

## Great Moments in UU History Readings

### 1) 19<sup>th</sup> Century Theists, Unitarian (Channing) and Universalist (Ballou)

“Intro” Word doc. (pg. 2)

“Dedication and a little about the course and the author” (pg. 3)

“Purposes of this Course” (pg. 4)

“Questions You’ll Answer After Taking this Course” (pg. 5)

“Pilgrims, Puritans, Harvard, and a Trained Clergy” (pg. 6)

Hosea Ballou [www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/hoseaballou.html](http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/hoseaballou.html)

William Ellery Channing [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Ellery\\_Channing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Ellery_Channing)

**William Ellery Channing** [www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/williamellerychanning.html](http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/williamellerychanning.html)

(optional reading) **The Unitarian Controversy and Its Puritan Roots**

<http://www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/unitariancontroversy.html>

### 2) 20<sup>th</sup> Century Humanists

**Humanist Manifesto I (1933)** (first known as “A Humanist Manifesto”):

[www.americanhumanist.org/who\\_we\\_are/about\\_humanism/Humanist\\_Manifesto\\_I](http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I)

“Unitarians and Making Humanist Manifesto I” (pg. 7)

Curtis Reese <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/curtiswillifordreese.html>

Raymond Bragg <http://www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/raymondbragg.html>

(optional) Maurice B. Visscher. . [www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/mauricevisscher.html](http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/mauricevisscher.html)

“Visscher” (pg. 9). From Group Health and his own writing. Compiled by John Keohane

**Humanist Manifesto II (1973)**

[www.americanhumanist.org/who\\_we\\_are/about\\_humanism/Humanist\\_Manifesto\\_II](http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II)

### 3) Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Civil Rights Activists

Paul H. Douglas <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/phdouglas.html>

Howard E. Shuman on Paul Douglas and Civil Rights (first 15 pages of this interview):

[www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Shuman\\_interview\\_3.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Shuman_interview_3.pdf)

James Reeb [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Reeb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Reeb)

Orloff Miller on James Reeb (start at page 7, when Orloff meets James Reeb):

<http://fellowship.uufp.info/sermons/OrloffSelma.pdf>

Viola Liuzzo [www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/violaliuzzo.html](http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/violaliuzzo.html)

### 4) Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century UU Merger and Beyond

“A Precarious Path: The do-it-yourself Fellowship movement spread Unitarian congregations far and wide” article by Warren R. Ross UU World magazine

<http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/93593.shtml>

“The Second Radical Reformation: The Unitarian Fellowship Movement” paper by Holley Ulbrich

<http://www.sksm.edu/research/papers/fellowshipmovement.pdf>

Caroline Veatch [www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/carolineveatch.html](http://www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/carolineveatch.html)

“Women in the UUA” (pg. 14)

“Shared Values” article by Warren R. Ross in UU World magazine

[www.uuworld.org/2000/1100feat3.html](http://www.uuworld.org/2000/1100feat3.html)

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## Great Moments in UU History Introduction

Unitarian Universalists have a certain sense of pride, perhaps hubris, in our own supreme worth, often feeling that our own life journeys are especially unique. This can get in the way of relating to other people, present, past, and future. I believe that from stories of our past, we can get better vision for the future, so that we journey through life with better vision, and more whole. We can get beyond ourselves, relate better to others, and have less clouded vision for ourselves, our church, and our World.

Almost all readings for this four class course are directly available online. I have developed a few supplemental readings on “Pilgrims”, “Unitarians” and “Women”, and a recommended one on “Visscher”. For more on our history, go to UUA.org click on Bookstore, and buy books. I especially recommend ***Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History*** by Bumbaugh, ***The Premise & The Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association*** By Ross, and ***The Fellowship Movement: A Growth Strategy and It's Legacy*** by Ulbrich. Most of these are not on Amazon.

This course is meant for teaching with discussion. My experience, at my church, is that some students will do the readings, and others will not. Be prepared either way, if you choose to offer and teach this course.

The hardest part I've found, in teaching this course, was not to prepare the materials, but to get people to sign up. Here in Austin, Texas, I teach this course in four 90 minute segments, a week apart. We have a 10 minute break in each class. Often students will continue discussion throughout their break.

I offer this course, gratis, to anyone who wants to use it at a Unitarian Universalist Church, or Universalist church, or Unitarian church. My only requirement is to give me credit when you use my materials, or adjust it enough to make it your materials.

I do think it is the kind of course to get people interested in UU history. I think it applies to UUs in Fairbanks and Florida, Massachusetts, Washington State, Washington, DC, Kentucky, and Illinois, in Atlanta, and Kansas City. By the way, UUs in all of those areas have asked for this material, and I've gladly sent it to them, gratis.

So read this over. Consider teaching it at your church. Give me credit if you do, or change it enough to make it your own, and then send it on to others. If/when you offer this course, be sure to email at least the first page on to all your students. They'll have email links to most of the material. You could take these other pages, and print them for them, or email them as well.

Email me with any ideas, questions, or suggestions.

--John Keohane  
Member, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, Texas  
keohane@prodigy.net

## Dedication and a little about the author

*“Mine your niche”* --Nannerl O. Keohane

This course is dedicated to three women, each with the last name of “Keohane”. One is my brother’s wife, Nannerl O. Keohane, daughter of a Presbyterian minister, for 11 years President of Duke University (Methodist), a sometime Episcopalian whose views on religion, I know to be very close to my own. Another is my mother, the late Mary Pieters Keohane, daughter of Dutch Reformed missionary parents, who, in her late 40s, without telling her parents, joined a Unitarian church, and had all hell to pay when her father found out. Mother provided a boost for me in splitting from a fundamentalist Sunday school teacher, and for that I will be forever grateful. Finally, and most especially, this course is dedicated to the woman who it was my great fortune to marry, a woman who I “knew” was a safe escape from UUs, because she was Jewish, and yet, who, somehow, in the amazing chemistry of relationships, over years became UU, so that over 35 years after a Unitarian Universalist minister performed our marriage ceremony, Cynthia and I actually joined a Unitarian Universalist church. This is to all three of you. Thank you.

Here now, is a little bit about me. As a young boy, I was sent to Sunday school, at a Protestant church, which my parents knew to be liberal. Because of *“Baptist”* in the name, my maternal grandparents, two states away, thought of it as *“solid”*. In that neighborhood near the University of Chicago, it was known, in those days, as the Hyde Park Baptist Church.

When I was 10, this ruse failed for a graduate student from Tennessee who came to teach Sunday school. In his first class, he told amazing things, which I had never heard before, about a “leap of faith” and a “chasm to Hell”. Realizing that it was not going well, he volunteered to take boys to football games, if we’d stick with him. It didn’t work with me, especially because his doctrine sounded unreasonable, and because I was a baseball partisan who despised football. Sunday school still being a requirement, but with mother as an ally, I had an alternative. First Unitarian was one block less to walk, with no special leaps required.

My Unitarian heroes were close at hand, particularly a family friend, and United States Senator, Paul H. Douglas, and my mother’s brother-in-law, my “uncle” Dr. Maurice B. Visscher. If you think this course is biased, it is. Visscher and Douglas are two of the UUs we study.

My parents were historians. I majored in history in college, then came back to Chicago when I was 20 to study for the Unitarian, soon to be Unitarian Universalist ministry. I never became a minister, but I did ace UU church history with Dr. John Godbey at Meadville. I left, first to teach, and then to program computers. When programming, I was active in politics, and at a Lutheran church, in a meeting led by a Catholic nun, I met the young Jewish woman who would become my wife. She was 21 and I was 30. We married 32 months later. I was, I thought, done with UUism.

I was done with UUism, but I wasn’t. We had been married over 35 years, when Cynthia and I, together, joined the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, Texas. She works full-time, and is active in Austin civic affairs. I got really active in church where I serve on Adult-Re, Bookstore, Denominational Affairs (chair), and Finance committees.

## Purposes of this Course in UU History—Titled “Great Moments in UU History”

I think a course in UU history deserves, and requires, explanation.

- 1) I think history is important
  - a. otherwise we become and/or are what Quaker Elton Trueblood called a “cut flowers religion” and all of us know that cut flowers do not last.
  - b. we need to quench the spiritual thirst or we’ll lose members through our too frequent “revolving door”
  - c. we’ve got some great stories to tell, her stories and his stories.
- 2) Many today, and UUs in particular, often think they hate history
  - a. They already suffered “history” as tornados of names, dates, nothing.
  - b. We in particular, may have become UUs to escape a past tradition.
- 3) So what do we do to make UU history spell binding, fun, and future oriented?
  - a. Cut cut cut. One UUA history course has handouts on the UUA www site, and lists 46 individuals before 1900. We teach using only two of these.
  - b. Keep it more recent, but not so recent that one cannot track historic impact.- We emphasize six people in the last 80 years.
- 4) This course builds
  - a. Channing/Ballou—the source of our names. Classic Unitarian and Universalist Christians, still alive in some of our churches today.
  - b. Humanists—Opening to the left, theologically. Didn’t have to be a Christian, or even a theist, to be a Unitarian. Led way to the UU Buddhists, UU Pagans, UU other things we have today
  - c. Civil Rights Leaders for Voting Rights—Especially Douglas and Reeb After James Reeb was killed at Selma, President Johnson came out for voting rights, but it was United States Senator Paul Douglas’ bill, which Douglas had been fighting for five years. It was Douglas who got in the bill that it would need federal registrars to go into towns in the deep South to register black voters, because one could not count on the local whites.. Reeb and Douglas represent two different patterns, as we fight for different civil rights today.
  - d. Merger and Beyond---Here the focus is on two things. First, the Fellowship movement, which made the Unitarians twice as large as the Universalists, and much more vital, at time of merger. The fellowship movement also led us to find Caroline Veatch, who, though never visiting any of our churches, was our saviour, twice. That leads to our focus on the role of women, exemplified by the change in the number of women ministers, from less than ten in 1967, to 431 in 1999, and the change in our principles, from the six in 1961, to the seven in use today.

“Purposes of this Course in UU History” 3/16/2010 by John Keohane

How complete was separation of church and state in Massachusetts, in 1797, when the first President we claim, John Adams of Massachusetts, became President?

Who was the Universalist minister whose preaching prompted a nearby Unitarian preacher to say he had “never seen a more irrational doctrine”?

Which Unitarian humanists organized to send medical missionaries abroad?

Were any women involved in drafting the original Humanist Manifesto?

Who enlisted in the United States Marines as a 50-year-old Quaker, fought with the marines in the Pacific, then became a Unitarian while continuing as a Quaker?

When Unitarians and Universalists consolidated, to create the UUA, why were the Unitarians larger, more energetic, and less theistic?

Why did the person who was savior of the Unitarian Universalist Association never attend any of our congregations?

Which foreign country helped to save the Unitarian Universalist Association?

How many women ministers did the Unitarians have in 1896, the UUA in 1967, and the UUA in 1999?

How do the current Seven Principles represent women, better than the UUA's original six?

## Pilgrims, Puritans, Harvard, and a Trained Clergy

The Pilgrims and the Puritans were different. Both came to America, and in particular to Massachusetts. The Pilgrims were here first. They founded Plymouth in 1620. Even though their charter was to go to Virginia, they got lost, and having rented passage on the Mayflower, they stayed.

The Puritans came in 1626 to found Salem, on the Massachusetts coast north of Boston, and in 1630 founded Boston. The Pilgrims were separatists. They were also egalitarian. They believed in some kind of equality for every man.

The Puritans wanted to reform the Church of England, not separate from it. They did not believe that any “Tom, Dick and Henry” could be trusted to interpret the Bible. They preferred educated clergy. A degree from Oxford or Cambridge was a sign of such an education. It was the Puritans who founded Harvard College. It was the Puritans who said that every town of 100 residents had to provide a free public grammar school.

Here’s more on Pilgrims and Puritans, who they were, how they were similar, and how they were different: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/PURITAN/purhist.html>

Unitarians, historically, are descended from the Puritans, not the Pilgrims. The Puritans leaders were men of wealth, education, and standing. It was they who got the Royal Charter for Massachusetts. It was they who said they who came to dominate the politics, economy and life of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Here’s a www site on reasons for founding Harvard College, in 1636, just six years after Puritans founded Boston, as well as, in 1721, the creation of Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard: <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/history.html>

## Unitarians and Making Humanist Manifesto I

Ed. Note: Universalists were not much involved. Rev. David Bumbaugh, who started as a Universalist before merger, says in *Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History*, that only one Universalist signed the Manifesto. Two others had joint fellowship with the Universalists. Unitarians were key in 1933, 28 years before UUs became the UUA:

Biographies of some of these are on:

1) The Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography  
<http://www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/index.html>

and/or

2) The Harvard Square Biographies:  
<http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/unitarians/index1.html>

### Earlier Background:

The American Unitarian Association was founded in 1825, and continued until 1884, as an association of individuals. The leading light among Unitarians in 1825, William Ellery Channing, refused to join, because he feared large organizations (pg. 8 of the DUUB biography on Channing).

The Western Unitarian Conference was founded in 1852. "The West" went from Ohio to Colorado, and from Oklahoma into Canada. For more on this background read the online DUUB biography of Curtis Reese and pages 136-139 of *Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History* by David E. Bumbaugh.

The four men in Chicago who initiated the discussions for Humanist Manifesto I:

*Raymond Bragg* (1902-1979) was the youngest of the four, and according to *Ed Wilson*, is the one who initiated the issuance of the Manifesto. Bragg had a good job with which to come in contact with lots of Unitarian ministers, because at that time he was Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, in which job he had succeeded *Curtis Reese*. Bragg credits *Birkhead* in Kansas City, and *Potter*, then heading a Humanist Fellowship in New York, but mainly earning his living as a traveling lecturer, with prodding him. Later Bragg (1935-38 as associate, 1938-47 as senior minister) would follow *Dietrich* to First Unitarian in Minneapolis, and still later (1952-73) he would follow *Mondale*, who had followed Birkhead to All Souls Unitarian Church in Kansas City. Bragg had started as a Congregationalist, and became a Unitarian during college, when a geology professor introduced him to evolutionary theory and the scientific method. In the 1920s, he was a student at Meadville, graduating in 1928. From 1927-1930 he was minister of the Unitarian church in Evanston, just north of Chicago. In 1930 *Bragg* succeeded *Reese* as Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference (1930-35).

A. Eustace Haydon (1880-1975) a Canadian, was never a Unitarian minister, but after serving as a Baptist minister in Ontario, earned his PhD at the University of Chicago, and became a pioneer in the study of world religions. He taught at the University of Chicago, and from 1919-1945 was professor and chairman of the Department of Comparative Religion in the University of Chicago Divinity School. Though Haydon was never ordained by the Unitarians, for five years (1918-23) he commuted from Chicago to serve as minister of the First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin. ....

*Curtis Reese* (1887-1961) started as a Southern Baptist. With a whole raft of Southern Baptist preachers in his family, he was ordained as one in 1908. When he graduated from Seminary in 1910, he became state evangelist for the Illinois State Baptist Association. His “heresies” apparently began due to the impact of “Higher Criticism”. Reese moved to the Northern Baptists, and then, in 1913, to the Unitarian ministry. He pastored churches in Illinois and Iowa, then in 1919 he became Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference. In 1920 he sounded a strongly religious humanist position when he addressed the Harvard Summer School of ministers on “The Content of Present-Day Religious Liberalism” (DUUB) In the early 1920s, Reese was on the Board of the Meadville Theological School. Largely through his efforts, Meadville got a major financial gift to facilitate its move from Pennsylvania to Chicago, in 1926. In 1930 Reese left the job of Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference to become Dean of Abraham Lincoln Centre, where he remained from 1930 until retirement in 1957. (HSq.).

*Edwin H. Wilson* (1899-1993) started as a Unitarian. After a short time as a sales manager, he returned to school in 1924 to attend Meadville. After graduating he served churches in Ohio and New York, before coming to Chicago as minister of the Third Unitarian Church on Chicago’s West side. In 1929, he became a contributor to *The New Humanist*, a then mimeographed newsletter published by the Humanist Fellowship, a fellowship primarily of students in the Chicago area. By 1930, Wilson was managing editor. He did this as a volunteer, in addition to his ministry at Third Unitarian

Other Unitarian ministers who signed Humanist Manifesto I:

*Dietrich and Dieffenbach*: Both were ministers of Reformed churches in Pittsburg in 1911 when they both became Unitarian ministers. *The Christian Register*, which Dieffenbach edited from 1918-1933, before the American Unitarian Association trustees fired him, was the denominational publication of the AUA, and thus one of the predecessors to our own *UU World*.

*Backus and Wicks*: Backus had served four Unitarian churches, and would later be successor to Wicks in Indianapolis.

*Caldecott, Williams*, and possibly Marley were also Unitarian ministers.

“Unitarians and Making Humanist Manifesto I” 3/16/2010 by John Keohane

FUUCA Great Moments in UU History  
Maurice B. Visscher (1901-1983)

This additional information on Maurice Visscher includes three things:

- 1) A description of Dr. Visscher, in a history of Group Health
- 2) A letter from Maurice Visscher to his minister in Minneapolis, Raymond Bragg
- 3) A letter from Dr. Visscher to Robert McCoy per a Humanist chapter in Mpls.
- 4) A first sentence to members of The First Unitarian of Minneapolis in 1965

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*Group Health is a not-for-profit Health Management Organization, founded before there really were HMOs or PPOs. All medicine in this country was “fee for practice” medicine, which was basically when you go, you pay. Group Health, now Health Partners, now has over a million members. Dr. Visscher was in at close to the beginning, and the role he played was immense. This is from **An Enduring Mission: The Story of Group Health**, in chapter 2, pages 23-24, on **Birth and Survival**:*

“By the time Group Health Plan’s medical clinic opened its doors on August 1, 1957, it had only seven hundred contracts and about twenty-one hundred members. With such an inauspicious beginning, someone less idealist than Jacobson [1<sup>st</sup> President of Group Health] might have considered quitting. But he knew word of the Plan would spread and membership would increase if it provided medical care of the highest quality at a low price. The key was in attracting qualified physicians willing to risk their reputations to work with the Plan. Maurice Visscher, M.D., would help.

Visscher, the long-time head of the Department of Physiology at the University of Minnesota, had an international reputation as a scientist. His teaching and research on heart function provided the basis for breakthroughs in the development of drugs to treat heart failure and of the technology to maintain circulation during open-heart surgery. He taught students like Christiaan Barnard who went on to become world-famous surgeons, and he published hundreds of scientific papers as well as articles on topics ranging from “Scientists as Citizens” to “Heating Your Home in Wartime for Comfort, Economy, and Health.”

Visscher’s lofty scientific standing was complemented by his reputation as a maverick. He drove a fuel-efficient Volkswagen when nearly everyone else drove gas-guzzlers. He spent much of his life on at least one or two blacklists, and he was proud of it. He challenged the war in Vietnam when few others were willing to do so. And he fought for rational thought and academic freedom in the face of national paranoia about Communists in the nation’s laboratories.

“Fear and hatred have so stirred up the midbrain and hypothalamic centers of millions of otherwise sane people,” he said, referring to the effects of McCarthyism, “that they no longer retain cortical dominance.”

Visscher the researcher maintain a running battle in the press with antivivisectionists, whom he once called “intellectually befuddled little old ladies of both sexes.” He held a series of famous debates on the topic with Irene Castle McLaughlin, a famous dancer of the 1920s. McLaughlin had a sense of strategy as well as style, and she had frustrated many a debater by arriving late, with handsome Russian wolfhounds on a leash. Visscher counteracted her appeal to emotion by confining his opening remarks to the surgical advances made possible by vivisection that benefited children. Just as she arrived with her dogs, he turned off the lights and began a slide presentation. Finally, he arranged for the young child of a colleague to sit in the front row. When the child raced into Visscher’s lap early in the debate, McLaughlin lost her emotional advantage.

Though he espoused many unpopular causes, Visscher did so not just because he enjoyed being contrary but also because he had thoroughly considered the issue and chosen the answer he believed would lead to the greatest social good. He applied the technique to prepaid medicine. Physicians were not acting completely out of self-interest when they resisted changes in the fee-for-service system, he noted, but the desire for unlimited freedom was more than offset by the need for quality medical care for all people, not just the well-to-do.

Visscher was an early supporter of Group Health Mutual, and he often spoke at conferences sponsored by the Group Health Association. Before one such appearance, Harold Diehl, dean of the University of Minnesota Medical School, got a call from the president of the American Medical Association, asking him to prevail upon Visscher not to speak. I can’t do that,” Diehl said. “And even if I did, you don’t know Maurice Visscher very well if you think it would do any good.”

“Visscher believed that Group Health Plan must ensure the highest quality of care, not only because the members deserved it, but also because it would help counteract any criticism from the medical community. He helped put together a board composed of several physicians from the University of Minnesota Medical School, including Fred Kottke, professor of physical medicine, A. Boyd Thomes, clinical professor of internal medicine, and Lyle J. Hay, clinical professor of surgery. Visscher was chairman.

The board’s purpose to was to advise the lay board on medical policy and determine the qualifications of physicians hired by the Plan. The board also intended, Visscher said, to “assure that the physicians are truly independent contractors, free to determine their own methods of practice without any interference from the Board of Directors or lay management. It does not intend to attempt to exploit physicians for the benefit of its members, if for no other reason because it is convinced that first class medical care cannot e obtained through the employment of underpaid or overworked personnel.”

Visscher played an important role in avoiding problems with the local medical societies. A few months before the Group Health Plan clinic opened, Visscher arranged for all the officers of the Hennepin and Ramsey County medical societies to meet with the board of Group Health. There were told about the Plan's philosophy and about how the system would work, and they were asked for their blessing. The officers declined, but did agree not to keep Group Health physicians from membership in their societies.

Visscher also hired the Plan's first medical staff director, Abraham Falk, M.D., then chief of staff at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Minneapolis. Falk was intrigued by the concept of prepaid care. But he had trouble making up his mind, went on vacation in Florida, and accepted only after Visscher sent him a telegram saying, "Yes or no. Now."

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*Dr. Visscher wrote on Parker House stationery to Rev. Raymond Bragg, his own minister at the First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis. Dr. Visscher had just been across the street, attending a service at the Unitarian King's Chapel in Boston, which was and is even in 2010, Unitarian Christian. Dr. Palfrey Perkins was minister at Kings Chapel:*

Parker House  
School and Tremont Streets  
Boston, Mass

11-1-42

Dear Ray,

Sorry I have nothing to report as yet, but S. G. had to go to a funeral and will not come in until 5pm, so I am amusing myself as best I can in downtown Boston.

My impelling motive for communication ( I should say in view of my experience, communicating) with you is that I have just listened to the Reverend Doctor Palfrey (paltry?) Perkins expound on the community of all saints—presumably including you—questionably me!

This being All-Saints Day, I sat, in company with 63 (actual count) other saints and sinners in Kings Chapel listening to the melodious voice and poetic rhythm of the said Dr. Perkins. Last nite I saw "Blythe Spirit" (Noel Coward) in New York and I could not help thinking about how the ritualistic churches employ the art of hypnotism in small or large degree, as the talents of their priests permit.

If some psychologist hasn't already worked it to death it would be worth while trying to make a scientific study of the role of hypnosis in keeping the orthodox religions alive. I have never seen a study from this point of view—of course there is the Marxian dictum

about the opiate function, and I guess everyone vaguely recognizes the role of the power of suggestion in keeping people in the churches. A lot has been made of the “fear” angle in keeping the nag in line, but how much has the power of hypnotic suggestion been stressed? I haven’t read anything in the literature of the psychology of religion and I should like to know more about it. I should not advise psychologists at public universities to fiddle with it just at the moment. Debunking religion would not be a popular venture right now. But if psychologists in endowed institutions were worth their salt some of them would get at this business. Social psychology could use the experimental approach if it wished to in problems like this. There has been too much ad hoc theorizing and not enough testing by experiment.

The social scientists can’t go about making practical experiments on sex questions, for example, because certain social behavior has come to be illegal as well as immoral, but so far as I know, no one has gone to the work-house recently for agnosticism.

Isn’t it amazing how fragile is the card by which we hang in freedom from the dominant religious groups. To them freedom of religion is primarily freedom to choose one of the conventional sects.

This started out about P. P. and I’m not quite through. It was impossible not to think, as I was sitting there, what a terrible calamity it is that so much money has to be wasted in keeping a dozen or two of the desiccating (ed. def. “drying up”, “dehydrating”) faithful diverted from reality. The average age—exclusive of a dozen soldiers and sailors (and WAVES) who dropped in to get out of the rain—must have been seventy years. I suppose you pay your money and you call the tune, so there’s nothing to do about it, but it hurts me none the less. Why not take the endowment they’ve got and set up shop somewhere that they could reach real people, not feeble old men and women, and only a few of them, seeking verbal assurance that they will never die.

But it’s a grand gesture anyhow. And the churchyard is a shrine. I spent half hour reading inscriptions on the headstones of the departed (I should say “passed over”—it was amusing that P. P. used that expression this morning, and after having it overworked last nite by Noel Coward, I had a hard time convincing myself that the sermon wasn’t part of last nite’s farce!)

Cherio

Maurice

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*Dr. Visscher wrote this on April 4, 1961 to Mr. Robert McCoy. Rev. Carl A. Storm was minister of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. The letter is in response to the idea of forming a chapter of the American Humanist Association in Minneapolis. Years later, in 1997, Dr. Khoren Arisian, minister of the First Unitarian Society would develop a humanist society when, after 18 years as senior minister, he retired at the age of 65. Dr. Arisian is now minister emeritus of First Unitarian.*

The University of Minnesota  
The Medical School  
Minneapolis 14

Department of Physiology

April 8, 1961

Dear Mr. McCoy:

I have been so busy this last week that I have not been able to do anything about the AHA matter. I shall be out of town all next week and your office told me that you were away this week. Therefore this note.

As you may sense, I am distinctly cool to the idea of promoting an AHA chapter in Minneapolis, because it is not very acceptable to many people—not only Mr. Storm—in the 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Society, who look upon it as a potentially divisive move. Whether it would be, or not, I do not know, but I do not like to move against the minister of so many friends in any case.

However, I would be happy to meet both you and Dr. Astelle and talk about the problem. Please let me know when arrangements for his visit are complete.

Sincerely

Maurice Visscher

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*Dr. Visscher was Chairman, and Mr. McCoy, Vice Chairman, of a pulpit committee of their church to find a successor to Mr. Storm in 1965. Here is the first sentence of a letter, dated October 1, 1965 from the pulpit committee to each of the members:*

Dear Fellow Unitarian:

Our search for a new minister provides the opportunity for all of us to consider the qualifications we want in our minister and the activities we want to see emphasized in his work for our Society.

*Take note of "his" in the above. We will see, in section four of this course, how much "his" could have been assumed in 1965, and how that has changed. The 2009 UUA Yearbook lists seven women and 2 men as settled ministers in Minnesota, including the minister at the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis who is successor to Dr. Arisian.*

"Visscher" 3/16/2010 compiled by John Keohane

Women in the UUA

1) Iowa Sisterhood

“In the late 1800s and early 1900s a group of women ministers known as the **Iowa Sisterhood** organized eighteen [Unitarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iowa_Sisterhood) societies in several Midwestern states.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iowa\\_Sisterhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iowa_Sisterhood)

2) Mary Billings, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Universalist minister, in Texas, and elsewhere

<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/marybillings.html>  
by Rev. Barbara Coeyman

3) How many women ministers?

American Unitarian Association Yearbook, 1896: 26

Unitarian Universalist Association, 1961: 18, but only five were active in church work. Two were ministers and one an RE director and two were active in the RE Department of the UUA. Seven were retired. Six were in secular work or not working. See below for the entire list.

UUA active women ministers, 1972: 23

UUA active women ministers: 1999: 431

Sources of numbers of these numbers:

For the AUA number in 1896, consider the importance of the Iowa Sisterhood. For that Number, and reasons for the decrease, see the excellent online biography by Elizabeth Curtiss of the AUA President from 1900 to 1927, Rev. Samuel Atkins Eliot II  
<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/samuelatkinseliotii.html>

For the number in 1961, I received this on 3/15/2010 in a pdf file from the UUA..

## Women Ministers in 1961

856 ministers in fellowship in 1961  
18 women or 2.1%

7 of the women were retired  
3 were serving parishes (two as parish ministers and another as minister of religious education)  
2 were working in the Dept. of Education of the UUA  
the remaining 6 were not working or engaged in secular work

## Women

1. **Helen F. Adams** ® ord. 1918 B. of Oratory, Dixon College, 1898.
2. **Patricia Bateman** (P) Minister of Education, Church of the Unity, Springfield MA ord. 1959 B.A. Colby 1956; B.D. St. Lawrence 1959
3. **Janet Hartzell Bowering** ord. 1955 B.A. St. Lawrence 1952
4. **Edna P. Bruner**, Education Consultant, UUA ord. 1930 B.A. St. Lawrence 1929, B.D. 1931
5. **Mrs. Maja V. Capek** ® (P) ord. 1929 Columbia 08-17
6. **Eleanor G. Collie** ord. 1939 A.B. St. Lawrence 1929
7. **Mrs. Wilna Livingston Constable** ® ord. 21 Heriot-Watt Coll., Edinburgh 1906-1910; Univ. of Edinburgh 1910-1912
8. **Mrs. Greta Worstell Crosby** ord. 1960 Settled at 1<sup>st</sup> Unit. Lynchburg. B.A. Ohio Wesleyan U. 1951; LL.B. Harvard Law School 1954; B.D. Meadville 1959
9. **Harriet E. Druley** ord. 1922 settled at 1<sup>st</sup> Universalist Church of Springfield OH in 1942
10. **Elizabeth Etz** ord. 1955
11. **Sophia Lyon Fahs** ord. 1959 B.A. Wooster Coll., 1897; M.A. Columbia U., 1904; B.D. Union Theological Seminary, 1926; D.H.L., St. Lawrence U.
12. **Ida M. Folsom** ord. 1951 Eastern State Normal School 1910
13. **Hazel Rogers Gredler** ® ord. 1921 Emeritus, Barnstable & Yarmouth
14. **Mrs. Grace E. Marshall** ® ord. 1942. B.A. McMaster Univ. 1898; Ph.D., Harvard-Radcliffe, 1910.
15. **Marguerite P. McIntire** ord. 1929. B.A. Tufts, 1935.
16. **Pearl M. Mock** ® ord. 1920
17. **Harriet B. Robinson** ® ord. 1899
18. **Dorothy T. Spoerl** UUA Dept. of Educ. ord. 1929 B.A. Lombard 1927; M.A. Boston U., 1928

Source: 1961-62 Directory of the Unitarian Universalist Association

For the 1972 and 1999 numbers of active women ministers (23, and 431). Source is a UUA Renaissance Program handout in UU History, handout #7:

[http://www.uua.org/documents/recc/handouts\\_history.pdf](http://www.uua.org/documents/recc/handouts_history.pdf)

“Women in the UUA” 3/15/2010 by John Keohane