

Bill Credo Statement

When I was growing up, the clergy taught us about the importance of miracle, mystery and authority as the pillars of faith. Faith required that I accept the miracle of the resurrection, embrace the mystery of the trinity and accept the authority of the church. Freedom was what the devil offered Dr. Faustus in return for his soul.

As an adult I tabled any final decision, embracing freedom during the week while paying lip service to my faith on Sundays. Now that I have arrived at that age the Beatles sang about, sixty-four, the opportunity for decision is rapidly closing. Fortunately, I have gained a little wisdom with age, and rejected the simple formula for eternal life. I believe faith and freedom are compatible and that miracle, mystery, authority and freedom can stand together and form a viable way to live.

First, I believe in miracle.

If you stand out on a clear but dark winter's night on the deck of my Adirondack home, you can observe the miracle of the universe, much as the first human did thousands of years ago. The miracle of the universe was the foundation of faith. The first explanations told of powerful gods, who created all that we see and to whom we owed homage. Everything has changed but nothing is finished. Astronomers have explained the stars and

planets, biologists have identified millions of life forms and demonstrated their interdependence and physicists tell us a Big Bang started it all. Instead of diminishing my faith in miracle, their explanations have fortified me with wonder and awe.

Scientists offer explanations of the universe as it is, but only artists can express the miracle of our place within it. The work of poets, writers, and musicians are the miracles that touch me today.

I have had the opportunity to consider what my purpose is on earth and how it all ends? The ancients believed in an immutable fate dictated by the gods. Christianity labels mankind as evil, but offers redemption and grace. As a UU I believe humans are neither inherently good nor evil. We perform abominable actions and enormous love facing the same experience. The mystery I believe in is the irrational forces locked in our DNA: love, power, creation and destruction. How do we harness these forces to live a full and meaningful life? We try through personal reflection, a supportive community and learning from those who came before us. Along the way we write our stories as a way of explaining our lives to others and ourselves. This is the mystery I believe in.

Whenever I have difficulty performing some simple task on my computer, I run to the Apple Store where some twenty-something sets me on the right path. In matters of faith, I also look for authority, but as a

Unitarian, I am not limited to a single book or a particular liturgy. I believe in the authority of prophets, both past and present. A speech by Martin Luther King Jr., a sermon by Forrest Church or even the Psalms of David can be the authority I seek. I listen to prophets not because they tell me what I want to hear, but what I should hear. When Dorothy Day, Daniel Berrigan and even Pete Seeger talked about peace, I called them dreamers, and shook my head. When members of our church call upon me to take a stand on social justice, I want to become invisible. But the hound of heaven in unceasing and these voices of authority drive me from my complacency.

Freedom is the catalyst that adds meaning to miracle, mystery and authority. It is only in choosing a way of life that it has any meaning. I have not forfeited my freedom by choosing, but rather committed myself to living a wide-awake life. I do not take the miracle of the universe for granted but choose to become a good steward. I do not profess a creed with answers, but embrace the mystery of life and commit myself to a search for meaning. I do not worship authority, but I seek it in order to test my faith in action.

When we die we leave a legacy on earth, to our children, our friends and that small part of the world where we lived and worked. If there is a reckoning, a judgment of some kind, it will be a funeral that no one attends and legacy no one recalls. Our mission in life is to build the largest stone

we can and drop it in the pool of creation, and our reward after death will be the waves that stone radiates and the people they touch.

