

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees
Subject: President's Report for April 2014 Board Meeting
From: Peter Morales
Date: March 26, 2014

Introduction

This report focuses on developments and trends of long term importance. It makes no attempt to give a comprehensive overview of activities of the staff, nor even of significant events over the last quarter. Nor does it attempt to repeat information covered in monitoring reports.



Membership, RE and expenditures in congregations

- Adult membership declined 1.2 percent during the last year (156,515 to 154,707). Ten years ago our membership was 153,585.
- Children's enrollment declined 4.6 percent (51,588 to 49,191). Ten years ago the enrollment was 56,897. This represents a decline of 13.4 percent over the decade.
- Average weekly attendance declined from 97,400 to 96,788 (0.6 percent). This number was not collected ten years ago.
- Congregational expenditures increased from \$220.2 million to \$223.0 million (1.3 percent).
- The number of non-members served increased from 172,106 to 184,169 (7.0 percent). These numbers were not collected ten years ago.

More than half of the decline in adult membership during the last year came in three large congregations and represents more of a paring of membership than real decline.

I find these numbers frustrating given my conviction that we have enormous potential. Yet, in comparison to the rapid decline in denominations like the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, Episcopalians and Lutherans our numbers look very good.

This underscores the importance of excellence, outreach and innovation in our ministry.



Entrepreneurial ministry training

The planning for a continuing education program for ministers in entrepreneurial leadership and innovation is accelerating. I believe that this has the potential to have important long term impact on our movement. Below are some highlights:

- The core planning team includes:
 - Scotty McLennan, Dean of Religious Life, Stanford University
 - Don Southworth, UUMA Executive Director
 - Peter Morales, UUA President
 - Brock Leach, UUSC
 - Cheryl Walker, Panel on Theological Education
 - Taquienna Boston, Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness
 - Sarah Lammert, Director of Ministry and Faith Development
- We envision a program of four three-day meetings, occurring every six months. The tentative sites are: California, Chicago, Boston and North Carolina.
- Instructors will include business school faculty.
- We hope to have a total of 40 ministers—30 UU's and 10 from the UCC, Reform Judaism and perhaps other liberal faiths.

Communications and outreach

As part of our focus on outreach, we are creating a new position (though not adding to total staffing) called director of outreach. This position will head our efforts in online communications, a redesign of the uua.org website, and align our communications with our branding framework.

This is a result of the work we have done over the past several years in reviewing our communications. We expect to have this position in place at the start of the new fiscal year. We will see important changes in our online presence next year.

Diversity in ministry

This year's "Finding Our Way Home" gathering of religious professionals of color had nearly 80 participants. I recall more than a decade ago when the first gatherings had just over a dozen.

Just as significantly, we are seeing an increase in the number of ministers of color in called positions, some of them in very prominent pulpits. Among these are Bill Sinkford (Portland, Oregon), Abhi Janamanchi (Cedar Lane, Bethesda, Maryland), and Jonipher Kwong (Honolulu, Hawaii). Others include Cheryl Walker, Wendy Pantoja, John Crestwell, Lilia Cuervo, Mitra Rahnema, Lauren Smith and Hope Johnson. Perhaps most significant, a dozen or so of the attendees were there for the first time. It is also noteworthy that ministers of color in search last year were more likely than others to be successful.

Clearly, our situation is dramatically different than it was a decade ago. While we still have much to do, the task is now different. Our task once was to support efforts to have congregations hire or call a minister of color. We did this in part through subsidizing associate ministry positions. Our challenge now is to nurture and support ministers, religious educators and musicians of color. Programs such as Beyond Categorical Thinking need to be reimagined.

When this trend is seen in context of the growing interest in multicultural growth in congregations, as evidenced by the large and enthusiastic participation in the last two Mosaic Makers conferences, we see a exciting blossoming of what I have called “crossing borders” of race, class and culture. While we still have far to go, we also have much to celebrate.

