

Unitarian Universalist International Engagement:

*An Historical Sketch
in Three Parts:
Part III: Looking
Ahead*

President Samuel A. Eliot's reflections on international engagement from the AUA 1908-9 Annual Report:

“I am confident that one of the best ways to have a large and growing life at home is to have a **vision of the great possibilities of service abroad**, and that the best way to have a beneficent service abroad is for us to have a **rich, deep life at home.**”





Part III – Looking Ahead: A New Vision

In Part I of this presentation we saw the early efforts of Unitarians and Universalists to be effectively internationally engaged.

In Part II we considered key markers for international engagement during the last 50 years, particularly the establishment of supporting organizations.

In Part III we'll examine a New Vision, and tools that the International Resources Office has developed to assist congregations in their international engagement.



Part III – Looking Ahead: A New Vision

Recognizing the highly decentralized nature of UU international engagement, the multiple independent organizations that provide leadership and resources, and embracing an effective UUA role, the UUA Board of Trustees developed a guiding Vision statement:



Part III – Looking Ahead:
A New Vision
**UUA Board International
Vision**

1. To Model friendship and right relations, economic fairness and responsible stewardship of resources among partners



Part III – Looking Ahead:
A New Vision
**UUA Board International
Vision**

2. Promote human rights, religious freedom, international peace and justice; and



Part III – Looking Ahead:
A New Vision
**UUA Board International
Vision**

3. Increase the visibility of Unitarian Universalism, Unitarianism, and Universalism as an active, positive religious presence in the world.



Part III – Looking Ahead: A New Vision

Emerging from the Vision Process
are three focuses for the UUA's new
International Resources Office:



Part III – Looking Ahead

1. Coordinating with the multitude of U/U organizations involved in international ministry.



Part III – Looking Ahead

2. Maintaining and developing linkages with historic and new Unitarian Universalist judicatories around the world based upon principles of right relationship.



Part III – Looking Ahead

3. Providing resources to congregations for international engagement.



Focusing on International Resources for Congregations

1. Improving Communication and Collaboration
2. Fostering Best Practices
3. Profiling Effective Congregational Engagement
4. Offering congregational planning tools and ongoing support



Faith Without Borders



The *Faith Without Borders* Program invites congregations to create, maintain and expand their international ministries holistically. As a framework designed to assist congregations in this effort, the Program identifies opportunities for engagement within 7 program areas.



Faith Without Borders



- **The Program Areas:**
 - *Spiritual Support*
 - *Education*
 - *Justice-making and Advocacy*
 - *Partnership*
 - *Faithful Stewardship*
 - *Pilgrimage and Witness*
 - *Associational Leadership*

Area 1: Spiritual Support





Area 1: Spiritual Support



- Congregations provide spiritual support by including people around the world in their spiritual practices. During worship, in meditation, through prayer, singing, preaching, and in many other ways UU congregations can extend themselves, spiritually, to brothers and sisters around the world.
- For Example, congregations can choose to:
 - Include a global chalice lighting during worship services.
 - Sing hymns with international themes, lyrics or tunes.
 - Celebrate international engagement accomplishments during worship.
 - And in many other ways...

Area 1: Spiritual Support



- Every year, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Black Hawk County (Cedar Falls, Iowa) dedicates at least one Sunday to spiritual support as it shares blessings and stories from “our cousins in faith from around the world.”

Area 2: Education



Area 2: Education



- Learning about the lives and experiences of people around the world, developing an understanding of complex global issues and studying methods of effective international engagement are a few of the ways that congregations can provide educational opportunities for international engagement.
- For example, congregations can choose to:
 - Make use of multi-generational curricula designed by ICUU, UUPCC and other international U/U organizations.
 - Include selections from the "Faith without Borders" bibliography in book group/covenant group programming.
 - Annually host a speaker/workshop from a UU international organization.
 - And in many other ways...

Area 2: Education



- Over the summer, the UU Community Church of Santa Monica, CA offers an RE Program entitled "UU World Travelers," in which members of the congregation with experience in or an affinity for a particular culture organize relevant music, food, games, dances, crafts, languages, costumes, art, etc.



Area 3: Justice-Making & Advocacy



Area 3: Justice-Making & Advocacy

- Congregations identify international injustices and develop responses or participate in secular/interfaith coalitions to carry out an already developed action plan.
- For example, congregations can choose to:
 - Intentionally include an international focus in annual social justice planning.
 - Partner with the UU-UNO or UUSC.
 - Organize an annual lobby day on a specific international advocacy issue.
 - And in many other ways...



Area 3: Justice-Making & Advocacy



Over the past 10 years, the UU Congregation of Phoenix, AZ has provided sponsorship for school-aged girls and assisted in promoting cottage industries through [Circulo de Amigas](#), a Nicaraguan organization founded by a UU from California. The congregation has helped the organization purchase stoves and water barrels and has provided for the completion of a plumbing project.



Area 4: Partnership

Area 4: Partnership



- Congregations establish church-to-church partnerships with international congregations modeled after the methodology of the UU Partner Church Council.
- For example, congregations can choose to :
 - Study the meaning/purpose of international partnership.
 - Establish an international partnership through the UUPCC.
 - Follow the UUPCC's 'best practice' guidelines by remembering your partner church during worship, promoting clear and frequent communication, organizing regular visits, etc.
 - And in many other ways...

Area 4: Partnership



First Church UU (Leominster, MA) has partnered with the Unitarian parish in Rugonfalva, Transylvania to “share in a cultural exchange and to better understand and strengthen each other’s faith.”

Area 5: Faithful Stewardship





Area 5: Faithful Stewardship

- Congregations raise and provide financial assistance to international organizations, partnerships, programs, etc.
- For example, congregation's can choose to:
 - Support one or more internationally-oriented UU organization (i.e. UUSC, UU-UNO, UUPCC, etc).
 - Provide ongoing financial support to an international interfaith organization like *IARF* or *Religions for Peace*.
 - And in many other ways...

Area 5: Faithful Stewardship



- The approx. 60 member Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson, MA has provided \$8,500 in grant money to the local Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) project committee, alongside donating meeting space and providing volunteers for construction. 10% of all donations to HFHI are sent overseas to international Habitat affiliates. The “purchasing power” of these contributions often exceeds the other 90% used locally in the United States.

Area 6: Pilgrimage & Witness





Area 6: Pilgrimage & Witness

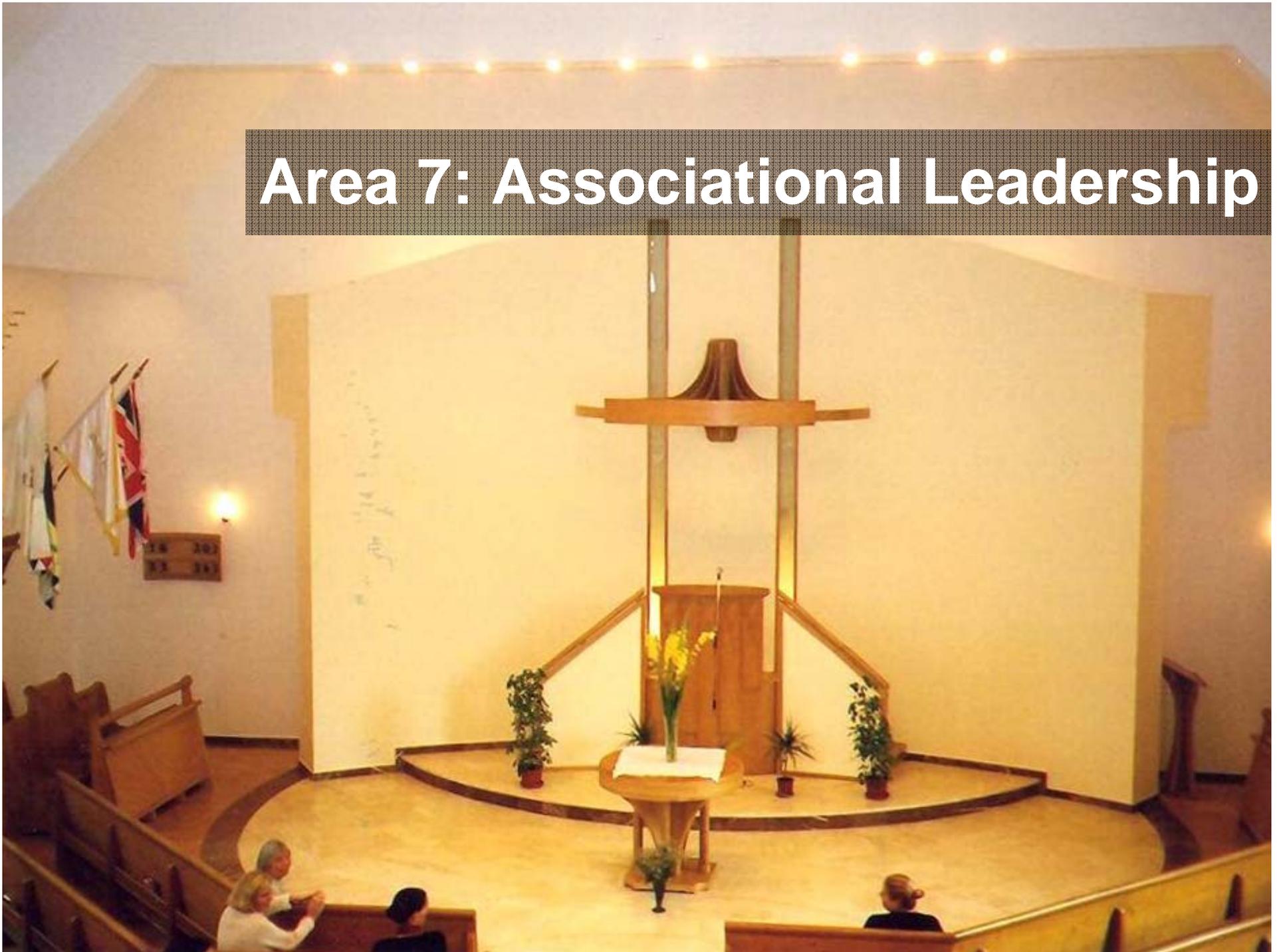
- Congregations provide opportunities for sacred travel to a partner church, organization or justice project in another part of the world.
- For example, congregations can choose to:
 - Plan a biennial or annual pilgrimage to a sacred place.
 - Visit a justice project in another country to study its vision, goals and methods.
 - Support a pilgrimage or witness trip for the members of your Youth Group.
 - And in many other ways...

Area 6: Pilgrimage & Witness



- After nine youth and adults from First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY visited the border region of Texas and Tamaulipas, Mexico, as part of a border witness delegation of the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State, the group formed “Borders and Boundaries” to facilitate a community-centered building project with an emphasis on empowerment within the colonia.

Area 7: Associational Leadership





Area 7: Associational Leadership

- Congregations develop, support and sustain relationships with U/U institutions and other congregations committed to international engagement.
- For example, congregations choose to:
 - Visit other congregations or gatherings and share their international engagement experiences.
 - Mentor other congregations.
 - Share in and serve as a voice for the international responsibility of the UUA.
 - And in many other ways...



Area 7: Associational Leadership



Unitarian Universalist women are organizing "The International Convocation of UU Women" to be held in late February, 2009, in Houston, TX.

The advisory committee consists of Maria Sinkford (Honorary Chair), Barbara Beach (Chair), Cathy Cordes, Rev. Dr. Dorothy Emerson, Elissa Goss, Gay Ann Gustafson, Rev. Olivia Holmes, Rev. Carol Huston, Arlene Johnson, Rev. Jill McAllister, Rosemary Matson, Prof. Christine Nielsen, Rev. Shirley Ranck, Rev. Rebecca Quimada Sienes, Rev. Addae L. Watson, Amy Youngblood, Rev. Dr. Helen Zidowecki, Mary Overton and Laura Nagel.

This event will gather women from around the world to learn about grassroots organizing for women's rights and social justice through education, healthcare and safety, leadership development, and economic empowerment in the context of sustainable environments.



Faith Without Borders

Congregations participating in the *Faith Without Borders* program will receive practical assistance and consultation in all stages of their international engagement from the International Resources Office (IRO).

Seasonal resources (e.g. Flower Communion) will also be provided on an ongoing basis.



Faith Without Borders

Similarly, the IRO will celebrate the international engagement of *Faith Without Borders* congregations with denominational recognition.

For example, the IRO is in the process of compiling an online archive of congregational profiles to showcase churches that have demonstrated sincere commitment to international engagement.

For More Information please visit the [International Resources Office on the web](#)



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS
Representing over 1,000 liberal religious congregations

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Faith Without Borders

About Faith Without Borders

The Faith Without Borders program is designed to assist congregations in creating and sustaining effective ministries of international engagement. The International Resources Office hopes that this program will provide a useful framework for all congregations:

- those that are already deeply engaged in international ministries,
- those who are only beginning to develop a vision of international ministry, and
- those anywhere else on the spectrum of engagement.

Creating and Sustaining

The Faith Without Borders Program invites congregations to create, maintain and expand their international ministries holistically. Opportunities for engagement in 7 program areas are described and

Related Content

- Faith Without Borders Brochure (PDF, 2 pages)
- Faith Without Borders Booklet (PDF, 17 pages)
- Flower Communion Resource (PDF, 7 pages)
- International Resources Homepage

LEADERS

- › Ministers
- › Youth
- › Young Adults
- › Justice & Diversity
- › Announcements
- › Data Services
- › Manage Subscriptions
- › UUA Health Plan
- › Leaders' Library
 - › Faith Without Borders

Please keep in mind the thoughts of AUA President Samuel A. Eliot from the AUA 1908-9 Annual Report:

“I am confident that one of the best ways to have a large and growing life at home is to have a **vision of the great possibilities of service abroad**, and that the best way to have a beneficent service abroad is for us to have a **rich, deep life at home.**”





Thank You

Thank you for your time! For additional information about the history of U/U international engagement, please contact the International Resources Office at the UUA.



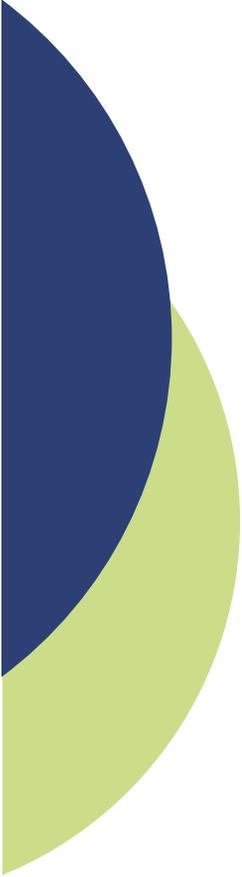
You've reached the end of
Part III

You might also enjoy

Part I: The First 125 Years

And

Part II: The Next 50 Years



Unitarian Universalist International Engagement:

*History and Vision
in Three Parts:
Part III – Looking Ahead
The End*