's Religious Union, the purpose of which was "the stimulation of religious and ethical ideals and the promotion of social intercourse among young people of any or no church." He thoroughly reorganized and modernized the library in the Charles H. Brigham Reading Room, and he was very active in inter-denominational affairs. His greatest gift to the church was the development of its music program. Already noted as an authority on hymnody, as well as art, he generated interest in a strong choir and excellent musical services for the church.

Although very conscious of the need to keep an open mind in the "age of revolutions" as he expressed it, he led the congregation along traditional Unitarian lines, preaching strong biblical sermons with what was stated to have been a solidly conservative message. While Mr. Foote's conservatism pleased many members of the congregation, student and faculty interest fell away, causing some dissension in the congregation.

Mr. Foote resigned from the Ann Arbor pulpit in 1910 to become Secretary of Education for the American Unitarian Association. He had a long and distinguished career as a minister, author, hymnologist, and from 1914 to 1925, was assistant professor and secretary to the Harvard Divinity School.

Dr. Percy M. Dawson

Following Mr. Foote's resignation, a "liberal" Board of Trustees decided to call Dr. Percy M. Dawson to the Ann Arbor ministry. Dr. Dawson, the son of an Episcopal clergyman, was a professor of physiology at Johns Hopkins University. He took the ministry because he saw a chance for an outlet of his own social convictions. Students with no special interest in the church as such, but with an awakening social and political idealism, turned to the new minister as a logical leader. The nucleus of his student group was formed by such people as Mary Donovan, who became well known for her interest in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, Walter Nelson and Maurice Sugar, Detroit attorneys with a vital interest in civil liberties, and George Bishop, later a professor at Washington University and a leader in the cause of civil liberties.

However, Dr. Dawson shocked the congregation by sneering at them and their beloved Tiffany window and by refusing to live in the parsonage. He stated that the denomination had outlived its usefulness and was dead—they should change the name and reorganize. He ignored pastoral care of church members and spent his time with the Socialist Club, securing the use of the church parlours for their meetings.

The original period for the incorporation of the church had expired, probably in 1907. Alarmed by the discord and determined that the church should survive, a group of church members signed and filed new *Articles of Association* of the First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor with the State of Michigan on January 24, 1912.

When a resolution was introduced at the annual meeting that, for the welfare of the church, the ministry of Dr. Dawson be declared to cease, the meeting was packed with his student followers and his term was extended by six months.

In fact, the issue was not entirely clear cut. Dr. Dawson was deeply sincere but the members of the congregation who might have accepted the strong social implications of his ministry were not willing to go without the traditional ministering ways of those trained for the ministry. On the other hand, Professor A. E. White, a church member and a staunch supporter of the new regime, stated that the purpose of the church was service to the community first and religious worship second. He moved a three-year term for Percy Dawson. When the vote came up in May of 1912, the old regulars turned out and the vote to end Dawson's ministry carried. In disgust, Professor White tendered his resignation.

At this point, and in deep anger, the Young People's Religious Union disbanded and wrote to the American Unitarian Association that no further help to the church would be necessary as the denomination's help had always been intended for young people and they were now disbanding.

A long and shocking account of the matter appeared in the Detroit papers based on an interview with Dr. Dawson, who claimed the church was far behind the denomination in dealing with the issues of the day and that there had been fraud in the voting procedures. The statement from Dawson ended with, "the present pitiable condition of the church is not likely to last. We may look for a revival along the progressive lines of the other churches in the denomination. This may perhaps be achieved only at the expense of another minister or two, but perhaps the convulsion in which I have been privileged to play a part may alone be sufficient in inaugurating a new era. I sincerely hope so."

Dr. Dawson suffered a "nervous breakdown" as a result of this controversy and spent a year of quiet in order to recuperate. He went on to a prominent career as a professor at the University of Wisconsin. In 1929, 17 years later, in a letter to the trustees of the church, he said, "I can at this distance view quite objectively the course of events which led to my departure ... aggravated by a lack of patience, of gentleness, or consideration on my part. I had too much of the harshness of honesty, too much of the arrogance of insight."

Dr. Robert S. Loring

The church itself was in shambles, with staggering financial difficulties. The A.U.A., not for the first time, bailed out their missionary church, and Dr. Robert S. Loring, a warm, gentle and intelligent man, was called to the pulpit, to take up the burden of another dispute which had arisen during Dr. Dawson's tenure, that is, whether or not the young people should be allowed to dance in the church. Dr. Loring and the Board of Trustees adopted a liberal attitude.

The A.U.A. agreed to provide funds for church repairs plus a $1,200 stipend annually toward the minister's salary. Another $1,800 was raised to add a Guild Hall and a dining room to the church structure, thus bringing the social activities of the church from the basement to the ground level. The architectural firm, Donaldson and Mier of Detroit, designers of the original church, directed the building of the addition.

The congregation entered an unprecedented period of social activities, with dancing and card playing permitted in the church when these things were still condemned in other churches. The Socialist Club was invited to continue its meetings in the church parlours. Through these entertainments Dr. Loring succeeded in drawing the congregation together again. Although more general participation on the part of University faculty and students waited for a later day, still a unified and thriving congregation celebrated the church's 50th anniversary on April 30, 1915.

The conservative reaction to the Dawson ministry, reinforced by the conservatism brought on by the turmoil of the war in Europe, caught up the Ann Arbor congregation. This was a time in Ann Arbor when there was a great deal of suspicion and hostility toward the rather large number of residents of German descent. Church members were quite unwilling to provide a place of refuge and comfort to the faculty members who were being persecuted for their German ancestry.

This congregation was small and ingrown, with the A.U.A. continuing to provide up to one third of the cost of keeping the church alive. Dr. Loring, himself, looked after many of the details of keeping the church presentable, often providing the funds as well. In 1916, he wrote plaintively, "the church is largely dependent for a congregation on strangers."

After a cut in his salary in 1918, due to the poverty of the church, Dr. Loring resigned, ostensibly to return to Boston to look after his father who was in poor health.

Dr. Jabez Sunderland returned to the pulpit during the summer, and the preaching was intermittent and by various ministers or laymen during the early fall. On October 13, a meeting was called which 13 members attended. They decided to send out a questionnaire as to the continuance of the Sunday School, the Women's Alliance, and the Young People's Religious Union. Meanwhile, the Board offered the church parlours to the Student Army Training Corps as a convalescent ward. Later in the fall of 1918 all public services of any kind were cancelled because of the epidemic of influenza.

There were 38 replies to the questionnaire, 21 favorable, 8 negative, and 9 conditional. The A.U.A. sent a delegation to look at the church to see what could be done. They decided to provide funds to repair the parsonage, and a committee was appointed to consider securing a minister. In February 1919, the renewed congregation voted to call the Reverend Sidney S. Robins, at a salary of $2,000, of which $1,200 would again be paid by the A.U.A.

The Rev. Sidney Swain Robins

Dr. Robins came from the Unitarian Church in Kingston, Massachusetts. He was a graduate of the University of North Carolina, with a Master of Arts degree from the Harvard Graduate School, S.T.B. from Harvard Divinity School, and Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the Harvard Graduate School.

Dr. Robins provided a stability and an enthusiasm of which the church was much in need. With the war years over and again in good spirits, the congregation could turn their thoughts to local community and social problems. In 1920, Professor Alfred E. White, again active in the church, chaired the local drive for a National Unitarian Campaign. The congregation joined an interchurch committee concerned with the matter of civic morals. The Laymen's League and the Women's Alliance were again strong.

Dr. Robins' deep commitment to the A.U.A. and the Western Conference provided the leadership so that local delegates took part in all of the conferences.

In 1921 Dr. Robins made the arrangements for an International Unitarian Conference in Detroit, with enthusiastic participation on the part of the church members. Edson Sunderland chaired the committee

The Rev. Sidney Swain Robins

to amend the constitution of the A.U.A. Recognizing that the church was still financially very weak, Professor White, working with the A.U.A., looked into the possibility of federating with the local Congregational Church, but nothing came of this.

On coming to the church, Dr. Robins' first request was for an able music committee and the resources to provide excellent music as a part of the service. Funds were found to pay a professional soloist each Sunday and a music director was hired on a trial basis to train the congregation to sing. While not everyone could sing, those who could formed a choir. This commitment to an excellent music program has become a tradition in the church.

At the annual meeting in April of 1922, there were words of appreciation and congratulations all around; the treasurer, the Women's Alliance, the Music Committee, the Religious Education Department, the Laymen's League, and the Young People's Religious Union had all had an inspiring and successful year. When the University Student Christian Association asked for support, the congregation voted to give twenty-five cents for each student member of the congregation. Conservatively figuring the number at 100, a total of $25 was given.

In December of 1923, in order to raise more funds for the minister and for student work, it was decided to ask for annual subscriptions to the church (heretofore these had been standing subscriptions), and to ask members to increase their pledges if possible. The A.U.A. continued to provide $1,200 annually toward the minister's salary.

Harold Marley writes in his church appraisal that Sidney S. Robins preached a Hegelian philosophy, and he made every effort to restore the church to the place of importance it had once occupied. His sermons showed his great concern for the social problems of labor and poverty; some members felt he had too much sympathy for the masses. At his suggestion, the names of the parishioners were removed from the pews of the church, making them open to everyone.

It is interesting to note that the American Friends Service Committee asked the church members to contribute funds for relief in Russia and Germany, but the church members balked at sending any money to Germany.

In 1924 there was a concerted effort by all the churches in Ann Arbor to join in a plan for weekday religious education for all the children of the town. The Unitarian congregation found this impractical and never joined in.

In other firsts for the church, a safe for church documents was purchased in 1924 (this safe was moved to the Washtenaw location in 1946, but in 1970 it was stolen, contents and all, after it had been built into the wall of the chalet), and church letterhead stationery was ordered.

In the December 1924 canvass, there were 47 subscribers. While it was a stable and enthusiastic congregation, it was ingrown, with the same officers serving on the Board year after year. Since the congregation was composed largely of University families, University interests often came first, so that only vesper services were held on those Sundays when the University held their convocation services.

The sharp drift of university students away from church attendance in this decade caused great discouragement on the part of the minister and the church officials. On the other hand, the University now offered courses on religion and the Bible and maintained a religious center for students, activities which had once been left entirely to the churches.

At the annual meeting in 1926 the congregation voted to buy a motion picture machine for the church. At the request of the A.U.A., church members committed themselves to raise money for the Unitarian Foundation.

The Sacco and Vanzetti case and its ramifications took the attention of the church body in 1927. There were lectures and discussion of the issues involved, with petitions signed and sent asking for justice for the two.

To the consternation of the church members, Dr. Robins resigned in May of 1928 to accept a position as Professor of Philosophy at Lombard College, saying that a change would be good for the church. A resolution was passed recognizing Robins' "splendid intellectual ability, spiritual and religious sincerity, social sympathies and toleration, and the vigorous character of his leadership." For a number of months following the departure of Dr. Robins it was not known whether the church would continue. The church structure was again in need of extensive repairs. Only the aroused and dedicated

interest of the A.U.A. turned the tide in favor of continuation. Several thousand dollars were appropriated for the physical repairs of the church and parsonage, and $1,200 was again set as the A.U.A. yearly grant toward the salary of the minister.

In December Dr. Loring returned to help the congregation discuss the relationship of the minister to the church, and in early 1929 the congregation met again to discuss whether they should close the church or affiliate with another. With the support of the A.U.A. they voted to begin the search for a new minister. During this difficult year, Professor Alfred E. White directed the church activities most ably, with all of its activities in place except for the Sunday service.

The Rev. Harold P. Marley

The Reverend Harold P. Marley, recommended to the congregation by Curtis Reese, Dean of the Abraham Lincoln Center in Chicago, gave an Easter sermon at the church and was immediately extended a call which he accepted.

Mr. Marley, then age 32, had been ministering in the Disciple Church. He had found, however, that he needed a more liberal church to fulfill his ideals of the ministry. It was the first Unitarian church in which he preached and unfortunately he encountered a good bit of skepticism because of an article he had written the previous winter while looking for occupation in Chicago. "Unemployment Hits the Clergy" was published in the *Christian Century* and reprinted in the *Readers Digest*.

THE REVEREND HAROLD P. MARLEY

Mr. Marley, his wife, Faye, and young son, John, came in the late summer of 1929. In addition to his Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, Mr. Marley had completed a course in journalism at the University of Missouri, and scholarship programs in the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University. His considerable experience in social welfare work had not only changed his own theological concepts, but had a great bearing on the kind of ministry he gave the Ann Arbor church.

On November 26, 1929, the 47th anniversary of the original dedication, the church was rededicated and the minister formally installed with triumphant ceremony and the pledge that "This Church is incorporated to carry on such religious, benevolent, and charitable work as shall promote 'Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion'" (the motto of Western Unitarianism since the 1860s). The keynote of the new pastor for himself and for the congregation was "service, unstinted and unrepaid service, to our fellow man." Letters of welcome came from Jabez Sunderland, Henry Wilder Foote, Percy M. Dawson, Sidney S. Robins, and Robert S. Loring.

Although the congregation could not foresee the tumultuous and tragic decade ahead, Harold P. Marley, usually called "H.P.," was an energetic and dedicated activist, an apt choice for a congregation made up of the most progressive and socially conscious members of the University faculty.

The congregation voted in September of 1930, in an effort to reach out to the "unchurched," to label the church "The Fellowship of Liberal Religion," with the word "Unitarian" underneath in parentheses, because, they said, the Eastern connotation of Unitarian does not carry enough meaning here in the Middle West. We should point out here, however, that even as early as the mid 1920s, liberal and dedicated church members had begun dropping their memberships as the church moved away from traditional Christian doctrine.

In spite of the impending gloom of the Depression, a reinvigorated and hopeful congregation began to plan, with the other Ann Arbor churches, a *Religious Emphasis Week* to be held in February of 1931. Through the courtesy and financial support of the Laymen's League and the A.U.A., Dr. Curtis W. Reese was invited to represent the Unitarian Church. A leader among the humanists in the denomination, Dr. Reese was a former President of Lombard College and a former Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference. His book, *The New Humanist*, had just been published.

Although it was not at first intended to give the Unitarian contribution a thoroughly humanist emphasis, the coming of Curtis Reese marked a distinct turning point in the philosophical expression of the church and in Mr. Marley's ministry. Just before the opening of *Religious Emphasis Week*, nineteen members of the church, representing as many departments of the University, prepared and signed the following statement:

A Reflection of the University Mind

We Believe

That there is only one source of authority for any philosophy of life—validated human experience.

That religion consists in the daily quest of the good life here and now, lived in the light of truth without equivocation, and in the effort to see life in its entirety.

In the attempt to enrich and improve the life of all mankind, by the search for and application of the truths of human experience, wherever they may lead, even if this means rejection of established and time-honored concepts.

In honoring all great teachers of truth and in promulgating great truths from whatever source derived, not in emphasizing the teaching of merely one sect or creed.

In the continual readjustment of ideas to new truths in all fields of thought and in the necessity of struggling for the freedom of the human mind, for freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of the press at all times.

Therefore

since the Unitarian Church is a creedless fellowship of liberal religion, free to change with increasing knowledge, we are happy to be part of this group which looks always to the conquest of ignorance, evil and suffering, to the unfolding of the highest powers of mankind and to the banishment of false and obsolete creeds, practices and institutions.

We are united in a quest for the good life, "a life inspired by love and guided by knowledge," and for the brotherhood of man in its highest sense.

Samuel T. Dana
Z. Clark Dickinson
Walter B. Ford
Carl Guthe
Preston James
Carl D. LaRue
D. M. Lichty
Benjamin D. Meritt
Arthur B. Moehlman
A. R. Morris
Harrison Randall
Theophile Raphael
U. G. Rickert
Edson R. Sunderland
John F. Shepard
Roy W. Sellars,
Arthur E. Wood
Paul Welch
Alfred E. White

This statement was printed on the back of the announcement which described the meetings in the church. On the front page, the minister stated, "We urge you to bring your critical faculties with you and join with us in the effort to re-think religion in terms of modern needs and in the light of present day knowledge."

The Reese lectures were well attended but his words failed to attract the anticipated following. The other invited speakers and the local ministers took issue with what they considered to be an extreme position.

"Thus, without particularly choosing to do so, the local church became the champion of a doctrine which was unpopular with other church-goers, but which had not yet permeated the thinking of the unchurched," wrote Mr. Marley in 1936.

In 1932, with the Depression growing deeper, the A.U.A. cut the minister's grant to $1,080 per year. A survey of the church that year lists 87 pledging units with another 35 "friends" who contributed to church activities and support. It was still essentially a University faculty and student group, with no prominent members of the business community. Of the University students enrolled, 97 listed themselves as either Unitarian or Universalist, and only a quarter of that number participated actively in church affairs. The Sunday School had a paid director and a volunteer nurse gave health inspections of the children on Sunday mornings. The high school PRISM group took its acronym from "physical, religious, intellectual, social, and mental." Other participating groups were the Junior High School Club, the Women's Alliance, the Laymen's League (which was essentially a faculty club) and an Evening Alliance of Business and Professional Women.

With the widespread failures in businesses and banks, church pledges fell as well. A number of new

community and University organizations arose, radical and otherwise, to try to deal with the tragedies of the Great Depression and the perceived requirements for change needed in our social structure so that these hardships could be prevented in the future. Unitarian groups were formed to study the New Deal of the Roosevelt administration and how such concepts could be implemented.

The minister and church members became involved in promoting multiracial use of dormitories so that Jews, Negroes, and Orientals might be accommodated. The Community Fund Association, of which Mr. Marley became president, publicly defended groups of radical students on campus (The Round Table, Socialists, and Vanguard Clubs, as well as the Student League which was semi-communist in its political thought). Work began on forming "cooperatives" as a means to secure food, insurance, credit, and other necessities at reasonable cost.

The Humanist Manifesto

The Ann Arbor Unitarians had played their role since the beginning of the 20th century in discussing and formulating the ideas that constituted early religious humanism. Motivating changes in religious thinking were the empirical methods which produced outstanding scientific advances of the past and present centuries. The devastation of World War I, the "roaring" materialism of the 1920s, followed by the crash, all led to great public debate about the meaning and purposes of religion.

While the philosophers had been carrying on the debate publicly, secular philosophy now became associated with the religious enterprise, as Unitarian leaders considered these challenges.

William F. Schulz, who was elected president of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1985, wrote of religious humanism in 1975:

> But it is important to remember that the movement arose uniquely within one particular religious tradition, the Unitarian. We will avoid a good deal of confusion if we keep in mind the starkly limited nature of humanism, both institutionally, numerically, and in the amount of influence it was ever able to wield. This was the faith of a small segment of a tiny denomination; it was hardly a world-wide crusade.[3]

And of course the debate brought schism in Unitarian circles, as well, which harked back to the division between Eastern and Western Unitarianism during the Sunderland period.

In 1920, *The Christian Register* asked the Rev. Sidney S. Robins, minister of the Ann Arbor church, to interview Professor Roy Wood Sellars. The interview resulted in an article entitled "What Is a Humanist? This Will Tell You," which was published in the July 29 edition of the magazine. Sellars' book, *The Next Step in Religion,* published in 1918, had been the first attempt by a non-clergyman to articulate a humanist faith. This book had had a great influence on Dietrich, Reese and the entire humanist movement. Roy Sellars was a member of the Ann Arbor church and a very respected philosopher at the University of Michigan, with broadly ranging interests. In the interview he rejected supernaturalism and urged those of the Unitarian faith to turn to a contemplation of what makes for human happiness. In his article, Robins quoted Professor Sellars as saying, however, that there was too much emphasis upon rationality in Unitarian circles—"the new religion must develop a ritual of its own, or a certain orderliness or beauty of its own."

Roy Wood Sellars, the son of a country doctor, was raised in a small community in northeastern Michigan. He attended the University of Michigan and stayed on there as a professor of philosophy his entire professional life. He has been described in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* as a "vigorously independent thinker" who "maintained a substantial reputation and was respected world-wide."

The years 1922 to 1933 were a period of growth in religious humanism, not only in the Unitarian churches but throughout the intellectual world. A new generation of humanists brought the movement into the 1930s. Concentrated somewhat at the Meadville Theological School under the leadership of Curtis Reese, an organization, The Humanist Fellowship, was founded in 1927, followed in 1928 by a magazine for the movement, *The New Humanist*. In writing for the movement, the new humanists found that the old religious language did not suit their purposes and a frank and more scientifically sophisticated terminology was needed. Above all, what was needed was a summary statement of religious humanism.

In 1928, Roy Wood Sellars' *Religion Coming of Age* was published, one of the most influential works of

the movement. In it, Sellars systematically defined humanism, with a new and deeper intellectual sophistication.

Challenged by the political events of the early depression years, the question philosophers posed was "dare liberals lead" the way out of the morass? Late in 1932, the Humanist Fellowship asked Roy Sellars to compose a definitive statement of humanism. Within a few weeks, the original draft of Sellars' "Humanist Manifesto" was in the hands of the leaders of the movement, who reworked and reviewed it, with Sellars' blessing. Sellars' Unitarian colleagues at the University of Michigan, in particular Carl Guthe, Preston James, and John F. Shepard, reviewed the Manifesto before it was submitted.

By April 1st the first public draft was issued. Only a limited number had been asked to sign the document, Marley among them, and it is still debatable whether the whole effort was not meant simply to get publicity for the movement.

Although there were several refusals, a number of abstentions, and some who signed with reservations on certain points in the document, thirty-four eminent clergymen, philosophers, scientists, and social scientists ultimately signed the document, which was released to the Associated Press in late April and published in *The Christian Register* on May 11, 1933. The full text is provided in Appendix B.

The public debate over humanism opened the doors of Unitarian Universalism for those who profess a non-theistic faith, but the interest in humanistic theology, and in particular point 14 of The Humanist Manifesto, led many people to the conclusion that this was communist dogma and initiated many of the loyalty and security questions of the late 1940s and the 1950s. Interest in the Manifesto waned during World War II and its aftermath, although there were efforts to revise the document in 1941 and again in 1953.

By 1933 the church was already in arrears in paying the minister. Mr. Marley took the summer to work for the Friends Service Committee doing rehabilitation work among the coal miners of West Virginia. When he returned in the fall, he asked for and was granted a further leave, from January to September of 1934, to do similar work in the coal fields of Kentucky. The congregation organized a "cabinet" of the heads of the various church groups to carry on the affairs of the church.

Mr. Marley wrote "on the firing line in Kentucky" that the men had formed a new union but did not know how to use their new freedom and power. He asked the congregation for books, games, art materials, and any possible recreational equipment, a request to which the church body generously responded.

Before his return, Mr. Marley offered his resignation. He felt the church was not responding to his ministry and he pleaded for a system of regular pay, complaining of the large deficit in his salary, which caused not only financial sacrifice but outright physical hardship. His resignation was rejected unanimously and Harold Marley returned in the fall of 1934 to resume his ministry.

The Board of Trustees managed to get sufficient pledges to pay Mr. Marley $125 monthly, with the balance to be paid when it became possible. In 1934, as the emergency in the church continued, John F. Shepard became Chairman of the Board. He and Mr. Marley instituted a change in the church program.

Adult services were thereafter held at 5:00 P.M. on Sunday so that the children might have a richer Sunday School program in the morning, and the adult members a more "poetic" service. Mr. Marley regarded "the aesthetic as a necessary equivalent to life's enjoyment and to a full realization of its truths." The western light in the late afternoon added a special glow to the beauty of the sanctuary.

In the summer, services took place at 8:15 p.m., with a light supper served at 6:45. A Saturday evening open house was held weekly beginning at 9:00 p.m., preceded by two interest groups: a study group to center around book reviews or special academic interests, and a personal experience ashram (their term) to deal with more intimate problems of individual living. Cards, ping-pong, billiards, and dancing took up the rest of the evening.

Harold Marley was an activist in a church of activists. Upon his return, Marley became Acting President of the Council of Social Workers, newly organized to combine their forces in dealing with unemployment and its problems. The Council began publishing a bulletin to push for solutions to the pressing need for treating Ann Arbor's sewage, the need for land and park planning, and the

problems of the public schools. In the Ann Arbor community, a Building Council for the Public Schools was organized to study these matters. The Civil Liberties Committee established the right of the Communist Party to hold meetings on the Court House steps during the fall election.

Marley also served on the Ann Arbor Community Forum Board and the Ann Arbor Civil Liberties Committee. (In 1932, the Ford Motor Company was invited by the congregation to speak to the Ann Arbor community about the hunger march and the violence at the Ford plants. Ford Motor Co. did not respond but a forum was held nevertheless, from which the Community Forum Board had its beginning.) For a short time H.P. became involved in local partisan politics, but was persuaded by his friends not to run for the office of mayor.

By 1935, with war rumblings in Europe, students began holding antiwar meetings, some of which were initiated in the church by Marley himself. The press was hostile, referring to all antiwar or peace groups as "Reds." Mr. Marley addressed the students at Ypsilanti Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University), and scheduled an address on the campus of Michigan State College in East Lansing (Michigan State University today). There he and his group were met by a group of opposing students who picked up Mr. Marley and heaved him into the Cedar River. Forced to leave the campus, the antiwar group held its short and disrupted rally on a porch across the street. Press coverage was intensive. Mr. Marley and his supporters initiated a legal case against State College for not protecting the speakers but later this was dropped.

The general mood, however, was overwhelmingly pro-war—so much so that some students who refused to sign an oath to take up arms in defense of their country were expelled. Mr. Marley's files, however, are filled with letters of support from people all over the state, including several legislators, some of whom introduced bills to censure State College and to make military training optional.

A conference was called on the Protection of Civil Rights, to be held on the local campus, but the mood was tempered by University President Alexander Ruthven, who issued a statement that he would allow no antiwar activities in connection with the conference.

In 1935, the Dunbar Center, an organization of black citizens created to provide housing and recreation for their people (the YMCA, and YWCA and other business and professional clubs were closed to them), was granted the use of the church Guild Hall for their annual formal dance, thus beginning a long period of friendship and cooperation between the church and the Black community.

A momentous occasion in 1935 was a debate between a distinguished history professor at the University of Michigan, Preston Slosson, and William Weinstone, a well-known Marxist scholar and editor and a leader in the trade union movement, on the question, "Is Liberalism the Way Out of a Depression?"

Mr. Marley, in a new role, took a part in the production of *The Late Christopher Bean,* an excellent depression play on human greed, produced by the newly established Ann Arbor Civic Theatre.

A Religion and Art series was begun in the church, and an attempt was made at having interracial services. Mr. Marley planned an Institute of Liberal Religion for four Sundays in February and March. A Saturday program for the youth of the church was begun, with one hour for study of the life of Christ, followed by an hour of social activity.

In the Appraisal of the Church which was done in 1936 by a special committee appointed by the Board, the church was described as being in its third period historically (the second beginning with the changes brought about by the Dawson ministry, and the third growing from the publication of the Humanist Manifesto). The committee found that the church "interprets the secular literature (including economics) as well as the sacred, and emphasizes the local church as a community force rather than a unit in a denomination. Humanism is regarded not as a separate religion, but rather as the flower of religion and the peculiar contribution of Unitarianism."

The A.U.A. initiated a "Student Plan" which constituted a program for university students, asking Marley to give one quarter of his time for this purpose, with a remuneration of $750 per year.

In 1936 a successful series of Saturday night suppers for the young married couples of the congregation was begun. Still it was found necessary as an economy measure to discontinue

the weekly newsletter and to send postcards instead. Mr. Marley asked to be relieved of his summer duties to work once again with the Friends; Mr. Ryder of the Flint church filled in for the summer. At the annual church supper, Jabez Sunderland, 91 years old and once again living in Ann Arbor with his family, gave a talk on the Importance of Unitarianism. Included in the annual report was the announcement that the church's Boy Scout group had taken all of the distinctions in Ann Arbor. Mr. Marley gave a stirring report on his year as chairman of the Washtenaw Conference for the Protection of Civil Rights, organized locally to make all groups conscious of civil rights infringements.

The 1936–37 year was emotionally, if not financially, a resurgent year. The Reverend Frederick May Eliot of St. Paul, a humanist, was nominated for the presidency of the A.U.A. The theists in the denomination nominated the Reverend Charles R. Joy. To avoid another theological battle, the leaders conferred and persuaded Joy to withdraw and Eliot was elected.

The Ann Arbor church was surely not the only church to suffer such a decline in morale and membership during the Depression years. The Rev. Eliot had chaired a Commission on Appraisal of the A.U.A. prior to his election as president. With the Commission's recommendations in mind, Eliot and the A.U.A. staff began a program to restore the morale of the ministers and to provide direction for better administrative practices in the churches.

Mr. Marley and University President Alexander Ruthven exchanged compliments, Marley commending Ruthven for his letter on peace, and Ruthven thanking Marley for his work with the students. Mr. Marley was asked to serve on the board of the Dunbar Center. A church committee came together to study funeral costs with a view to improvement of local practices. The High School group reorganized to take in non-Unitarian youths, this coming about because the high school across State Street rented space in the church for some youth activities. Still there was a deficit for the year, particularly in the minister's salary.

During that year the membership seriously considered a proposal to build a cooperative apartment house for women, the *Sunderland Memorial House*, next door to the church for the purpose of raising funds to send women in India to college. Beginning during the Sunderland ministry, the members of the Ann Arbor church had supported the people of India in their struggle for independence and in their efforts to liberalize the caste system and free its women through education. Although the apartment building was never built, there is no doubt the Ann Arbor church, in its small way, was a part of the force which eventually brought India its independence.

The use of the once-famous library had practically ceased, although Lee Iacocca, in his autobiographical sketch printed in the 1980s, wrote of reading and finding many of his ideas in this library as a high school student during the 1930s.

Most doors were closed to community groups relating to the peace movement and to labor union agitation. The idea of offering a liberal center in Ann Arbor to groups financially unable to meet elsewhere or who were refused space because of the controversial nature of their meetings appealed to the church membership.

Services were now held at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays, but attendance was poor. Mr. Marley began a series of talks in the community on labor strikes and other union problems in the state. The *Ann Arbor Daily News* attacked Harold Marley and his friend and co-worker on the labor front, Kermit Eby, a well-known socialist and labor educator, for their interest in the strikes in the Flint automobile plants. Posters from the Loyalists in Spain adorned the walls of the church, and the *Daily News* printed Marley's sermon on the Spanish Civil War. He was also on the sponsoring committee for a series of lectures by Norman Thomas, an American socialist leader and one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union, but a very controversial figure to the general public.

The total membership of the church in 1937 was 79. Once again Mr. Marley tendered his resignation, which once again the small but tenacious congregation refused to accept. Services, however, were suspended entirely during the University exam period, an indication of the influence of the faculty members of the church.

Because of his activism in the field of labor problems, Harold Marley was appointed to the Unitarian Fellowship of Social Justice to study the relationship of Unitarian churches to labor conditions.

Mr. Marley now proposed to the congregation a major change in the church program—to set up a Unity Hall Board, Unity Hall being the new

designation for the Fellowship Room, and to open the church seven days a week to accommodate educational programs in labor problems and leadership skills for labor union people, and to establish a Social Arts Guild. This was done and a highly successful education program ensued for the next several years, one which was later taken over by the University.

In the fall of 1937, Mr. Marley was given leave for two to three days a week to speak for the Conference on Civil Rights and for the League for Peace and Democracy, a position which provided him with a small but dependable income.

An excellent program was begun that year for the High School PRISM Club and the Liberal Student Union under the direction of Nicholas Schreiber, an Ann Arbor educator and a new member of the church.

In 1938, Unity Hall was going strong. Mr. Marley was speaking widely on behalf of the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. Professor John F. Shepard was honored publicly, in the church and in the press, for his community leadership. Cited were his roles as Vice-Chairman for the Ann Arbor League for Peace and Democracy, organizer for medical aid to Spain and to China, organizer for the Ann Arbor Cooperative Society, and organizer for the state chapters of the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors.

In the struggle to keep the church viable, Marley and a committee of church members had done an evaluation of the church together with its history in 1936 (the document resulting from this evaluation has been referred to from time to time as Mr. Marley's history). Now, in 1938, he recirculated the words of the statement of belief published in 1931 and asked his parishioners if they would change it in any way. So far as we can tell from the records, the statement was reconfirmed unanimously.

With the lack of funds for any kind of refurbishing, the church was becoming threadbare, and Mr. Marley made some efforts himself to make it more attractive. Still enthusiastic about his church and its potential, he wrote the following article which was printed in *The Christian Register* on April 7, 1938.

A FELLOWSHIP OF LIBERAL RELIGION
Harold P. Marley

The Unitarian church at Ann Arbor, Michigan, has made vital experiments in relating worship to *contemporary life. Mr. Marley, the minister of the church, here describes some of the things which have been done and points to future developments.*

Entering the Ann Arbor church on a winter Sunday afternoon at the twilight hour, one passes through a dark candlelit vestibule to the narthex, lighted by a floor lamp, with the bust of Emerson facing the door. The plaster bust of the Concord saint, made by Sidney H. Morse, who came from Boston to teach in the university, is placed squarely on a marble baptismal font—constant reminder of his views on traditional Christian ritual. In the chancel, where an altar light dimly burns, one sees at once a long batik hanging as a reredos—a life-size figure representing a pronounced struggle of man with his environment. It is *Man, controlling his Destiny,* himself, and his immediate surroundings. Below, on a table draped with an Indian cover of a design antedating the Paisley, are two tall candelabra of Persian design. Down each side aisle hang, in chronological order, eight banners of religion from Hinduism to Mohammedanism. The symbols on them were for the most part suggested by foreign students on the campus, as explained on the flyleaf of the new hymnal. A glow of light comes from the upper reaches of the chancel arch and an illuminated Tiffany window adds rich color to the interior.

With the prelude comes the acolyte, in academic robe, who lights the two candles on the chancel table from the altar-light by means of a taper inserted in an ancient oil cruse, used for administering extreme unction in the Catholic Church. During the singing of the first hymn, the minister lights the taper once more, and the acolyte touches it to the candles on the side aisles under each banner. Overhead lights are noiselessly controlled, and used for congregational singing and reading. Aspiration is said from behind the table, with a solo response sung from Stanton Coit's "Social Worship." Antiphonal readings between minister and reader are selected appropriate to the topic of the day. In keeping with the spirit of the service and the esthetic appeal, there is no passing of collection plates. Following the closing hymn, the minister goes to the table and the acolyte is handed a two-handled aspersorium, used in the Greek Church for holy water. This is taken to the door and placed on a stand. There is a solo response to the offertory-benediction, and the crescendo on the organ and switching on of lights marks the conclusion of the service.

The interior fittings of the sanctuary grew over a period of years to enrich the Normandy walls erected in 1881–2 during the ministry of Jabez T. Sunderland. The Michigan fieldstone, with which the locality is the rich beneficiary of glacial days, was used in the walls. Chiseled to a flat surface and well buttressed, with a square tower on the corner, the building is a fine example of the structures erected by the descendants of the predatory people who settled on the river Seine during the eighth and ninth centuries, and which was subsequently spread to other places by Norman conquerors. Thus, it may be taken as a symbol of the Unitarian belief—strong enough to make

itself a part of a well-churched western community which was hostile to the new doctrine, and virile enough to be spread by graduates of a growing university. The square pyramid-roofed tower, with a rounded towerette on the front corner, is reminiscent of conquest—days when men needed the strong shield of sturdy walls to outwit the enemy.

Just as subscriptions came from various parts of the country, so did furnishings for the new building. Pictures of early Unitarian poets and preachers, books for the endowed library, a marble baptistery and a communion service found their way to the Ann Arbor freight depot. The interior of the auditorium had many mural inscriptions of sentiments, biblical and Unitarian, which gave an intellectual appeal even before the service began or the minister rose to speak from the centrally-located pulpit. In 1896, one of the ornamental windows was removed to permit the installation of a Tiffany window commemorating a child, stillborn. During the war period, Dr. Robert S. Loring added a parish house between the church and parsonage, and all social events moved upstairs.

It was in 1930 that a grant from Boston made it possible to modernize the interior and exchange the slate roof for a Tennessee tile one which is in perfect harmony with the colored stone walls. The art window was moved to the north side and artificially lit, and the walls were changed from blue to deep yellow. Gold curtains were hung in the chancel on either side of the central panel which had the original biblical quotation, “To us, there is one God...

Then arose the question of how to make the rededicated interior take on the aspect of a living vital religion—something which fresh paint and new wiring cannot do. New pew cushions were placed on the seats and pulpit upholstering made to match. There was the question of a pulpit cover and flags of the nations, needed to bring color and symbolism to the chancel. Eventually, the flag idea evolved into plans for banners of the historic religions, which required months to design and execute. Selections from the writings of Channing and Lowell were put on mason board—gold letters on a blue field, and fitted over the original Bible quotation.

The desire arose to make the service itself more beautiful, on the theory that the intellectual expression of religion needs a symbolism to make it authentic even as an orthodox service uses ritual to cloak its intellectual lack. The pulpit was moved to the right and the communion table was made central in the chancel. A stand served as a lectern. A new service book, containing readings and hymns, was compiled and printed. Members of the church made copper wall-candle-holders in the prism design—the prism being the symbol of truth broken into its component parts. On special occasions, unusual services, such as a harvest communion, a child dedication, and a spring dance, were solemnized.

The student emphasis in the church means that the college person must be encouraged to participate in creative ways as well as in ways critical of religion and the adventure of liberalism in this field. Focus of the student life is the library. Several hundred volumes line the walls and Windsor chairs surround a large oval table in the middle of the room. The Liberal Students Union has no devotional service, but launches at once into the topic of the evening by introducing a speaker. Here is a clearinghouse for the radical campus illegal tender, and here, with Channing, Martineau and Lincoln looking down, students are self-schooled in the difference between standing in the liberal tradition and moving with it.

The tradition of the church as a *Fellowship of Liberal Religion,* where free speech may prevail even when state buildings are closed, has been a costly tradition to follow consistently. Some have objected to admitting radical groups to use of the building; had these people known that a student socialist paper got started and died in the tower room of the church, they would have objected to this lusty skeleton in the closet. But today the church feels itself a beneficiary of the new social strength which is emerging from the more troubled years of the depression. The walls need a bit of pointing to smooth out the marks of the finger of time, but they are yet strong in the Norman tradition of stolid power.

One final word as to the future. In line with the institutional church emphasis of the past year, the board have approved an expansion program to include an L-shaped co-operative apartment building, the Huron Street entrance to be only a few steps from the new million-dollar graduate school headquarters. One proposal is to make it a Sunderland Memorial, and to use part of the income to provide scholarships for Indian students in India. When plans are eventually drawn, they will provide for a connecting crypt under the church chancel for the ashes of deceased members. The apartment will include quarters for the minister’s family, and the custodian, and there will be many co-operative features for graduate students and young faculty members who will reside under its roof. The maintenance of a strong church in this strategic center is a matter of importance to all Unitarians.

By 1939 the financial affairs of the church were in desperate straits. The budget for that year provided for a ministerial salary of $1,900, of which the A.U.A. provided $1,080. The total budget was $2,395, half of what it had been a decade earlier. Three makeshift apartments in the parsonage were rented, leaving little space for Marley, although he was now divorced. During the next year, space in the tower was rented to students in exchange for janitorial service, a system which created numerous frustrations and a minimum of upkeep. The church building was used intensively by many groups and as the next few years passed, it became increasingly bleak, run-down and unkempt.

Since an automobile for the minister had now become a necessity, the Board of Trustees voted to buy and insure a car for Mr. Marley’s use, with ownership in the name of the church. Payments for the car, however, were deducted from his salary.

Until this time, it had been the practice of the treasurer to take the contributions of the congregation and to pay the bills. Mr. Marley requested that monthly financial reports be made, the beginning of a practice which continues today. There was no question of the misuse of funds, indeed many of the expenses of the church were paid from the pocket of the treasurer when church funds were lacking. The A.U.A. was strongly recommending better accounting practices in their churches as a step to providing a better financial base.

In March of 1940, an estimate of $1,100 for urgently needed repairs was sent to the A.U.A. with the request that they provide the funds. The A.U.A. responded by insisting on an every member canvass before any money would be provided, and chided the church members for relying too heavily on Boston for support. Mr. Marley offered to forgive half of the back salary owed him, if the Board would raise the money to pay him the other half.

Meanwhile, a people's front newspaper, *The Washtenaw Progressive*, was launched from offices in the church, with a governing body drawn from the various unions meeting in the church library. Mr. Marley continued his community activism, which included a radio talk under the auspices of the League for Peace and Democracy opposing the fascism of the notorious Father Coughlin. The church and the minister were also involved in defending the case of thirteen students expelled from the University for anti-war activity and for union organizing. A young townsman, Neil Staebler, joined with the congregation in this case.

The following year the church was again put to the test concerning a request from the American Student Union to meet in Unity Hall. Mr. Marley consulted with the University and the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee of the University, since the ASU was not recognized by the University and could not use their rooms. University officials were gratified for having been consulted and the way was smoothed, but the church trustees tabled the question as they did not wish to antagonize the community. Later, on the advice of Mr. Fritchman of the A.U.A., the Board agreed to stay with the policy of open rentals to all serious groups, reaffirming a resolution by the congregation of many years' standing. However, the trustees now insisted that a statement be read at each meeting that the congregation neither affirms nor condemns anything said or done at the meeting.

The church had already been subjected to severe community condemnation for allowing the use of church rooms by the Young Communist League. Thereafter, the minister insisted that, while the church would serve these groups in accordance with its long-standing policy, care would be taken to protect the church and there must be no publicity for these meetings.

In November of 1940, the A.U.A. reduced their annual support to $900. The budget and the minister's salary were cut accordingly. It should be noted here that while the church itself was quite insolvent, the Laymen's League and the Women's Alliance were thriving. Many members of the congregation were known world-wide not only in their professional fields as university professors, but also for their service and their writings on social and political questions. Mr. Marley called John F. Shepard's service to the attention of *The Christian Register* so that he was listed among eminent Unitarians. Professor Roy W. Sellars was well known, as were several others. Both the League and the Alliance were prestigious in the town and it sometimes happened that other liberal townspeople would join their discussions and become members without realizing they were thereby joining the church.

In March of 1941, the church's first bank account was established at the Federal Savings Bank, thus removing the income and expense monies from the treasurer's pocket to a more formal arrangement of deposits and a checking account. During the budget year of 1941–42, the A.U.A. contribution was again cut by $120, with the minister's salary cut accordingly.

Sufficient money was raised and matched by the A.U.A. to make the most necessary repairs to the church building, and the Michigan Unitarian Conference was invited to meet in the Ann Arbor church in January of 1942 to honor the church building's 75th anniversary.

War years seem to be particularly difficult for Unitarians as their loyalty and patriotism conflict with their dedication to peace and democracy. The church archives have no record of those who joined the military forces in any of the wars or of those who were lost in war service. Nor is there any record of the members who became Conscientious Objectors or who gave up their citizenship in order to avoid service in the so-called Vietnam War. There is good evidence, however, of those who have thrown themselves into the cause of Peace or who

have worked to ameliorate the suffering and social disruptions of war.

Following the celebration of the 75th anniversary, Mr. Marley asked for a committee to study what the church could do in the war situation to create a steadying spiritual influence. Services were moved to the Library to conserve heat. In February of 1942 the congregation planned its methods for "blackouts" when necessary (to darken the church so that no lights could be a guide to enemy planes during an air raid).

The Unitarian Service Committee asked the churches to do social service work during the crisis, particularly with the large number of workers crowding in to work at the new bomber plant near Ypsilanti. With the collaboration of the Unitarian churches in Detroit, a "Wayside Pulpit" was established, reinforced by social and recreational programs. The project in Ypsilanti involved a house, a pre-school nursery and playground, and an education forum for young people. A part of the costs came from the A.U.A. Fund for the Advancement of Unitarianism. As the local program developed, under the guidance of Harold Marley, its purpose was to provide services and recreation for the thousands of worker families coming in to build and operate the Willow Run B-24 Bomber Plant for the Ford Motor Company and at the same time give social work experience to Unitarian young people during the summer months. These workers were crowded into Willow Village, a compound of roughly built, barracks-like structures, with coal-burning stoves for heat. The narrow, mean streets were lined with coal sheds, and the drafty interiors provided a cramped and sickly life for the wives and children of the men who had come largely from the poor regions of the southern states to work for high wages in Detroit.

Harold Marley discussed with friends the possibility of becoming a Navy chaplain but was soon convinced that his beliefs and commitments were too incompatible with military service. Records show that he was in despair as he wished to remarry but was just too poor to do so. In the spring of 1942, he requested leave for the summer to join the Unitarian Circuit Mission in Kansas. In the late summer of 1942, Marley accepted a call to serve the Unitarian Church in Dayton, Ohio.

In Ed Redman's recollections of his ministry in Ann Arbor, he writes of Harold Marley:

> ... at another time and place HP's convictions and involvements would most likely have brought him great admiration as an esteemed example in the annals of the profession and much to be emulated.
>
> As it was, he was greatly admired by the young people and his close followers, but there were too few of those ... HP was impressively dedicated to the church he tried so hard to serve well in a difficult time, preaching in accordance with his own heartfelt principles, and for many, through time, it was something to be fondly remembered.[5]

The Rev. Edward Homer Redman

Ed Redman, his wife Annette, and their baby son came to Ann Arbor in the summer of 1942 on assignment from the denomination's youth organization, the AUY, to organize and provide leadership for a youth work camp at Gilbert House in Ypsilanti, an outgrowth of the preliminary programs developed by Harold Marley. In Marley's absence during the summer, Mr. Redman preached on some occasions to the Ann Arbor congregation. When Marley accepted the call to the church in Dayton, Ohio, he recommended Mr. Redman to the congregation and the A.U.A. Dr. Curtis Reese, then president of the Western Unitarian Conference, asked Mr. Redman if he would be willing to relocate to Ann Arbor, since the denomination was very eager to continue and expand the Ypsilanti (Willow Run) program, and the Ann Arbor pulpit was empty. Mr. Redman preached once more to the full congregation in October and was asked then and there to become their minister.

Mr. Redman agreed to take the three-part position as Director of the Ypsilanti Project, the first home service activity of the Unitarian Service Committee; as Minister of the Ann Arbor church; and as the A.U.A. minister to the University of Michigan students.

In the fall of 1942 the Ann Arbor Unitarian congregation had dwindled to only sixteen supporting families. The church budget provided a $900 annual salary for the minister, plus the parsonage and the proceeds from the rental space in the parsonage.

Services were held in the library of the church as before. Church member Bess Dornbush lived in the study in the tower of the church and looked after

the welfare of the structure as much as possible, almost single-handedly raising funds for the modernization of the old tracker pipe organ. In May 1942, a committee was formed to work on the organ restoration. The Women's Alliance gave $500 and the A.U.A. promised to contribute. Sufficient funds were quickly raised, and the contract with the Wicks Organ Company was signed within the month.

Not only the minister's family but all the renters used the single functioning bathroom on the second floor of the parsonage. The whole church was in an alarming state of disrepair. The four coal furnaces serving the church and the parsonage still worked, but the ashes had been allowed to accumulate in the basements for years.

The three apartments in the parsonage had been improvised to begin with and had been very poorly maintained. In some previous year, a renter, in exploring the attic, had fallen through the ceiling of a second floor room and the large hole had never been repaired. Little by little, with the help of a few of the parishioners, the Redmans cleaned out the mess and restored the rooms to a livable condition.

The first six months of Ed's ministry brought about a great spurt in church activity. His work with the Willow Run Project attracted people to the church. A strong interest in creating a religious education program attracted families with Quaker affiliation and other families in the Reformed Jewish Community. Both groups were very small and used the Unitarian facilities for lack of any of their own. Small Mormon and Greek Orthodox groups also used the church for their meetings.

In the fall of 1943 a joint venture, the Unitarian-Friends Church School, commenced, with some potential for the Jewish Reformed group to join as well. There was much discussion and Ed Redman was asked to become their rabbi as well. However, the Reformed group was growing and they felt they needed a program for their children which was rooted in the Jewish culture and its tribulations.

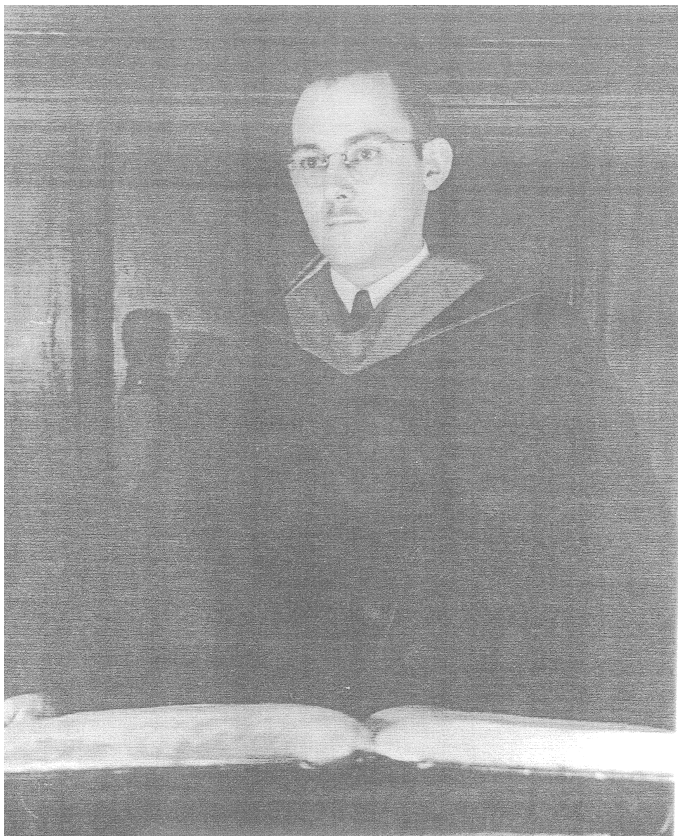
At the annual meeting that fall, the congregation felt able to commit to a ministerial salary of $2,200 plus the usual rentals, and a total budget of $4,570 was agreed upon. In October the church set up its first formal bookkeeping system. They also paid for copies of *The Christian Register* to be mailed to our men and women in the Armed Services.

Ed Redman proposed and the church membership agreed to join the Council of Churches in sharing the cost of providing a Japanese minister to care for the religious needs of the Japanese refugees in this region, of which there were more than 200 in Ann Arbor alone. It was also decided to put the fees from weddings and funerals into a Memorial Fund.

With the wartime restrictions on gasoline, the Midwest churches found a way to do the work of their regional conferences by mail.

The Unitarian Service Committee project was now called the Willow Run Area Recreation Project, jointly sponsored with the Willow Run Area Community Council, made up of the UAW-CIO Local #50 serving the Willow Run plant workers, the Washtenaw County Departments of Welfare and Health, and the Office of Civilian Defense. Services were provided for the Detroit industrial area, with Ed Redman as the Executive Director. The project continued well into the demobilization period which followed World War II.

In the church the congregation was quickly outgrowing the library space. They set about cleaning and repainting the church auditorium, the



The Reverend Edward H. Redman, mid-1940s

library meeting space, and Unity Hall. Renovation of the organ was completed in spite of wartime restrictions. The congregation was pleased with the progress, but the spurt in growth, particularly in the Sunday School, soon led to use of the parsonage for the overflow. In spite of the improvements, much more needed to be done. It became evident that adequate renovations were far beyond the means of the congregation, and the A.U.A. was unable to provide even matching funds.

In his memoirs, Ed Redman writes of the core members of the church, small in number but quite exceptional, who helped to bring the church back to life:

First among equals was John Shepard, chairman of the Psychology Department, erstwhile secretary of the University of Michigan and in that capacity responsible for the major building programs of the University in the 1920s, with a wide following of students for his course in the psychology of religion, his interest in left wing social and political causes, his espousal of humanism, and his singular devotion to the Ann Arbor church.[6.]

With the war at an end there was a great surge of energy toward restoring the amenities of life. In exploring mortgage possibilities, the congregation discovered that at some time in the past the building had been deeded to the denomination. The denomination officers recommended selling the property, since they were unwilling to fund the restoration or to reassign the title back to the congregation so that they could secure money locally.

The process of having the building appraised was begun, but unfortunately before the appraisal was available the chairman of the Board quoted what he thought was a reasonable price of $65,000 to a realtor. An offer of this amount came to the Board almost immediately, with a very short time given to return an answer. At this point several members of the congregation became very upset. The Sunderland family offered to pay for the repairs to the exterior if only the congregation would stay in the church. Another parishioner, Mrs. George Jackson, offered to pay the cost of having the structure rebuilt stone by stone if the church would stay. But the key leadership had one thought in mind—to accept the offer—with the A.U.A. of the same opinion. Thus, very quickly, the Grace Bible Church had purchased the property from the A.U.A. and moved in, permitting the minister and his family to remain in the parsonage until June of 1946 or until other accommodations were found.

The A.U.A. accepted payment from the sale of the church, deducted what was owed them by the Ann Arbor church, and returned the sum of $56,709 to the Ann Arbor congregation to pay for a new property and its furnishings. Although the record is not entirely clear, it appears that the A.U.A. turned over most of the proceeds of the sale to the Ann Arbor congregation, with the understanding that the church would henceforth be an independent entity and no longer a missionary church dependent on the A.U.A.

Church services were moved to Lane Hall on State Street, a University building used as a religious center for students. In February of 1946 the minister paid a final tribute to the Unitarian stone church at State and Huron, then 64 years old. Edson Sunderland, a professor of law at the University of Michigan and a son of Jabez and Eliza Sunderland, had served the church throughout the years as a board member and loyal supporter in spite of his misgivings as the congregation turned more and more “leftist” and humanist in its approach to religion. At this point, in deep disappointment over the congregational decision to sell the stone church which his father had brought into being, Edson and his family ceased their affiliation with the church.

Within a few months the congregation approved the purchase of the Dr. Dean Myers family home at 1917 Washtenaw from his estate for the sum of $45,000. A house on Packard Street was purchased for a parsonage, an arrangement that was quite unsatisfactory for the minister and his family because of the small space and inconvenient location.

At the same time that the church was undergoing a very disruptive move, the minister and the A.U.A. were bringing the Willow Run Area Recreation Project to a close and helping the community organizations within the housing areas at Willow Run, Norwayne, and Inkster to form cooperatives to purchase government housing no longer needed as the bomber plant closed down.

In October of 1946, the carriage house at 1917 Washtenaw was remodeled to provide an apartment for a caretaker. The porch on the first floor of the chalet was glazed and heating pipes installed to provide additional meeting space. In 1947 the congregation began to plan to build a

parsonage and an addition of a chapel-auditorium. It voted to accept donations for a building fund. In July the Packard Street parsonage was sold and the Board was authorized to build a parsonage annex as soon as possible. While the annex was under construction, the minister's family moved into the chalet. The organ fund residue was turned over to the A.U.A. and the church then asked them for a loan of $2,600 to complete the parsonage.

Church membership continued to increase as the church school and other programs attracted young families who were returning to the area or who had come to the University to continue their graduate education. Ed Redman himself enrolled in the graduate program in Philosophy and found his studies were making a change in his thinking and preaching. During his first years in Ann Arbor he had been preaching a neo-orthodox theology, but his association with Roy Sellars and John Shepard, as well as his graduate studies, converted him to a more humanistic ministry.

During the summer of 1947, Rev. Redman led a Unitarian youth work camp near Port Huron, in conjunction with the UAW-CIO, to provide an opportunity for Unitarian young people to become familiar with the labor movement.

Beginning also in 1947, the church and the denomination began to suffer from the wave of congressional investigations of loyalty, security, and communism. Steve Fritchman, who had long been active in the denomination, a minister of the church in Bangor, Maine, and a close friend of Mr. Redman, was suddenly suspect as the editor of *The Christian Register*. Because various articles and editorials were considered much too leftist or communist in their ideology, Mr. Fritchman and his close friends became the objects of investigation. The Unitarian Service Committee came under inquiry, as well, because certain of their overseas staff seemed to give preferential treatment to communists. The matter came to a head in the denomination at the annual meeting in May 1947, where Ed Redman chaired the meeting in support of Mr. Fritchman. A related question considered by the conference was whether *The Christian Register* should retain its independence as in the past, or become a house organ controlled by the executive staff and the board of the A.U.A.

The A.U.A voted to exonerate Mr. Fritchman on all charges and to keep him on as editor of *The Christian Register,* voting at the same time to establish a committee to oversee the content and editing of the magazine. The editorial board of the magazine was reduced to having advisory status only. Mr. Fritchman had been responsible for the youth work of the A.U.A. and the Board also relieved him of these responsibilities.

In Mr. Redman's view, the mission and the message of the A.U.A. had shifted from free expression to what had come to be considered safe expression. He also felt that his position had shifted from a favored status in the denomination to one where he felt some pressure to leave the ministry. This storm was weathered, but the political turmoil regarding any suspicion of communism was to last for many years.

As the church library had virtually ceased to lend books after the move to 1917 Washtenaw, the congregation decided to take the balance of the Seaman/Whitlock Fund (legacies which stipulated that the income be spent on the purchase of books for the church library) and invest it in the General Investment Account of the American Unitarian Association. This was done in 1948. Under the requirements of the GIA, this money could not be withdrawn, but interest would be paid the church quarterly so long as both the GIA and the First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor existed. The church does retain the right to designate the use of the interest payments should it cease to retain a membership in the Association.

The new parsonage, a small wing at the rear of the chalet at 1917 Washtenaw, facing Berkshire Road, was finished in 1948. With all accounts settled with the A.U.A., the church buildings became free of any ownership or control by the A.U.A. The minister and the membership were determined to retain this independence, and, in fact, to increase their financial support of the denomination. This has proved to be a very healthy move for the church and its congregational management.

One of the great regrets in the move from the old stone church was the loss of the organ. The congregation made do with a limited music program until September of 1950, when Bessie Jackson made a gift to the church of a Baldwin electronic organ. It was dedicated with ceremony on September 24, with Dr. Frederick May Eliot coming from Boston to speak at the service.

During the late 1940s and the 1950s the church attracted a number of people active in the fields of social research, sociology and psychology, as well as

families associated with the medical school. Ed Redman chaired the Social Action Committee of the Ann Arbor Council of Churches, thus leading to two other courses of action in the church: first, an increased interest in the whole religious community, and second, an interest in improving conditions for racial minorities. Many members became involved in local politics in the effort to provide for open housing in Ann Arbor, by changing community attitudes and in promoting legislation to guarantee that no one could be denied the purchase of a home on the basis of race or color.

Mr. Redman also served on the Board of the Ann Arbor Cooperative Society and as president of its credit union. He was active in the Ministerial Association and with University religious activities in Lane Hall. Both the minister and the church membership were ardent supporters of the American Civil Liberties Union.

It was the custom of one or both of the Redmans to be at the door to greet with warmth those who came for the Sunday service, as though it were their own home, as indeed it was. Members took a familial interest in the five bright and lively sons, Stephen, Bruce, Peter, William and Jon Jabez, the latter four of whom were born to the Redmans during Ed's ministry in the church.

Unresolved, still, after more than sixty years, the struggle continued within the denomination between the theists and the humanists. A pamphlet was circulated by a National Committee of Free Unitarians urging the Association to rid itself of all non-theists. The Ann Arbor church remained consistent in the belief that although it was generally humanistic, it also had room for theists as well. In the love for others, neither group should be rejected. The minister, in his preaching, made a serious effort to find a common ground between the humanists and the advocates of Christian Unitarianism, but in the denomination as a whole, the gulf widened. At the same time, there was a great rising of anti-Catholic feeling in the United States.

A book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power,* by Paul Blanchard, was published by the Beacon Press, reinforcing the anti-Catholic movement. Mr. Redman, in his sermons, was careful to point out that the Catholic Church had "developed its parochial school system, colleges and universities, hospitals and charities from the gifts of poor people to insure the availability of facilities to serve their needs—to match the institutions of the majority culture." The minister added, "I guess it is not much of a secret, but I have always been rather more sympathetic to the Catholic position than to any of the Protestant positions standing between us and Catholicism...I know of no other course than to take a stand, as sympathetically as possible to the positive merit of the Catholic Church, its people, and its achievements, while firmly resisting any and all encroachments of the Church on the freedom of our people to grow in knowledge and virtue under conditions of freedom. In being sympathetic and tolerant we must not betray our own cultural heritage."

The whole anti-Catholic movement undoubtedly hurried along the modernization of the rituals and practices of the Catholic Church.

President Truman's decision to authorize the construction of the H-bomb brought great consternation to the Unitarians and intensified the continuing struggle for international armament control.

In 1950, Ed Redman, feeling the need for more income for his growing family, took a part-time position as treasurer of the Central Credit Union's savings and loan subsidiary. His ensuing experience with funds management and real estate transactions was useful for both himself and the church in the years to follow. It was also an opportunity for him to meet Wade McCree, later a federal district and circuit court judge and then a professor in the Michigan Law School. The friendship of Wade McCree enriched the life of the church on many occasions.

The rapidly expanding economy and Redman's financial experience shared with the congregation led a number of people in the church to form an investment club, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1982, on the initiative of Dr. Walter Shipman, the club's treasurer-agent.

After the Fritchman affair, Mr. Redman became more involved with the Michigan Unitarian Conference, the Western Unitarian Conference, the Lake Geneva Unitarian Summer Assembly and the Midwest Unitarian and Universalist Ministers' Association. In 1947, the movement began to bring the Unitarian and Universalist denominations closer together on the state and regional levels.

Ann Arbor church members became involved in the effort to enrich regional conventions and conferences by including more functional training

and guidance for groups than had been possible in the past. Local experts in group dynamics were consulted for leadership strategies to make the Western Conference and state conferences stronger, to counterbalance the growing centralization of the denomination. In this way, the churches of the Midwest learned to work together more effectively.

During the early 1950s, Senator Joe McCarthy, in his self-seeking climb to power and renown, found the evil of communism in every aspect of freedom of thought. A congregation made up largely of university-connected people was bound to be affected by his notorious investigations. The United States' deteriorating international relations, the moral and ecological issues of the H-bomb development, and the injustices to racial minorities—all brought anguish to the church members, who were, on the other hand, experiencing the "baby boom" and the increasing wealth and technological advances that followed the war. The political assault on civil liberties induced most of the adult membership to take part in political action on many levels, from marching around city hall in support of open housing to lecturing and organizing under the aegis of an established political party. Fortunately, the full exposure of Senator McCarthy's tactics and deceptions by the public press, radio, and television eventually brought that particular madness to an end, but not before much personal damage had been done countrywide.

The local counterpart of this struggle involved Mr. Redman, who testified on behalf of students and other church members in connection with their security clearances, or in specific investigations of some suspect's loyalty. The church was careful to remain a place of trust and refuge where any person could take part freely and safely in candid discussion. It was a stressful time, however, and the church could certainly not prevent adverse actions against faculty persons singled out by congressional committees, although it made every effort to keep its community from being demoralized.

The openness to political debate and the humanistic attitudes of church members frightened some new and even long-time members of the congregation into leaving the church for fear they might appear to be favoring "communism." On the other hand, such church members as Neil and Burnette Staebler, Wilbur and Eloise Cohen, and Albert E. Marckwardt were assuming increasingly strong leadership in state and local politics as a part of the state Democratic administration, which brought about some much needed reforms. The Adult Discussion Group promoted discussion of the political issues with emphasis on bi-partisan debate. It was heady stuff. The activities of local Unitarians affiliated with the League of Women Voters, the Democratic Party, and the church itself made it seem satisfyingly possible that with enough work we could achieve a political climate with the qualities of our humanistic ideals.

The minister and the congregation carried on a long -term dialogue in the 1950s concerning the direction of Unitarianism, and its sociological difference from and its relationship with other churches. Professors Rensis Likert and Alvin Zander, both involved in University programs in social research, were influential in defining the role of the church. The church school program ensured that the children developed attitudes and values which were conscientious, humanitarian, and socially responsible.

In 1950 the proposal that the Unitarians and the Universalists merge their denominations was proposed nationally. When the Rev. Redman brought the question to the congregation for a vote, they voted in favor of continuing exploration. In 1952 a formal vote was taken countrywide which favored federal union and the steps to achieve that union were begun.

By the early 1950s the congregation and the church school were crowding the rooms of the chalet. One lone contribution had come for the building fund, a gift of $5,000 from a long-time and dedicated member, Mrs. Frank Leverett. As always the financial support of the church was a struggle, made more severe by the constant turnover in the membership of faculty and students as they arrived and departed from Ann Arbor.

The congregation voted to engage G. Richard Kuch, a Unitarian minister who had a record of success in assisting churches in fundraising, to conduct a campaign for a combined operating and building fund. Forty thousand dollars was pledged, to be paid over a three-year period. During this campaign, the minister and the congregation learned to appreciate the need for long-range planning and commitment to achieve the expansion of the church facility. In June of 1952 a special congregational meeting was called to authorize architect George B. Brigham, Jr. to begin the initial

phase of architectural planning for the addition of a chapel and social hall.

George B. Brigham, Jr. was a member of the church and an innovative Professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan. A friend and admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, he designed many buildings in Ann Arbor, most of them residences. He was noted for the spacious simplicity of his designs, flat roofs which did not leak, and a unique method of finishing concrete interior floors.

Because of the growth in church membership and the need for better administration, significant changes were made in the church bylaws in 1954. The number of trustees was changed from nine to twelve, with four elected annually. Membership requirements and the terminations of membership were made more specific, and provision was made for removing a trustee from office if necessary. Article VII made provision for a church council to consider the general welfare of the church.

In June of 1955 the congregation voted unanimously to proceed with the construction of the chapel with board discretion to build in stages if money were a problem. The building process might have taken much longer had not Professor and Mrs. George Jackson decided to make provisions in their wills for the survival of the church. They included an endowment to support the tenets of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, putting that portion of their endowments in the trust of the First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor for execution.

Groundbreaking took place during the summer of 1955. In November the congregation voted to build an addition to the parsonage as well, also to be designed by George Brigham. E. H. Wittman was the general contractor for the chapel, with Kurtz Construction Company building the addition to the parsonage. The laying of the cornerstone for the chapel was done with ceremony on July 3, 1956.

The Jackson Legacy

George Leroy Jackson and his wife, Bessie Florence (Hazelton) Jackson, were long-time members of the church and very close friends of John and "Bunny" Shepard. Dr. Jackson had been a professor in the School of Education at the University, and both, having considerable wealth, were great benefactors to various charitable and civic organizations in Ann Arbor. However, in the late 1940s, both were too ill to continue to attend services in the church. They began to rely very heavily on Ed and Annette Redman for comfort and pastoral care. Bessie died in 1951, and George, who died on December 13, 1954, willed a large part of their estate to the church. Since the bequest involved several parcels of real estate, including their home at 804 Berkshire (which they hoped would become the parsonage), and a number of stocks, it took some time to settle the legacy.

The Board considered the alternatives for managing these funds: they could be managed by the Board, they could be consigned to the management of expert denominational funds managers, or the H. C. Wainwright Company of Boston could be engaged as investment consultants who would leave final decision-making with the Board. The congregation voted for the third alternative, with the responsibility for the real estate holdings to be retained by the Board. In the many discussions, the minister and John Shepard, who had been most deeply involved with the Jacksons, endeavored to find ways to preserve the endowments from poorly informed decisions which would dissipate the funds. There was also concern that church members would assume that their support would be less essential to the church because of the substantial endowment.

As a result of these deliberations, which were reinforced by congregations over the years, firm policy was established that pledged income from church members would support the church program and the daily cost of maintaining the church buildings. Endowments kept in reserve for capital improvements would also be used to support, through grants, other community organizations whose work was analogous to those of this church.

With the settlement of the estate, the Jackson Social Welfare Fund was established in accordance with the wishes of the Jacksons. With a capital investment of $82,178.43, the income was to be used "for the purposes of advancing the understanding and acceptance of the great principles of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for the promotion of the use of reason and understanding as the effective method of solving in a peaceful manner domestic and international difficulties and conflicts" (from the Last Will and Testament of George Leroy Jackson).

As requested in the will, the Board appointed a committee of church members to determine how the

income from the fund would be allocated annually under the general direction of the Board. This committee is known as the Jackson Social Welfare Committee.

The total of the Jackson bequest to the church was $385,653, a very large sum in those days, when the minister's salary was $7,000 plus the use of the parsonage. With the construction of the new chapel underway, $94,351.64 was allocated for the building. After these two allocations, as specified by the terms of the will, the balance, a sum of $209,122.93 was invested as an Endowment Fund for the church.

For some years the income from the Endowment Fund was co-mingled with the General Fund of the Church. Additional money was borrowed from the Endowment Fund since the construction required more cash than was available. The congregation vowed to restore the borrowed money, and eventually this was done, in part, by allocating Endowment Fund income for that purpose. Finally the balance of some $26,000 was written off.

Although the Jackson Social Welfare Fund was not officially separated from the General Fund until 1961, the church has carefully carried out the purpose of the fund. For bookkeeping purposes, the Endowment Fund **was** separated at the same time, and records of both funds were kept under the designation of "Special Funds." It was not until 1971, however, that regulations were established for the now-designated Jackson Endowment Fund. An "Income Use Committee" of church members was appointed by the Board to allocate the income from this fund, with its first concern the problem of the large debt which the General Fund still owed the Endowment Fund. After the loan was written off, the General Fund still leaned heavily on the Endowment Fund to cover the cast of large repairs such as the roof and the furnace. It was not until the 1980s that the church, with grants from the Jackson Endowment Fund income, was able to support other community agencies with goals corresponding to those of the church.

In 1967 the arrangements with H. C. Wainwright and Co. were terminated. The Board was dissatisfied with the selection of stocks from companies producing war-related materials, and the yield under their management was low. The portfolio was liquidated and the proceeds invested in certain mutual funds. However, this was a very unfortunate period for mutual funds generally and the church had no control whatever over the choice of stocks. The mutual funds were sold at a severe capital loss in 1971. In 1972 the Board-appointed "Jackson Investment Advisory Committee" took on the sole responsibility for stock investments, under specific guidelines and with Board approval.[7] It was not until Bill Kinney, a member of the church and a professional investment counselor, joined the Jackson Investment Advisory Committee that the funds began to thrive.

In 1955 the Women's Alliance responded to a call from the Unitarian Service Committee and gathered together a large packet of sewing and knitting supplies which were mailed to the service organization in Korea.

In November, the Rev. Redman reported to the congregation that the Unitarians and Universalists in Michigan were to join together to form the Michigan Area Council of Liberal Churches. The church ratified the constitution of the MACLC and work began to expand the organization throughout the region.

In 1956, church members Chris Bailey, Nora Carey, Annette Redman, and Ileana Hunter organized a cooperative Day Nursery in the church for four year olds. Mothers served as volunteers in the nursery which was open from 8:45 to 11:45 a.m. Monday through Friday.

A proposal was studied to purchase a house near the campus to serve Unitarian youth as a dormitory and a daily gathering place and to provide counseling service.

The choice of furnishings for the church was an absorbing activity in 1956. At just the right time a small gift arrived from friends in the Budapest Unitarian church, a plaque in memory of Francis David, founder of the Unitarian movement in Transylvania in the 16th century. The plaque was embedded in the plaster wall of the chapel near the left entrance door. In a short time, church members were involved in helping Dr. and Mrs. Lazio Kovacsi to escape from Hungary after the 1956 uprising. They were members of the Ann Arbor church while Dr. Kovacsi retrained at the University of Michigan Medical School to qualify for medical licensure.

The dedication of the addition took place on February 10, 1957. Dr. Arthur Foote, minister of the Unity Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, gave the

morning service, with the Reverend Randall S. Hilton, Executive Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, leading the prayer of dedication. Dr. A. Powell Davies of All Souls Church, Washington, D.C., gave the major address in the evening. Arthur Foote was the son of Dr. Henry Wilder Foote, minister in the Ann Arbor church from 1905 to 1910. Frank Gentile, minister of the Southfield Unitarian Universalist Church, took responsibility for designing and installing a sound system which he had ready for the dedication ceremonies.

Members of the congregation felt that the church had embarked upon a new era; with plans and commitments in hand for a long-range program, the level of organizational activity rose astonishingly. The Religious Education Committee was organized, as well as a hospitality and a Sunday coffee hour committee. With the new social hall and kitchen on the lower level, the church hosted the MACLC Conference and the Western Unitarian Conference.

In 1957 the congregation became more specifically involved with the city Human Relations Commission, striving toward equal opportunities in housing, education, and employment. Florence Weaver represented the church at City Council meetings and Richard Weaver and Donald Pelz represented the church on the Citizens Committee on Human Relations. The Social Action Committee of the church was formed.

As the religious education program drew in more people, members began to discuss having two sessions of the program. Under the leadership of Chris Bailey, who directed the religious education program and other outreach programs of the church under the title of "Parish Assistant," plans were begun for a training program for religious education teachers and directors, using our church school as a laboratory.

In 1954 the State of California passed a law which required churches to sign a "McCarthy" type loyalty oath in order to qualify for their tax exemption status. While many of the churches complied, the Methodists and the Unitarians took up the battle on behalf of religious freedom. Ed Redman and the Ann Arbor congregation joined in the opposition. Through private contributions and monies from the Jackson Social Welfare Fund, the church was able to give strong support to the effort to bring the case to the Supreme Court, where their case was sustained in 1958. The merger of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations was moving slowly, except in the Midwest. With the help of Alvin Zander of the Ann Arbor church, one hundred regional churches and fellowships organized a statement of how they would merge the two groups and handle other denominational matters. The Boston headquarters of the A.U.A. was outraged, calling the statement "regionalism."

The early months of 1957 were occupied with preparations for the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Ministers Institute, to be held in Ann Arbor April 24–26, and with the Western Unitarian Conference to follow on April 26–28. With considerable growth in the Western Conference churches, nationally the more liberal, program planners were intent on finding skills and training to support religious education, adult education, social action, services to college students, fundraising, and outreach to new churches and fellowships.

It was a distinguished conference, with Maureen Neuberger, wife of the senator from Oregon, Richard Neuberger, speaking at the banquet on "Tasks Ahead for Religious Liberals."

The conference ended with the election of Ed Redman as president of the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, and member of the Board of the Western Unitarian Conference.

The minister was further gratified at this time as four members of his campus Unitarian group, the Channing-Murray college group, all active leaders on campus, decided to go to theological school to prepare for the Unitarian ministry.

In 1958, Ed Redman began to question the length of his ministry to the Ann Arbor church. This was met by a large social gathering convened to express the strong appreciation for Ed Redman and his family.

In 1959 a new Book of Membership was provided to preserve the previous record, which was badly deteriorated, and for use in receiving new members. The cover carried a candelabra design which Mr. Redman had constructed. The symbols chosen for the pages were the circle within a circle design used by the Humanist Association, the beacon to symbolize the Beacon Press, and the Flaming Chalice of the Unitarian Service Committee.

Early in 1959, Ed Redman was asked to participate in planning for the federation of four theological schools at the University of Chicago. One of these was the Unitarian school, Meadville. It was proposed to add a fourth year and to convert the degree program from a Bachelor of Divinity to a Doctor of the Ministry. The third year of the program was to be an internship in one of the participating churches.

Since the Ann Arbor church was already crowded for space, the Board decided to purchase a nearby house, as an investment, to accommodate the overflow and provide housing for an intern. The intern, Donald Myers, and his wife arrived in September 1959. The internship experience was a pleasure for the church, although Mr. Myers decided at the end of the year that the ministry was not for him.

Because of Ed Redman's financial expertise and close association with the Jackson bequest and its execution, the congregation drifted into the custom of leaving the execution of many of the financial matters of the church to the minister. This eventually led to conflicts and distress to all concerned.

In the summer of 1959, the heavy schedule which Redman had assumed in the denomination and the local church took its toll and his health deteriorated severely. The following summer, 1960, he accepted a call to the Unitarian Church of Arlington, Virginia. The Redmans left a flourishing church and many friends behind.

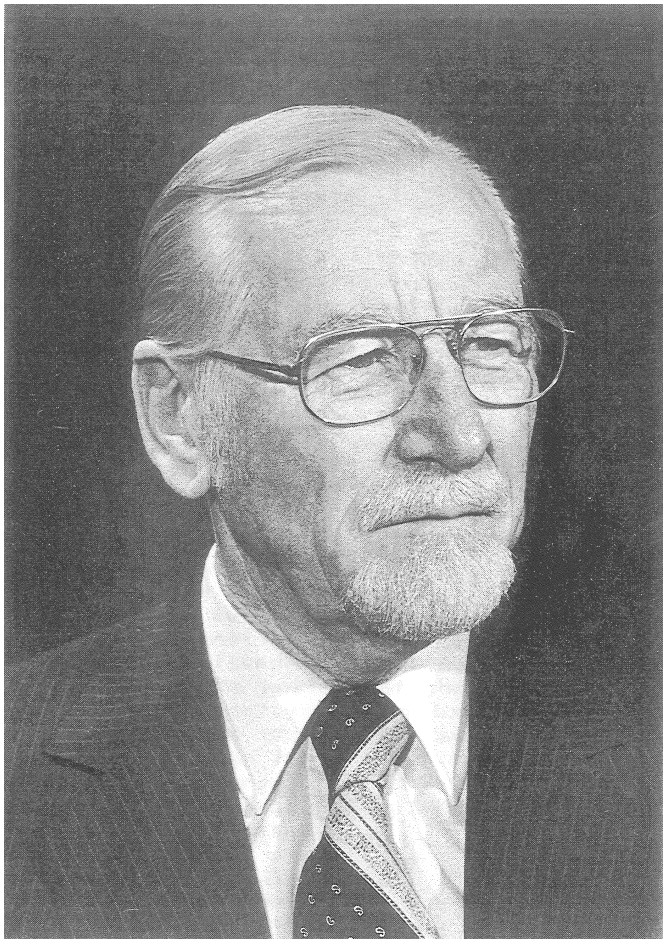
The Rev. Erwin A. Gaede

"The most significant event of the past year," wrote. president of the Board of Trustees Dr. Ronald Bishop in the annual report of 1960–61, "was the successful completion of the Pulpit Committee's task of finding a new minister for the Church." The new minister, Dr. Erwin A. Gaede, was to serve the Ann Arbor church for the next eighteen years.

In a brief report covering his first three months in the church, Dr. Gaede "particularly thanked the congregation for the splendid installation service," with which they honored him on Sunday evening, November 5, 1961. At the end of his eighteen years of service, his resignation was accepted with appreciation for his years of ministering and a luncheon was held in his honor in May of 1979.

During the years between Dr. Gaede's installation and his resignation, the country had been buffeted by the tumultuous events and changes that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, the most divisive of which was the domestic conflict over the morality of the undeclared war in Vietnam which alienated the youth of the country and took such a toll in American lives. Certainly Dr. Gaede's ministry was affected, as was every institution in the United States. But, as he said in his final report to the congregation, "We came through together and were able to develop a church of strength and warmth with many new programs and achievements."

As a youth, Erwin Gaede had intended to enter the Lutheran ministry, but in the course of his college education, he was converted to a more liberal Christianity. While working on his master's degree in Chicago, he became a substitute minister in the Congregational Church in Argo, Illinois, where he was installed and ordained after his graduation in 1942. It was in Argo that he met Marge (Marguerite) Krenwinkel. Finding themselves in full harmony, personally, as well as in politics and religion, they married three months later.



The Reverend Erwin A. Gaede

Gaede left the Congregational ministry in 1951, when the Gaedes moved to South Bend, Indiana, to organize a new Unitarian church and to begin work on his doctorate at Notre Dame University. In the mid 50s, he accepted an offer to go to West Los Angeles where the Santa Monica Unitarian Church had split off. They stayed in Los Angeles for five years during which time he managed to write his dissertation and receive his Ph.D. degree in Political Science from Notre Dame.

In 1961 Erwin and Marge Gaede were happy to return to the Midwest. They had three children, Sherry, Susie, and Steven, and preferred Ann Arbor's schools to those of Los Angeles.

During his first months as minister of the Ann Arbor church, Dr. Gaede spent much time meeting with committees and organizations of the church and church school, making pastoral calls, and officiating at weddings. He noted that work with the University students "had taken on new vitality," attracting from 40 to 120 students. Free bus service for the students was started in October.

The Jackson Social Welfare Committee, which had become inactive, was revitalized by a resolution of the Board of Trustees on February 9, 1961, formally establishing a committee of six persons and charged the committee with making grants in accordance with the original statement of purpose of the Jackson Social Welfare Fund.

Two women's groups were active at that time. The Evening Women's Group was mainly concerned with housekeeping projects in the church, washing curtains, and cleaning shelves. They also opened a book store to sell books from the denomination, and they held Sunday morning bake sales to raise money for new stair treads and paint. The Afternoon Group of the Women's Alliance held programs consisting of book reports, travel talks, films, and speakers. A sewing group met to make children's dresses to send to the Unitarian Service Committee.

When the church year ended on October 31, 1961, income totaled $35,771.53, with expenses at $35,295.88, leaving a surplus of $475.65. A surplus was a rare enough event.

At a special meeting on January 28, 1962, the Board of Trustees recommended to the congregation that the church resign from the Ann Arbor-Washtenaw Council of Churches, because of the conflict between the preamble of the constitution of this organization and the stated purpose of the church as outlined in Article II of the bylaws. The preamble read: "We, the Churches of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County, desiring to make a more convincing witness to our essential oneness in Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Savior, in order that we may bring an adequate, effective and relevant ministry to the people of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County; reach the unreached with the Gospel of Christ; bring the truths of that Gospel to bear upon the actions of men; do hereby constitute the Ann Arbor-Washtenaw Council of Churches."

The Board of Trustees regretted having to disassociate the church from some of the work of the Council. The congregation approved the recommendation, and the connection was dissolved.

During the church year 1961–62, some exploratory actions to form an extension of the Greater Detroit Memorial Society here in Ann Arbor were taken.

The Religious Education Committee reported that enrollment in the program was over 400 children, with the largest group of volunteers involved with religious education in the history of the church. The Committee strongly recommended, as they had the previous year as well, that the church hire a full-time religious education director. A temporary solution to problems caused by the growth of the church membership, and especially the Church School, was to institute two sessions for church services.

The Jackson Social Welfare Committee reported making a grant of $400 toward the cost of litigation involving a charge by citizens of Willow Run, Michigan, that the school board was deliberately gerrymandering school attendance districts for racially segregated schools. The case ended with a Consent Decree which gave the plaintiffs essentially what they were requesting for desegregation. The Committee also granted $500 to the Richard Waring case, involved with the dismissal of teacher Richard Waring by the Dexter Board of Education for a speech he made at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting criticizing the board and the educational program in Dexter. He was summarily dismissed, though he said he spoke as a parent. The, case was brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Mr. Waring was not reinstated because the contractual year had run out, but a settlement was reached.

In May the Social Action Committee mailed a statement to the congregation endorsing fair housing legislation for Ann Arbor. Eighty-seven per cent of the congregation approved the statement, which was then read by Dr. Gaede at the public hearing of the Human Relations Commission on June 7, 1962. Copies were sent to the mayor and city council members. Dr. Gaede and several church members were active in trying to persuade builders of subdivisions to sell to Negro families—without success.

For the fiscal year ending October 31, 1962, income and expenses balanced at $38,433.48. The assets of the Jackson Social Welfare Fund totaled $92,283.43, and of the Endowment Fund $211,161.38 (which included an internal loan to the General Fund of $84,596.39).

Dr. Gaede was elected president of the Michigan Area Council of Liberal Churches in October 1962. When this organization was dissolved to merge into the Unitarian Universalist Council of Michigan in April 1963, he became president of the merged group.

During 1963, some 60 persons signed the membership book. The Religious Education Committee reported an enrollment of 487 children, with a few children on the waiting list for some grades. To provide sufficient facilities for the church school classes, the Sunday services, together with the R.E. program, were held in two sessions, which worked smoothly, thanks to the hard work of the R.E. Director, Lois Isaacson.

The two houses at 2001 and 2007 Washtenaw, which were used for the overflow activities of the church and as a dwelling for the intern minister during the final year of the Redman ministry, were becoming a burden to the Board because of inadequate funding for upkeep. In 1962, the congregation made a tentative decision to sell the two dwellings. However, at a special meeting on July 18, 1963, the members approved a plan for meeting space needs by remodeling the chalet to provide enlarged and improved rooms (at a cost of $6,000) and by remodeling rather than selling the dwelling at 2001 Washtenaw to make it available for the church school.

The membership of the church, through the Social Action Committee, urged the Ann Arbor City Council to pass a strong fair housing ordinance. The committee sent to seven local developers a series of three letters urging joint voluntary desegregation. The committee felt it helped prepare the ground for subsequent action by CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), which persuaded a developer to sell one of his houses to a Negro family.

The Women's Alliance raised funds to complete the kitchen in the Social Hall and continued their sewing of girls' dresses and small bed covers for distribution by the Unitarian Service Committee.

Of special satisfaction to the congregation was the work of the Denominational Affairs Committee in monitoring the progress toward consolidation of the Universalists and the Unitarians in the Michigan area. The affiliation was completed both nationally and locally in 1963, and the newly formed Unitarian Universalist Council of Michigan held its fall meeting in the Ann Arbor church in October.

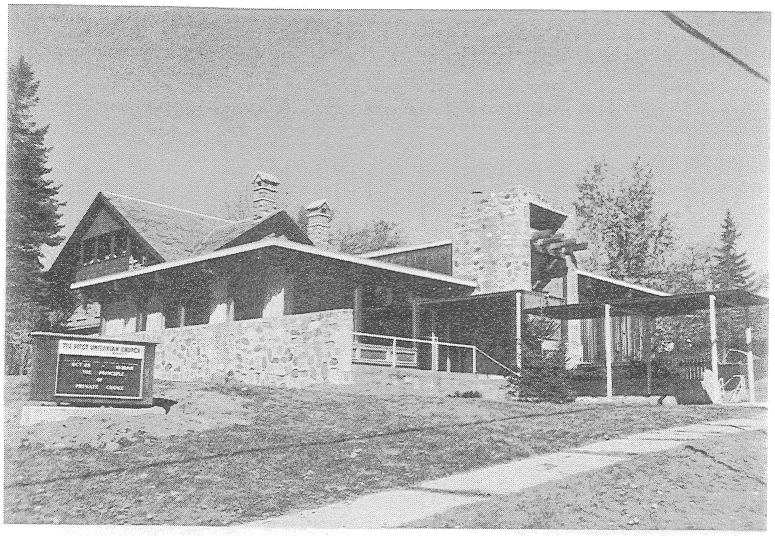
Although there was much talk of doing so, the congregation did not subscribe enough money to start buying land to build a new church. The Property Administration Committee guided the remodeling of the carriage house into a classroom by leveling the floor and replacing the overhead door with fixed partitions. A further change, although not related to increasing space, was the installation of four high clerestory windows along the north side of the auditorium to cool the room and to provide the proper ventilation for the grand piano which the Music Committee was raising funds to purchase.

The Unitarian Universalist Council of Michigan and the Michigan Ohio Valley District were active under the leadership of Dr. Gaede. He also gave a part of his time to counseling students and adults who were not members of the church, regarding this as a community service.

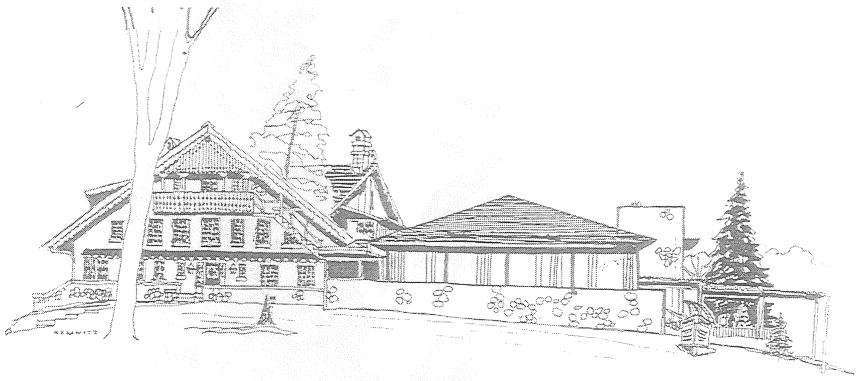
The Jackson Social Welfare Fund Committee made a grant to a special American Civil Liberties Union fund for the prosecution of Stanzione vs. Hubbard. Mr. Stanzione was the victim of a riot caused by his hiring a Negro firm to move him into his new home in Dearborn. It was alleged that Dearborn's Mayor Hubbard ordered the police to let the rioting continue, as it did, sporadically, for twenty-four hours. The Committee also allotted $500 to provide bail money for COFO (Council of Federated Organizations, a civil rights coordinating committee) workers in Mississippi.

The Social Action Committee reported that the Memorial Society, an organization to encourage

simple, dignified funerals, was launched in Ann Arbor as an independent group. The committee also organized congregational support to sponsor an exchange student, Julie Moore, in Europe, and prepared an amendment to the constitution of the U.U.A. (Unitarian Universalist Association): To affirm human personality "without regard to race, color or national origin" and to use the democratic method in human relationships.



First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor
1917 Washtenaw Avenue, 1946–1999
Photo by Stephen Schewe
Drawing by Milton Kemnitz



In 1964, the Board of Trustees appointed a Development Committee to study proposals for providing space for the growing congregation. Four proposals were submitted: 1) to build a new classroom building at 2001 Washtenaw; 2) to rebuild the structures at 1917 Washtenaw and enlarge the auditorium by 100 seats; 3) to build a new additional church; and 4) to sell the property at 1917 Washtenaw and build an entirely new church. In May of 1964, the Board of Trustees, with the endorsement of the congregation, authorized the Finance Committee to negotiate the purchase of a piece of land on Geddes Road, with a budget of $2,535. However, the budget was insufficient and the negotiations fell through.

At the annual meeting on November 20, 1964, President Ralph Loomis reported, "We must be doing something right around here, because we keep growing. We have gone to three sessions this fall." The third session was entrusted to a Sunday morning Adult Discussion Committee, with the committee's eight members each taking the responsibility for a session.

Dr. Gaede concluded his report by saying, "It has been a very good year." Ninety-four new members joined the church and 503 children were enrolled in the religious education program.

The problem remained: how to accommodate all the people—and where. The year of double R.E. sessions was stressfully but successfully completed. Enrollment in grades one through five was limited to twenty in each class. However, the R.E. Director, Lois Isaacson, who had developed this highly successful program, resigned in November of 1964. Mrs. Isaacson had been hired on a part-time basis, and had voluntarily given all the extra hours it took to recruit and train the teachers and to manage the program. She felt that, with more than 500 children registered, the church should pick up the responsibility and was disappointed when, in planning the budget for the following year, they failed to do so. An interim director was hired on a part-time basis, with the Religious Education Committee again emphasizing the need for a full-time director.

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor celebrated its centennial the week of May 9-16, 1965. Dr. Dana Greeley, President of the UUA, spoke at church services on May 9. On Friday the 14th, a potluck dinner was held in the social

hall, where historical materials relating to church development were on display. The congregation came together for a gala banquet on Saturday, May 14. Each guest was presented with a church history compiled by Mavis Greene and Harold Marley, with a cover designed by Milton Kemnitz, and a dinner program which contained a schedule of events and profiles of distinguished guests. Special honors were extended to the Reverends Harold Marley and Edward Redman, former ministers of the Ann Arbor church who had returned to share in the celebration and to speak about their Ann Arbor experiences as a part of the Sunday services the following day. Following the Sunday service, the celebration ended with a farewell tea for the honored guests.

At the request of the 1990 Committee, this church history covers the first one hundred years. A history of the remaining years of Dr. Gaede's Ann Arbor ministry is being written and will be placed in the church files in the Bentley Library for the use of future church historians.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *The Primitive Expounder*, Vol I, published in Ann Arbor, 1843.

[2] *Freedom Moves West,* by Lyttle.

[3] *Making the Manifesto: A History of Early Religious Humanism,* a dissertation submitted to the faculty of Meadville-Lombard Theological School, by William F. Schulz, Chicago, Illinois, March 31, 1975.

[4] "Sidney S. Robins, *What Is a Humanist? This Will Tell You,",* The Christian Register 99 (July 29, 1920):740..

[5] *Recollections of the Ministry to the First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor of Rev. Edward Homer Redman, 1943–1960*, published by the First Unitarian Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1988.

[6] Ibid, p. 46.

[7] See: *Study of Investment Policy for the Jackson Funds, Historical Data*, by William R. Kinney, Chairman of the Jackson Investment Advisory Committee, undated. Church files.

[8] See Appendix A for story of the Flaming Chalice.

Appendix A

THE FLAMING CHALICE

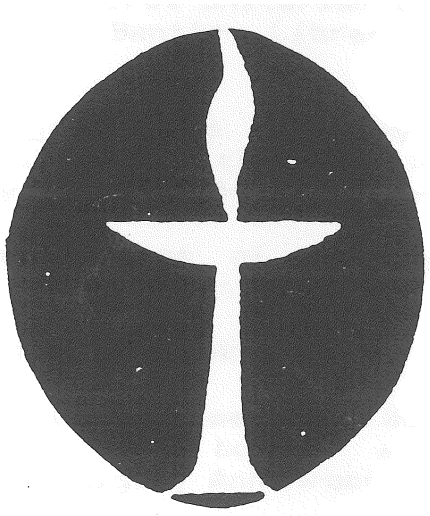
The Flaming Chalice is as close to a universal symbol among Unitarian Universalists as anything is or can be. It is used as the logo for the Unitarian Universalist Association and in a different design as the logo for the UU Service Committee. Churches and individuals use or do not use the Flaming Chalice as a symbol as they desire. We are a free religious movement and the meaningfulness of this symbol for some does not require that all use it.

The origin of the Flaming Chalice is in a very dramatic series of incidents that took place early in the 15th century. John Hus, a priest and the Rector of the University of Prague, Czechoslovakia, took issue on several religious questions with one or more of the reigning and quarreling popes. Throughout his lifetime, there were always at least two claimants to the Papal Office and sometimes three. Hus's books came to be burned because they challenged papal authority. He went into exile when high church officials threatened to kill every bishop and priest in Prague unless he stopped preaching there.

Several years later he was offered a safe conduct to attend an important Church Council in Constance, but on arriving was instead seized, chained, imprisoned, led through a mock trial whose conclusion was pre-ordained, and then burned at the stake. Dying he made a pun on his name, Hus, which means goose in Czech, crying out, "Today you are burning a goose, but out of my ashes will be born a swan, whom you will not burn."

Prophetic words indeed! The flame that consumed him was joined to the chalice to form a graphic symbol worn proudly by Hussites in Czechoslovakia and other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 15th century and afterwards, down into our own times. The chalice was used because of Hus's understanding of the Catholic communion chalice which contains the wine. Hus said that wine was only wine; it did not become the blood of Christ. Further, he insisted that it should be shared with all who were participating in the Mass and not drunk only by priests. This broader communion of humanity, symbolized in the chalice, together with the flame as a reminder of Hus's martyrdom, was a symbol of freedom, of autonomy, of light, and of truth. It had roots not only in Christian understanding but also in paganism. As in the chalice, all elements mingle together and are one, so are we all part of the earth and its elements. We each drink from the common cup of wine as a symbol of our drawing on the common cup of life.

500 years after these events took place, at a time when darkness was descending all over Europe, a group of American Unitarians working in Europe sought to provide aid to those fleeing from Hitler. Out of their efforts was formed the Unitarian Service Committee. Hans Deutsch, an Austrian artist and refugee from the Nazis, drew on his own cultural heritage in choosing for the Service Committee the flaming chalice as a symbol that would speak most clearly and immediately to the people in peril from Hitler, transcending all language barriers of the various countries then threatened. So powerfully did this symbol appeal to people that the Service Committee has continued to use it through the years.



At the time of the consolidation of the Unitarians and the Universalists some 28 years ago, the new president of the UUA suggested a variation on the design as the symbol of the new religious organization. This is the off-center flaming chalice in two coinciding circles. The use of the circle enlarges the symbolism, the circle of Unitarianism and the circle of Universalism coming together to form a wholeness of which we are all a part.

Over the past several decades numerous designs have been created and used among UUs, sometimes including flaming chalices that look like crosses. When this is deliberate it represents the Christianity out of which we have come to be what we are. It should not be misunderstood as indicating that we are a Christian religion. Some individuals among us are Christian; many are not.

Appendix B

THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO

published in *The Christian Register* on May 11, 1933

The time has come for a widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased knowledge and experience. In every field of human activity, the vital movement is now in the direction of a candid and explicit humanism. In order that religious humanism may be better understood, we, the undersigned, desire to make certain affirmations which we believe the facts of our contemporary life demonstrate.

There is a great danger of a final, and we believe fatal, identification of the word religion with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance and which are powerless to solve the problem of human living in the Twentieth Century. Religions have always been means for realizing the highest values of life. Their end has been accomplished through the interpretation of the total environing [sic] situation (theology or world view), the sense of values resulting therefrom (goal or ideal), and the technique (cult) established for realizing the satisfactory life. A change in any of these factors results in alteration of the outward forms of religion. This fact explains the changefulness of religions through the centuries. But through all changes religion itself remains constant in its quest for abiding values, an inseparable feature of human life.

Today man's larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and his deeper appreciation of brotherhood have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. Such a vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate social goals and personal satisfactions may appear to many people as a complete break with the past. While this age does owe a vast debt to the traditional religions, it is none the less obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present. It is a responsibility which rests upon this generation. We therefore affirm the following:

First: Religious humanists regard the universe as self existing and not created.

Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.

Third: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

Fourth: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded by that culture.

Fifth: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relation to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

Sixth: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought."

Seventh: Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation—all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between

the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

Eighth: Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

Ninth: In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

Tenth: It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

Eleventh: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

Twelfth: Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

Thirteenth: Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

Fourteenth: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

Fifteenth: We assert that humanism will (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.

So stand the theses of religious humanism. Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task

for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task.

Johannes Abraham Christoffel Fagginer Auer
Edwin Burdette Backus–Rev.
Harry Elmer Barnes
Leon Milton Birkhead
Raymond Bennett Bragg
Edwin Arthur Burtt
Ernest Caldecott
Anton J. Carlson
John Dewey
Albert C. Dieffenbach
John H. Dietrich—Rev.
Rev. Bernard Fantus
William Floyd
Frank Hankins
A. Eustace Haydon
Llewelyn Jones
Robert Morss Lovett
Harold Parsons Marley
R. Lester Mondale
Charles Francis Potter
John Herman Randall
Curtis Reese–Rev.
Rev. Oliver Reiser
Roy Wood Sellars
Clinton Lee Scott
(Howard) Maynard Shipley
W. Frank Swift
Vivian T. Thayer
Eldred Cornelius Vanderlaan
Joseph Walker

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