

# Financial Advisor's Report to the UUA Board of Trustees



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April 11, 2014

# Topics

- Activities
- Measuring and messaging growth



The opening  
history story



# Ethelred Brown

## 1875-1956

Minister, Harlem Unitarian  
Church 1920-1956

# Ethelred Brown



- 7<sup>th</sup> black man to attend Meadville
- Ordained in 1912
- Unitarian missionary to Jamaica (his native land) starting in 1912 (and initially supported by the AUA)
- Rev. Hilary Barnes, who had been sent to Jamaica by the AUA to assess Brown's progress, wrote:



*"The Rev. E.E. Brown is pronouncedly black, which is somewhat of a handicap to him in his work, since those of his race who are fortunate enough to approach absolute whiteness are too proud to 'sit under' any minister save a 'a white gentlemen.'"*

-Rev. Hilary Barnes



# Ethelred Brown

- Established Harlem Unitarian Church in 1920 without AUA support; church closed upon his death
- Always had a second job, including six years as an elevator operator
- Socialist candidate for Congress in 1928

At the 25th  
anniversary  
of ordination

# Ethelred Brown



"One milestone reached. Twenty-five years ago! What dreams then! What disappointment since! And yet, for not one moment have I regretted the step I took in 1907, which ended in the ordination we today celebrate."

At the 25th  
anniversary  
of ordination

## Ethelred Brown



"Twenty five years as a Unitarian minister!  
As you celebrate this anniversary with me, I  
may with slight changes say in the memorable  
words of Abraham Lincoln – 'I have not won  
but I tried to be true. I have not succeeded but  
I have lived up to the light which I have, and I  
have plucked a thistle here and there and  
planted a flower or two where I believed a  
flower would grow.'"

At the 25th  
anniversary  
of ordination

# Ethelred Brown



"I believe in man. At home [Jamaica] this would be enough. Here in America I must add – I believe in the Negro. I believe that he himself will...destroy the insane prejudice which now prevails to his hurt, and I believe that ultimately...he will leave the windows of his soul open to the winds of heaven, which are the winds of truth. In spite of all I see and hear...I today have faith."

# Activities

- Recruitment for business committees
- Enterprise risk assessment
- Financial policies review
- Coaching on FY2015 budget narrative
- Paper on "Ecology and Economics of Theological Schools" (copy on request)

# Growth or Not

Will we be  
distracted  
by shiny  
things?

- *UU World* article (3-24-2014)
- Main headline: "Emerging, alternative groups at UUA's growing edge"
- Sub-headline: "Total membership falls 1.2%; UUA counts 51 emerging groups"
- Article talks more about emerging groups than membership
- Article gives partial explanations for membership changes



# Growth or Not

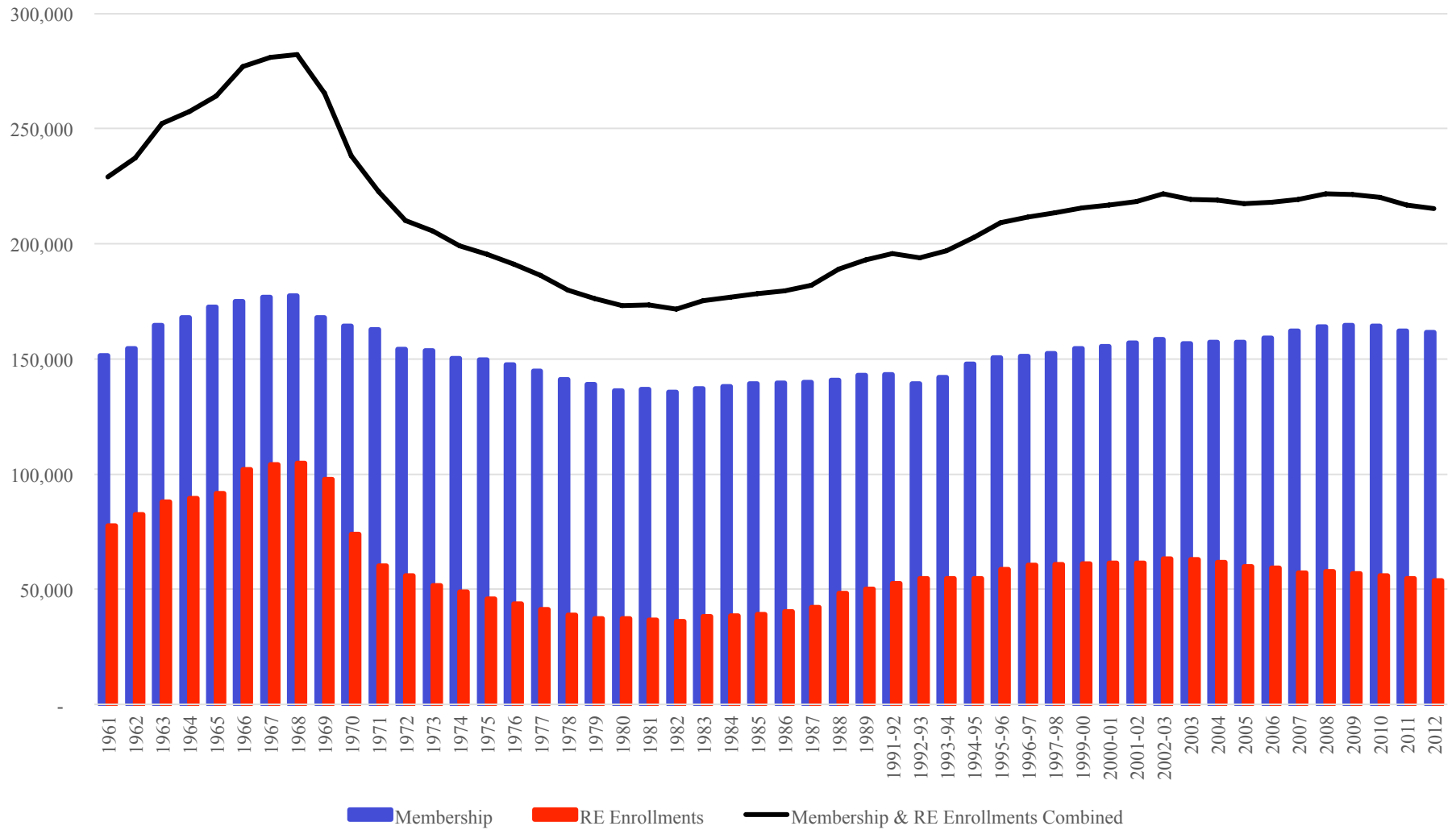
- Membership has been declining for five years
- RE enrollments have been declining for seven years
- But the total numbers, at least for membership, mask large swaths of growth and hope **in our congregations**

# Growth or Not

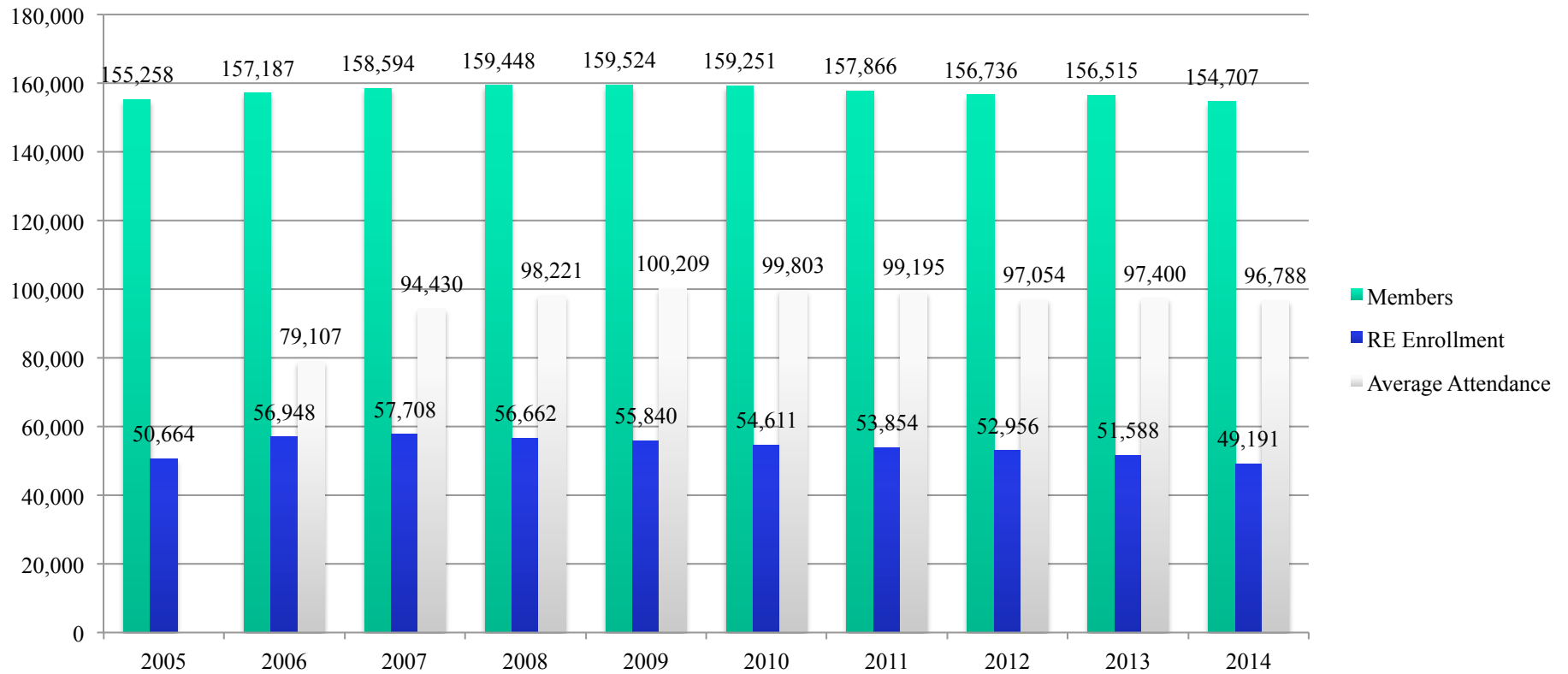
We need to report so that we convey

- A willingness to face facts
- A sense of **urgency**
- A nuanced understanding of growth trends  
(there good news and bad news)

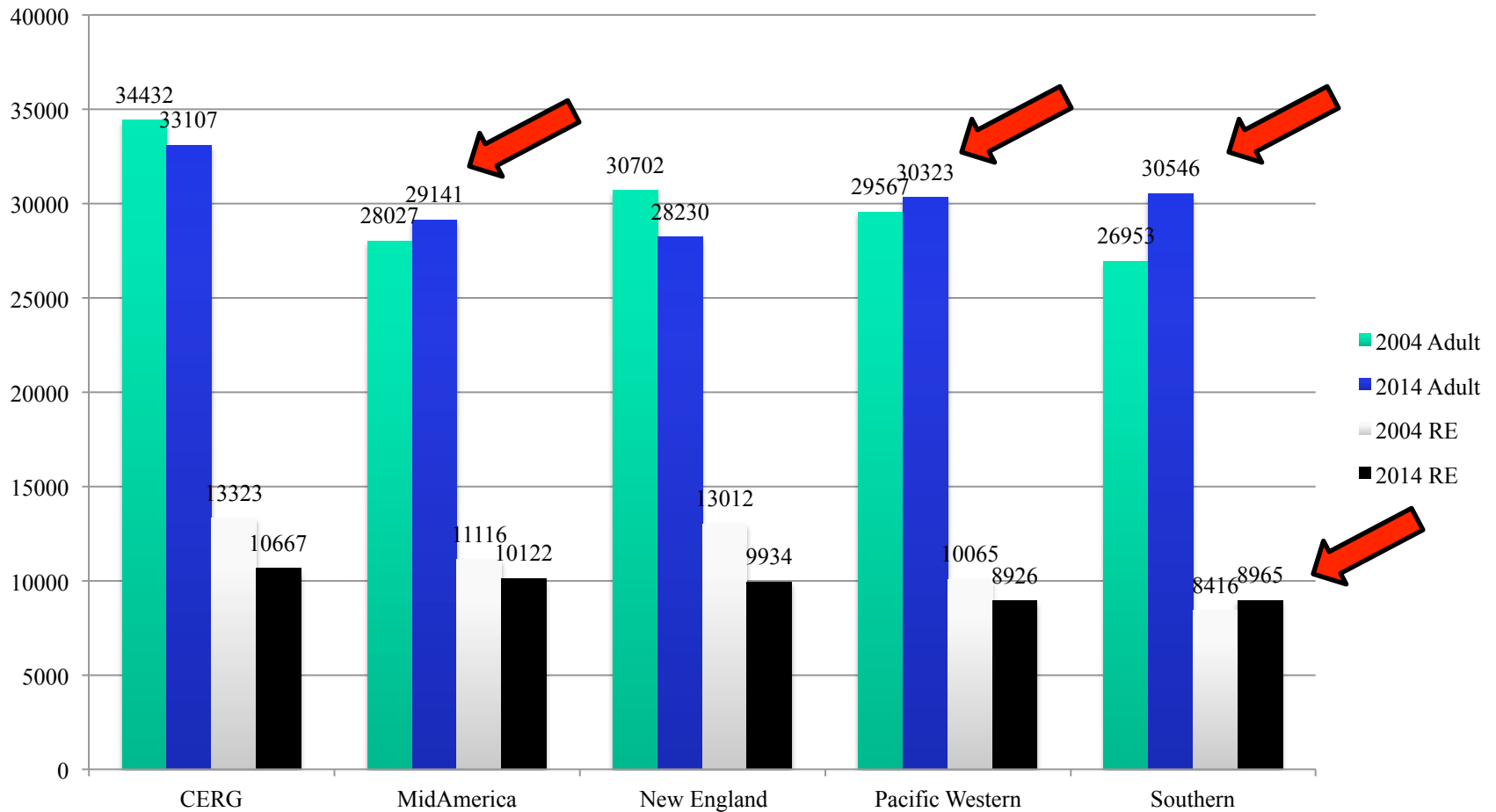
## Membership & RE Since 1961



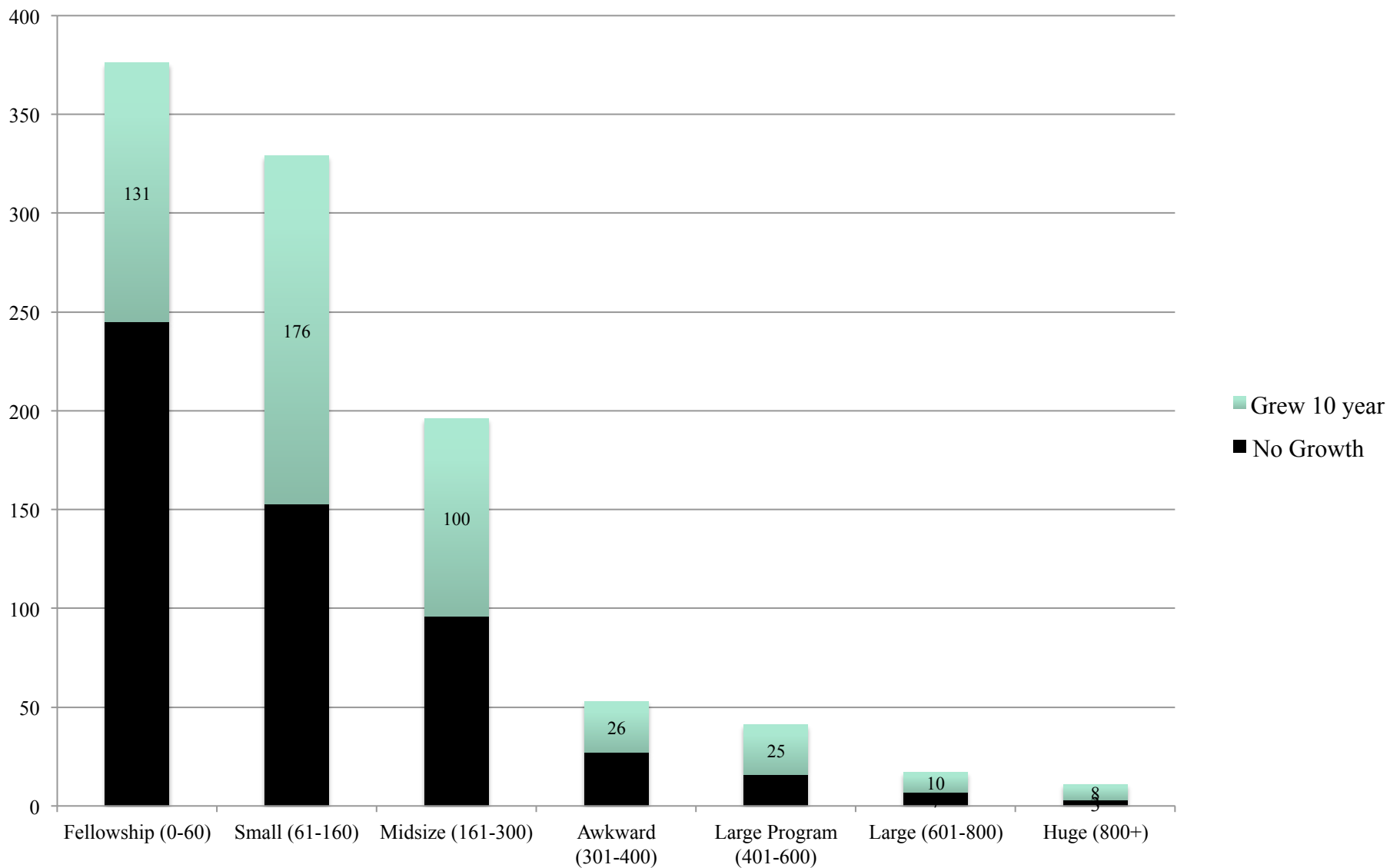
## UUA in the USA Total: Adult Members, RE Enrollment, Average Sunday Attendance



## 10 Year Comparison by Region Adult Membership & RE Enrollment



# Congregational Growth by Adult Membership by Size Catagory -- 10 years

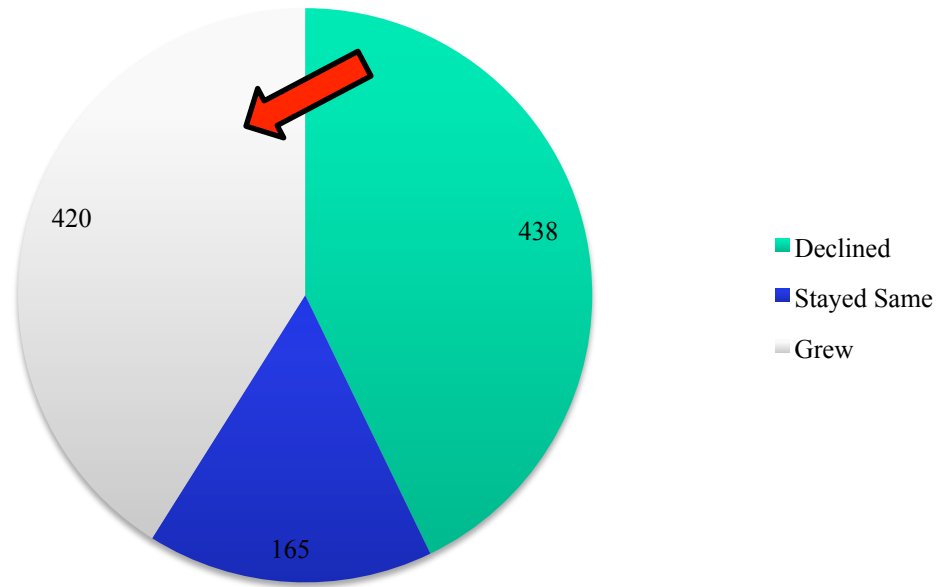


# Top 25 Growers – 10 Years



Congregation	City	State	# added	%	Members
All Souls Unitarian Church	Tulsa	OK	727	64.8%	1,849
All Souls Church Unitarian	Washington	DC	474	93.3%	982
First Unitarian Church	Rochester	NY	316	42.9%	1,053
Fox Valley UU Fellowship Inc.	Appleton	WI	296	77.5%	678
White Bear UU Church	Mahtomedi	MN	287	62.0%	750
Unity Temple UU Congregation	Oak Park	IL	221	58.8%	597
First Unitarian Church	Des Moines	IA	216	74.0%	508
UU Congregation of Fairfax	Oakton	VA	215	40.2%	750
Jefferson Unitarian Church	Golden	CO	199	35.3%	762
First Universalist Church	Minneapolis	MN	194	22.8%	1,046
UU Church of Asheville	Asheville	NC	192	50.8%	570
First Unitarian Church	Albuquerque	NM	186	30.5%	796
University Unitarian Church	Seattle	WA	166	21.3%	945
First Unitarian Society	Milwaukee	WI	160	25.0%	800
UU Church of Bloomington Inc.	Bloomington	IN	140	39.8%	492
Westside UU Congregation	Seattle	WA	133	133.0%	233
First Unitarian Church	Oklahoma City	OK	129	35.6%	491
UU Church West	Brookfield	WI	126	37.1%	466
UU Congregation of Phoenix	Paradise Valley	AZ	126	40.8%	435
Quimper UU Fellowship	Port Townsend	WA	124	58.2%	337
Westside UU Church	Fort Worth	TX	123	129.5%	218
UU Church	Charlotte	NC	118	21.5%	668
First Unitarian Society	Madison	WI	116	8.8%	1,431
UU Congregation	Columbia	MD	116	36.0%	438
UU Area Church at First Parish	Sherborn	MA	113	73.4%	267

## UUA in the USA Adult Membership



# Growth Is Happening

- In congregations (close to half of them)
- In three of five regions
- We need to speak of congregations
- We need to address the decline in RE enrollments
- We need to be blunt about the facts of decline and nuanced about the facts of growth

## Statement of Purpose, Harlem Unitarian Church



"This church is an institution of religion dedicated to the service of humanity. Seeking the truth in freedom, it strives to apply it in love for the cultivation of character, the fostering of fellowship in work and worship, and the establishment of a righteous social order which shall bring abundance of life to man. Knowing not sect, class, nation or race it welcomes each to the service of all."

