

MaleCall

Journal of the Unitarian Universalist Men's Network
UUMeN, 5307 NW 118th Ave., Coral Springs, FL 33076
Web: www.uumen.org
E-mail: info@uumen.org

Spring 2007



It's not enough to be a human being when you are a man of color

From a sermon by the Rev. William "Chester" McCall

On May 18, 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the Ware lecturer at the UUA General Assembly in Hollywood, Fla. The title of his sermon was *Don't Sleep Through The Revolution*. He shared that he had his own personal experience with Unitarian Universalism that began when he was a student at Boston University in the early 1950s. On occasion he visited the Arlington Street Church where Dr. Greely pastored at the time. He indicated that the support for his ministry expressed itself both before and after the death of Rev. James Reeb. He began his lecture by telling the story of Rip van Winkle, and he says that there is a point to the story that is usually missed.

"One thing that we usually remember about the story of Rip van Winkle is that he slept 20 years. However, there is another point in the story, which is usually completely overlooked: it is the sign on the inn of the little town that is on the Hudson from which Rip went up into the mountains for his long sleep. When he went up, the sign had a picture of King George III of England. When he came down, the sign had a picture of George Washington, the first president of the United States. When Rip van Winkle looked up at the picture of George Washington, he was amazed. He was completely lost. He knew not who he was.

The incident reveals that the most striking thing about Rip van Winkle is not merely that he slept 20 years, but that he slept through a revolution. While he was peacefully snoring in the mountains a revolution was taking place that would alter the face of human history. Yet Rip knew nothing about it. He was asleep.

One of the great misfortunes of history is that all too many individuals and institutions find themselves in a great period of change and yet fail to achieve the new attitudes and outlooks that the new situation demands. There is nothing more tragic than to sleep through a revolution or to mask the same old thing in new wine skins and call it a "revolution."

I believe that the men's movement—though transformational—is a movement that has yet to transcend the boundaries of exclusion of other ways of understanding maleness and masculinity that are found in other cultures than the dominant culture of our society. For example, what it means to be male or masculine is very different in a matriarchal society than a patriarchal society. Our understanding of what it is to be male or masculine needs to embrace and transcend these understandings.

I believe that if we as a movement are to be true to this journey for men, we must become inclusive and accepting of all definitions and understandings of what it means to be a man within the variety of cultural contexts that exist on this global bus we call earth.

Unfortunately, though these are revolutionary times, as we seek to end institutional systemic oppression, yet we are not in the midst of this revolution in dismantling the notions of manhood that support and perpetuate the various forms of oppression to which we are accustomed. I use the word "accustomed" intentionally, because there is a level of acceptance that

(Continued on page 6)

About UUMeN

The Unitarian Universalist Men's Network is a continental membership organization for UU men (which also welcomes other gender allies). Our purpose is to build and sustain a mature, liberal religious masculinity. Our primary objectives are to: develop a continental resource network; support the personal and spiritual growth of men at the local, district and continental levels; and collaborate with other UU groups who share our interests and commitments. Members receive a quarterly newsletter, may vote at our Annual Meeting held in June at General Assembly, and are eligible for discounts on materials.

2006-2007 Steering Council

Dave Woods (IL), president, 2007
Rev. Todd Strickland (CO), VP, 2007
Roy Schwartz (FL), treasurer, 2008
Bob Hospadaruk (MI), 2007
Rich Wilson (WI), 2008
Jack Ripple (AZ) 2008
Rev. Chester McCall III (PA), 2009
Frank Mundo (ME), 2009
Rev. James 'Chip' Roush (MI), 2009
Rev. Tom Owen-Towle, President Emeritus

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WWW.UUMEN.ORG

From the President...

The UUMeN's Network Winter Steering Council met Jan. 16-21 at the Valley UU Church (VUU) in Chandler, AZ. It was very successful, thanks to our hosts, Steering Council Member Jack Ripple and local VUU Men's Group leader Dave Johnson. Also, Rev. Lone Jensen of VUU, other members of the VUU Men's Group and wonderful providers of home hospitality for our Steering Council did a great job assisting. Besides the regular business, we had fun at Rawhide amusement park there; we conducted the Sunday 1/21 church service with the help of an all-men's choir; our Rev. James "Chip" Roush told a nice story to the kids during the first part; our Rev. Chester McCall did the sermon; and Jack Ripple and other VUU men set up a table of UUMeN literature for church members to review.

We are prepared to handle our Exhibit Booth at GA2007 and hold our Annual Meeting in Portland, Ore., in June. UUMeN Steering Council will set up the booth on June 19 and will be there until June 24. I'll be finishing my two-year term as President after this General Assembly and the Steering Council is prepared for a smooth transition of responsibilities.

Also, UUMeN will have a table and host a workshop at the Central Midwest Districts Conference in the Chicago area. We'll be there Friday April 13 and doing the workshop on Saturday, April 14. We are proud to have UUMeN member Ben Atherton-Zeman and his "Voices of Men," a one-man play that uses humor and celebrity male voice impressions to educate about sexual assault, domestic violence and other forms of men's violence against women. It urges me to take initiative to stop violence and to support women's leadership in doing so. "Voices of Men" has been performed at UU congregations, other churches, high schools, prisons, conferences, etc. Those of you in the Midwest, close to Chicago area, we suggest you plan on coming to this outing. See www.cmwd-uaa.org, or call Peggy Boccard, Central Midwest District Office, at (708) 336-0831 for more detailed information.

Keep the faith,

President, UUMeN, dnwoods@ameritech.net



Dave Woods

YIKES!

Have you forgotten to renew your
contribution to UUMeN?

Keep the faith and help the brothers out...
do it TODAY!

It's now *easier than ever* to join, renew, contribute,

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THANKS, Brother (or Sister) !



Where are the men?

An editorial by the Rev. James “Chip” Roush

Two-thirds of the attendees of any UU service are likely to be women. Does this mean that Unitarian Universalism has no place for men?

Of course not—our work of repairing the world requires both traditionally “feminine” values, such as healing and comfort, and traditionally “masculine” values, such as courage and outreach. But why do we have so few men?

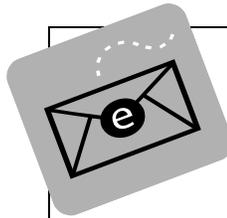
A related question is: why do we have so few men’s groups? We have more than 1,000 congregations, but we know of fewer than 200 men’s groups. Those of us in groups know how important and valuable they are—why haven’t we gotten that message out to our brothers? Or, why have our brothers not received our message?

When I travel, I like to attend the nearby UU congregation. Recently, I discovered that I’d be in town during a meeting of the local men’s group. I inquired about attending, and the members seemed pleased to have me. However, when we met, the group did not seem entirely comfortable.

Perhaps it was because the group had a stranger present, but it did not feel as welcoming as some groups I’ve attended. The members joked about whether it was proper to hug me on our “first date,” and they indicated their appreciation for my attendance, because it made their closing circle a little larger and less “intimate.”

It would have been easy to label this as mere homophobia, but it felt a little different. These men wanted to be close to each other. They saw value in intimate friendships. And they struggled with their own internalized homophobia, which made them uncomfortable with their own needs for masculine company. They yearned for male friendship, and feared that yearning.

Perhaps that is why there are so few men’s groups. Our United States culture is so aggressive and



MALECALL MAIL:

Our inbox was empty this issue—please email your questions, concerns, or responses to previous articles to info@uumen.org, or send postal mail to: UUMeN, 5307 NW 118th Avenue Coral Springs, FL 33076.

Questions & Conversation: Starters for Men's Groups

(This is a regular column—please submit questions and rituals that have deepened your Men’s Group experiences to share with others in our movement.)

- Each man is invited to tell about his first (or current) car/truck/vehicle, and to explain something about himself in relationship to that object.
- Where in your home do you feel most at ease, and why? Where in the world do you feel best, and why?
- Tell about a lesson you learned from a grandfather or uncle — from a grandmother or aunt.
- When did you feel particularly “manly” or “masculine” in the last year, and why?

hyper-masculine, and so homophobic, that any attempt at a “softer” masculinity is seen as suspect. Perhaps it is a positive sign that we have as many men’s groups as we do. It takes a lot to overcome the external and internal programming, and to stand joyfully with your arm around your neighbor.

Hugging each other is not required to join a men’s group. But banding together, somehow, and standing shoulder-to-shoulder as comrades is necessary, if we want to change our world into a more just and compassionate place for our children.

So may we be.

War and the Soul

by Karen Carnabucci, LCSW, TEP
Racine, Wisconsin

What might a Veteran's Day service be like — especially if it was not a rah-rah celebration of patriotism and not an anti-war screed against American foreign policy?

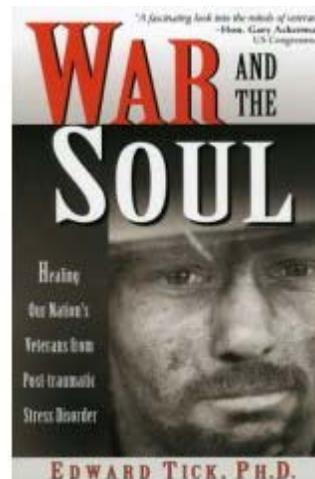
The Rev. Tony Larsen read “War and the Soul” and created a special Veterans Day service at the Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church, Racine, Wis., with the help of veterans in the congregation, including Rich Wilson, a UUMen steering committee member and Vietnam veteran who served in U.S. Air Force. Noting that UU ministers, as well as ministers of other faiths sometimes shy away from veterans issues because of people’s complicated feelings about war, he focused on having three veterans simply tell their stories in solemn and sacred space.

Three veterans — two officers and one enlisted — agreed to tell their stories, as part of the service’s “invitation to thought.” The OBUUC choir provided music, including John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" and Pete Seeger's "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?" At the conclusion of the service, congregation members had the opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifice of a veteran who was a family member or friend, past or present, as they shared photos of veterans and announced their names.

Rev. Larsen composed the service after reading “War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,” the book by Edward Tick, Ph.D., a psychologist from Albany, N.Y., who works a great deal with veterans of combat and war. Tick maintains that the veteran cannot and should not have to hold his or her own story and that true healing happens when the veteran is able to share his or her own story with the community so they can help “carry” that story.

Getting the word out about the suffering in wartime is essential, especially since the Veterans Administration recently acknowledged that more than 25 percent of Iraq returnees have Post-traumatic Stress Disorder – a figure that many mental health professionals believe is on the low side.

Although there are growing numbers of women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan – current figures are put at 155,000 since 2002 – we know that the majority of service people are men. And, for centuries war has been a kind of initiatory rite for men.



Tick bypasses political debate for the important and imminent necessity of addressing the serious needs of returning veterans, a cause that will become increasingly important as thousands of service people return home.

Tick believes the trauma of modern warfare is so deep that it devastates the psyche — affecting not

only the veteran but the veteran’s family and ultimately, the community. He draws from nearly 30 years of expertise in psychology, history, mythology, and diverse spiritual traditions to provide real solutions for healing PTSD – including storytelling, purification and reconciliation techniques. He also takes veterans back to Vietnam for healing ceremonies, to meet the country’s veterans and to assist in philanthropic programs to help the needy.

In just more than a year, veterans, clergy people, psychotherapists, healers, family members and others have been drawn to his book and begun to ask how they can implement Tick’s ideas in their own communities.

Since “War and the Soul” was published, Tick has been touring the country talking about the psychological and spiritual needs of veterans and how to address them. He has founded a non-profit organization, Soldier’s Heart, to create a national network of community-based services for the healthy and successful reintegration of veterans when they return home.

For information about Tick’s work, see his sites at www.mentorthesoul.com and www.soldiersheart.net. To join a discussion list on this topic, see: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Soldier’s Heart](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Soldier's_Heart).

Karen Carnabucci, LCSW, TEP, is a psychotherapist and psychodramatist in private practice in Racine Wis.

War Dances

by Jill Webb
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Rugby team war dances, like all war dances, are about power. (Watch the New Zealand All Blacks and Tonga's incredible war dance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEHvsFim4Mk>) These masculine struts embody what I most celebrate and what most frustrates me about the culture of men.

The teams line up mid-field facing one another. On command from a captain, they yell and grunt a series of chants. In unison, they beat their chests, slap their thighs, stick out their tongues, and slowly advance toward each other. The tone is serious, proud, and angry. Even though I viewed it from my chair at home, I felt awed and intimidated by the ritual.

Part of me celebrates these ceremonies and their power to enhance bravery through brotherhood. Perhaps these rituals are what have enabled men, when our freedom depended on them, to storm beaches peppered with land mines. This chest thumping and male bonding starts young. I have seen a boy beg to be put back in the ball game even after breaking his ankle. I stood with the crowd that Friday night and cheered for that young man.

Female soldiers and athletes are no less brave or committed to their cause than their male colleagues. But we don't bond with grunts and barks and chest thumping. Yes, we high five and yell and dance, but nothing that I've seen or experienced captures the serious, primal, intense power that is a part of men's war dances.

Sometimes I think it's not their stations in life that men fear losing. Instead, it's the love of that kind of power, expressed to one another in grunts and chest thumps that so many protect and embrace.



Logo Contest

UUMeN is considering adopting a new logo. Here is our current logo, and a possible alternative. We are soliciting ideas as well. Please send your design to info@uumen.org or to our postal mail address: UUMeN, 5307 NW 118th Ave., Coral Springs, FL 33076. We will present the finalists during the General Assembly at the UUMeN booth and our annual business meeting.



Nuts and Bolts!

Tips on creating a men's group

A regular feature, answering questions and offering tips on creating a smooth-running men's group. Send your questions and your tips to info@uumen.org.

Should there a minimum age in our men's group?

We men are rightly concerned with providing boy-friendly religious education, and with offering rituals and rites of passage from boyhood to manhood—but it is also important to create adult-specific spaces and groups. The challenges (and joys) that we men face are simply different from those faced by boys. We can, and perhaps should, offer periodic events where men and boys mix, and it is appropriate to have regular meetings where only men are expected.

If there is a minimum, what should it be?

This is a question best answered by each congregation. Eighteen and Twenty-one would seem to be the obvious choices. If your group ever meets in a place that serves alcohol (which raises other issues, to be answered in a future "Nuts & Bolts" column), then the minimum age of membership should match the legal age to enter such an establishment. If your congregation has allowed youth membership, perhaps after completion of a "Coming of Age" program, your men's group could offer a similar "youth membership," with a minimum age matching that of the congregation's bylaws. These youth would not attend every meeting but could be invited to annual or quarterly events focusing on their age-specific experience.

Should we allow women in our men's group?

In a word, no. Nor should we men seek to attend a UU women's group. There is an active debate in Unitarian Universalism about the place of single-identity "caucuses" in our movement. While some find them exclusionary and anti-democratic, I am persuaded that they serve a useful purpose. People may feel more safe, and speak more freely, in a group that is "like" them. As long as the members of the group go out and engage with members from outside that group, such caucusing is appropriate. As long as men and women and transgendered people work together in church governance and worship and on social justice projects, it is actually good to have identity-based groups in which to discuss their individual experiences.

(It is not enough to be a human being... Continued from page 1) makes us blind to this need for inclusivity or the need to create an understanding of what is male, what is man, what is masculinity that is grounded in multi-cultural realities and speaks to our relationship to the world rather than our power and dominance over the world.

It has been said that we are a faith movement that focuses on life *here and now*, rather than life after death. The central theme of this “*here and now*” focus is our relationship with one another. It is a focus on a way of being that expresses itself in the realization of our seven principles or aspirations. How can we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every man, if our understanding of a man is limited to a particular cultural understanding that functions in ways that are oppressive to other men who have their being outside of these definitions?

I believe that this is the relevant question for men today, particularly for Unitarian Universalist men – when our male youth and young adults of color continue to have experiences at General Assemblies that diminish their inherent worth and dignity and imply that they do not even belong within the UU movement in which they have grown up, because of their gender and color of their skin.

We men are struggling to free ourselves from the confines of ideologies and judgments. We are working to challenge the worldviews that undermine our efforts to build the “Beloved Community” and to restore the “undivided human family.” Let us also struggle to create a faith community, equitable in terms of cultural realities, age, sexual orientation, ways of decision-making, expression of our faith and a deepening of our relationships with one another, in a multiracial multi-cultural antiracist, anti-oppressive diverse and inclusive context, regardless of whether you believe in a God, a Goddess or no God at all.

Needless to say, that as a male person of color, I too seek to find that community where I can belong – where I can be all of me and not confined by a Eurocentric definition of maleness, male and masculinity nor confined by a reactionary definition in response to the Eurocentric definitions—which are still created around the context of a Eurocentric understanding.

Unitarian Universalism as a movement holds that promise, but without the “*intentionality*” and “*mindfulness*” to broaden the men's revolution to be truly inclusive, then this promise that is being made to the brokenhearted, disenfranchised, and those who experience the brokenness in our faith and in our nation most deeply – those who hold onto this promissory note – will still be returned and still marked “insufficient funds.”

There is another way of understanding what I am saying. Adapting the words of Wendell Berry – ‘It may be when we no longer have a limited definition of manhood, and when we recognize that there is a need to create a new understanding and worldview, and when we no longer have a preconceived notion to hold onto, we will have begun our real journey – one that is “spiritual rather than cerebral.”

If, as is affirmed in our UU sources, our spiritual journey is grounded in the “direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life” and grounded in the “words and deeds of prophetic women, children and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love” then we may take our rightful place in the world as men without the need to oppress others or to accept the abuse of oppression in our own lives.

Finally, the words of Marianne Williamson:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” Amen.

UUMeN Sermon Contest \$500 Prize!

Sermon's on men's issues usually help congregations deepen their ministry! Anyone (lay or clergy, any gender) can submit an entry for the annual UUMeN sermon contest—and maybe win \$500. It **must be delivered in a UU congregation between April 1, 2006 and March 31, 2007**. The submitted text should be single-spaced, between 2,000 and 2,500 words, and available electronically. Mail two hard copies (with a cover letter but no identifying mentions in the sermon copies) to: UUMeN, 5307 NW 118th Ave., Coral Springs, FL 33076 or email sermon to: info@uumen.org. **Mail by the deadline of April 15, 2007**. Rotating men's groups (supervised by a UUMeN Steering Council member) conduct the judging process. The award winner will receive \$500 and recognition at the 2007 UUA General Assembly in Portland, Ore. (attendance is encouraged, but not required to win).

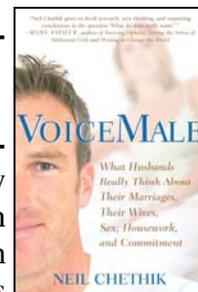
News and notes

- We accept articles, reviews and original poems relating to men's experiences. If you have something to share with your fellow readers, please submit your writing to our editor Chip Roush at jroush@uumen.org.
- Score! The Men's Group at the River Road Unitarian Church in Bethesda, Md., is celebrating its 20th year. A story about the group will appear in the Spring 2007 issue of *Interconnections* (Vol. X, Issue 2—mailed about March 15 and available at www.uua.org/interconnections.) Men of the group wrote a longer article—how the group formed, how it works, and what they get from it—which you can read on the UUMeN web site: www.uumen.org.
- Stop by our booth at the 2007 UUA General Assembly, in Portland, Ore.—for books and sermons about contemporary men's issues, boy-friendly religious education resources, and pointers for how to start or deepen a local men's group. See you there!



A Community of Men: A Guide to Men's Programming in UU Congregations free to new members (See membership form on back cover) or \$5.

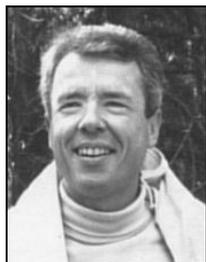
VoiceMale: What Husbands Really Think of Their Wives, Their Marriages, Sex, Housework and Commitment (Simon & Schuster). Written by former UUMeN president Neil Chethik, based on his research of 350 American husbands, this book challenges many of the commonly held beliefs about men and marriage. It also offers men advice based on the wisdom of the husbands themselves. \$23.95



Great
books
from
UUMen

FatherLoss: How Sons of All Ages Come to Terms with the Deaths of Their Dads, by Neil Chethik, focuses on the father-son relationship and comes with a study guide for men's groups. \$14

To order any of the above books, make check to Neil Chethik, and send to UUMeN/Books, PO Box 8071, Lexington, KY. 40533. Proceeds will be donated to UUMeN. There is no shipping or handling charge



SAVE THE MALES: Changing Men Changing the World, also by Tom Owen-Towle, boldly engages with stimulating topics such as men choosing to be brothers...men as religious beings...joining ethics and power...saying "yes" to aggression and "no" to violence; graying gracefully as elders. \$14.95 plus \$2 for shipping/handling—order directly from Tom Owen-Towle, 3303 Second Ave., San Diego, CA 92103 (uutom@cox.net).

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Please check each category above that applies to your tax-deductible financial contribution to UUMeN and complete the information requested at right.

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- Check if you would rather have *MaleCall* sent by email, when available...

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