

UCC and Unitarians elect minority presidents: Peter Morales, Geoffrey Black

News in the [July 28, 2009](#) issue

The Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ both selected minority presidents at their national meetings in June.

The Boston-based UUA elected its first Latino president, Peter Morales; the Cleveland-based UCC elected an African-American president, Geoffrey Black, as its next general minister and president.

Both of the liberal denominations have overwhelmingly white constituencies. The UCC estimates that 9 percent of its membership is made up of people from minority racial and ethnic groups. The UUA said roughly 7.2 percent of its membership identifies as people of color.

Each of the new presidents will be the second minority minister to helm his denomination.

William Sinkford, an African American, preceded Morales in the UUA's top post. Black is the second African-American leader of the UCC. The first, Joseph H. Evans, served only a partial term after the death of another president.

So far neither church body has had a female president, but a woman was runner-up in the election at the UUA General Assembly in Salt Lake City. Morales, of Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colorado, defeated Laurel Hallman by a vote of 2,061 to 1,481.

At the biennial UCC General Synod in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Black, a leader in the UCC's New York Conference, was the only presidential nominee.

Black, who succeeds John Thomas as chief executive, "has a depth of pastoral skills and understanding" to assist him in working with the broad range of theological perspectives among members of the United Church of Christ, according to J. Bennett

Guess, a UCC spokesperson. -*Religion News Service*