

Memorandum

To: UUA Board of Trustees
Subject: President's Report
From: Peter Morales
Date: October 8, 2014

This written report is a summary of topics I will discuss with the Board. In this report I will highlight three areas with long term implications—areas that do not lend themselves to the retrospective nature of monitoring reports.

Entrepreneurial Ministry Program

This program, developed as a collaboration between the UU Ministers Association and the UUA, is on schedule to begin in January, 2015. We are in the process of finalizing admissions. The majority of the participants will be ordained UU clergy, with the addition of a few other UU leaders and also clergy from the United Church of Christ and two rabbis from the Union for Reform Judaism. One pleasant surprise so far is that the majority of UU participants will be women.

This training program will go for two years and include four intensive weekend sessions. The first session will be in California and will be led by a faculty member from Stanford University. Subsequent sessions are planned for Chicago, North Carolina and Boston.

I believe that this program has the potential for being one of the most important initiatives during this administration. My hunch and hope is that the true benefits of this program will not be felt for more than a decade and will result in large part from the relationships that are formed.

Summit on the economic sustainability of ministries

The economic challenges facing our ordained clergy and other religious professionals has been a source of concern for some time. Our Ministry and Faith Development staff group, with the financial support of the Office of Church Staff Finances, will hold a “summit” to explore the challenges and possible new courses of action.

This effort is an outgrowth of previous work that began with the Strategic Review of Professional Ministries report of 2010. The meeting will bring together a wide range of stakeholders and experts.



Multi-faith outreach

One of the broad cultural trends in the area of religious identification and attitudes is the decline of the power of traditional religious “brands.” A generation ago we saw that denominational distinctions among mainline Protestants (Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.) were becoming less important. Now we see a growing frustration, especially among educated young adults, with the divisions among broad traditions like Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Much work is being done to move beyond mere tolerance to a deep appreciation and acceptance of difference. The work of 2012 Ware Lecturer Eboo Patel is an excellent example.

I believe that there is an opportunity to move toward a spirituality that is inherently interfaith. I believe it is occurring all around us. I am convinced that Unitarian Universalists, with our long tradition of accepting (at least in theory) the gifts of many religious groups, are in a unique position to lead this growing trend.

I have begun very preliminary conversations with the presidents of the United Church of Christ and the Union for Reform Judaism. Both are interested in exploring possibilities for collaboration. I envision something quite different from respectful exchange across religious boundaries. I imagine a multi-faith effort that would open spiritual community to those who have grown skeptical and alienated.

I hope to convene a small group of leaders from a variety of faiths to explore this further. I would like this meeting to happen in the first half of 2015.

