

MEADVILLE LOMBARD

theological school

NEWS

June 17, 2005

Meadville Lombard and Starr King Explore Collaboration

On June 12, Lee Barker, president of Meadville Lombard Theological School and Rebecca Parker, president of the Starr King School for the Ministry, issued the following release regarding discussions about the collaboration between the two schools. The text of that release is below.

In order to keep all of our partners and stakeholders informed, we issue this shared reflection regarding the ongoing conversations between Starr King School for the Ministry and Meadville Lombard Theological School:

On June 8, we convened an initial meeting with our consultant Dr. Robert Cooley, president emeritus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Dr. Cooley has participated in, studied, and/or observed numerous collaborations between institutions of higher education. He is conversant with the full variety of ways that theological schools can collaborate to strengthen theological education.

It was agreed at this meeting that the strengths of our two schools warrant a continued conversation. Within the next two weeks, we will meet with the chairs of our Boards of Trustees, Donna Dutton for Meadville Lombard and Daniel Kanter for Starr King, and the president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Bill Sinkford. At that time we will develop a plan to conduct a structured study of the various options.

Although it is too early to speculate where this conversation may lead, it is expected that a preliminary report will be issued to each of the school's Trustees in October 2005. We say this knowing that the implementation of any plan, no matter how modest, would likely take five to seven years to fully implement.

By the conclusion of our meeting, we were able to make a number of affirmations beyond the immediate issue of collaboration. First, these conversations can take place only because each school is strong and visionary. Second, the ongoing support of our two schools will become more meaningful for our donors because a gift to either school is a gift to the future of Unitarian Universalist theological education. And third, these conversations are motivated by an intention to provide our students with the finest preparation within the tradition of our cherished Unitarian Universalism.

Finally, let us say how deeply moved we are by all of you who see new learning possibilities for Unitarian Universalism. We are heartened and grateful. Thank you.

Sincerely,

LeeBarker
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