UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FROM THE

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION

SURVEY (ARIS) AND

THE FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY (FACT)

SURVEYS

This information was compiled by the Unitarian Universalist Association. For other statistical information about Unitarian Universalism, please visit http://www.uua.org/directory/data/demographics/index.shtml. To contact that Unitarian Universalist Association, call (617) 742-2100 or email info@uua.org.
ARIS AND FACT

ARIS:

- American Religious Identification Surveys
- Random-digit-dialed telephone interviews
- Open ended questions
- 2008 Study: February-November, 54,461 people
- 2001 Study: 50,281 people
- 1990 Study: 113,713 people
- Trinity College, Hartford, CT; same team all studies
ARIS AND FACT

- Faith Communities Today
  - Research by group of interfaith partners with Hartford Institute of Religious Research
  - Survey of congregations through participant groups—of their own faith groups, and then compared

- Both ARIS and FACT have been augmented by study of UU only responses

- ARIS with individuals; FACT with congregations
Those identifying as UUs (estimates):

- 1990: 463,000
- 2008: 586,000
- 27% increase

Similar to increase in US population of 30%

UUs over-represented in Northeast: in 1990 about 1 in 4

2008: increase in West and South

Percentage US Population 1990 .26%

Percentage US Population 2008 .25%
## ARIS: Population Size and Geography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990 UUA</th>
<th>1990 % UUA</th>
<th>1990 USA</th>
<th>2008 UUA</th>
<th>2008 % UUA</th>
<th>2008 USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>463,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>175,440,000</td>
<td>586,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>228,182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>121,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>111,000</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>106,000</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>139,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>138,000</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>236,000</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ARIS: Gender

- Those identifying as UUs:
  - More women than men
  - Gap narrowed from 1990 to 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990 UUA</th>
<th>1990 USA</th>
<th>2008 UUA</th>
<th>2008 USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% MALE</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% FEMALE</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARIS: Age

- Median age of US Adults
  - 1990: 40
  - 2008: 44

- Median age of UU Adults
  - 1990: 44
  - 2008: 52

- UU congregations “aging” faster

- Those over 55 were about one-third in 1990, near half in 2008
ARIS: Age Distribution

- **USA 2008**
  - 18-29: 21
  - 30-54: 47
  - 55+: 30
  - 55+: 2

- **USA 1990**
  - 18-29: 26
  - 30-54: 44
  - 55+: 28
  - 55+: 2

- **UUA 2008**
  - 18-29: 11
  - 30-54: 42
  - 55+: 47
  - 55+: 0

- **UUA 1990**
  - 18-29: 13
  - 30-54: 51
  - 55+: 32
  - 55+: 4
ARIS: Marital Status

- UUs more unique in 1990 than 2008
  - Had nearly twice proportion of divorced in 1990
  - Reflect national norm in 2008
- Single-never married below national rate
- Percentage UU married people similar both years, while US fell over period
ARIS: Marital Status

USA 2008
- Single: 28
- Married: 52
- Widowed: 8
- Divorced/Separated: 11
- Refused: 1

USA 1990
- Single: 21
- Married: 62
- Widowed: 7
- Divorced/Separated: 9
- Refused: 1

UUA 2008
- Single: 22
- Married: 60
- Widowed: 7
- Divorced/Separated: 10
- Refused: 1

UUA 1990
- Single: 17
- Married: 59
- Widowed: 7
- Divorced/Separated: 17
- Refused: 0
ARIS: Race and Ethnicity

- UUs followed national trend and now more racially diverse
  - Between 1990 and 2008 share Non-Hispanic whites decreased from 90% to 75%
  - Largely due to increase Hispanic population
- Under-represented in the African American, Asian and Other Race groups
ARIS: Education

- UUs highly educated, as we have been
- High proportion of UUs with post-graduation qualification
  - Post-grad rate three times US national rate
- Shift in 2008 from High/Tech School Graduation to Some College
ARIS: Education

USA 2008:
- Less than HS: 17
- High/Tech School: 31
- Some College: 27
- College: 17
- Post-Grad: 8

USA 1990:
- Less than HS: 22
- High/Tech School: 37
- Some College: 21
- College: 14
- Post-Grad: 6

UUA 2008:
- Less than HS: 5
- High/Tech School: 6
- Some College: 36
- College: 28
- Post-Grad: 25

UUA 1990:
- Less than HS: 5
- High/Tech School: 20
- Some College: 25
- College: 24
- Post-Grad: 25

Legend:
- Yellow: Less than HS
- Blue: High/Tech School
- Orange: Some College
- Green: College
- Red: Post-Grad
ARIS: Economics

- Reflects high level of education, with higher level of income and home ownership
- 1990 measured over/under $25K
- 2008 measured over/under $50K
- Greater than national average; down over time
- Home ownership higher; up over time
## ARIS: Economics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UUA</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% UNDER $25K/$50K</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OVER $25K/$50K</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFUSED</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOME OWNERSHIP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OWN</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% RENT</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARIS: Employment Status

- 1990 pattern of employment very similar to national average
- 2008 pattern reflects more retirees and part-time workers
- 2008 fewer students and unemployed than national pattern
- Reflects overall age and class profile of UU population
ARIS: Employment Status

USA 2008:
- Full Time: 47
- Part Time: 12
- Retired: 17
- Student: 7
- Unemployed: 4
- Housewife: 6
- Other: 7

USA 1990:
- Full Time: 53
- Part Time: 12
- Retired: 17
- Student: 9
- Unemployed: 3
- Housewife: 4
- Other: 2

UUA 2008:
- Full Time: 42
- Part Time: 17
- Retired: 27
- Student: 31
- Unemployed: 3
- Housewife: 7
- Other: 3

UUA 1990:
- Full Time: 53
- Part Time: 13
- Retired: 19
- Student: 6
- Unemployed: 3
- Housewife: 3
- Other: 3
More likely registered to vote: 90% compared to national average of 76% in 2008

In 2008 identified as Democrats rate twice national average
- Ratio Democrats to Republicans in 1990 was 2:1
- Ratio Democrats to Republicans in 2008 was 11:1

Similar proportion of self-proclaimed independents
ARIS: Religious Belief & Behavior

- Very small sample – subject to extrapolation error (17,000 households of which 77 reported as UU)
- Older data – from 2001 survey
- When it comes to your outlook, do you regard yourself as secular, somewhat secular, somewhat religious, religious?
- UUs similar to American Jews and “Nones”
ARIS: Religious Belief and Behavior

USA
- Secular: 10
- Somewhat Secular: 6
- Religious: 38
- Somewhat Religious: 37
- A Little of Both: 9

UUA
- Secular: 39
- Somewhat Secular: 19
- Religious: 17
- Somewhat Religious: 20
- A Little of Both: 5
ARIS: Belief about God

- Very small sample – subject to extrapolation error (17,000 households of which 77 reported as UU)
- Older data – from 2001 survey
- One-fifth of UUs didn’t answer
ARIS: Belief About God

- Supplement questions to those who expressed belief in God:
  - God performs miracles: 40% UUs disagreed, compared to 11% whole sample
  - God helps me: 60% UUs agreed, compared to 86% whole sample
- UUs tend to be more skeptical, and heterogeneous on matters of belief
ARIS: Membership in Congregation

- Small sample, 2001, extrapolations uncertain
- Less than half (47%) of sampled UU households reported membership in congregation in 2001
- Similar to national pattern of 54% congregation membership reported by most other liberal religions
- Borne out repeatedly by census data that reports about twice as many UUs as our UUA membership
ARIS: Religious Switching

- Small sample, 2001, extrapolation uncertain
- Half of adult UUs have changed religion
- Former religious preferences:
  - One-quarter Mainline Christian
  - One-in-five Roman Catholics
  - One-in-five Baptist
  - One-in-ten Atheist or None
- Results only suggestive
ARIS: Religious Switching

- Small sample, 2001, extrapolation uncertain
- Switching works both ways
- Of sample, .3% used to be UU, extrapolates to about 100,000

Current religious preferences:
- Over 40% now None
- Other large groups Catholic and Mainline Christians
ARIS: Religious Mixing

- 2001, 50,000 households
- Over half UUs were in mixed-religious relationships (other religion or none)
  - Clear selectivity in mixed-religious: half of these with partner who states either Jewish or None
- Raising children:
  - 1/3 UU, 1/3 None, 1/3 Christian
FACT STUDY: Overall Summary

- First decade 21st century: slow, overall erosion of the strength of congregations
- Also brought increased innovative, adaptive worship
- Surprisingly rapid adoption of electronic technologies
- Increase in racial/ethnic congregations
- Increased connection across traditions
- Increased support of electoral process
FACT: Overall Summary

- Steep drop in financial health
- Continuing high levels of conflict
- Aging membership
- Net: fewer people in the pews
- Growth in predominately white congregations less likely; zero growth demographically; members older; fewer contemporary worship
- Growth more likely among conservative Protestant groups
FACT: Overall Summary

- Congregations that are growing more likely:
  - To be spiritually vital and alive
  - To have strong, permanent leadership
  - Enjoy joyful, innovative and inspirational worship
Occurring in average weekly attendance – not membership

UUs ahead of the curve in attendance growth over Mainline Protestant (which includes UU) and Evangelical
FACT: Growth Over 5 Years

- 2000:
  - UUA: 44%
  - Mainline: 26%
  - Evangelical: 39%

- 2010:
  - UUA: 49%
  - Mainline: 22%
  - Evangelical: 46%
FACT: Location by Region

- Regional location more important than rural, urban or suburban location
- For all, South is growing faster
- For UUs, South and West are growing most
- UUs have a higher proportion of growing congregations than Mainline and Evangelical in all regions of the country
- Substantial growth is 10% or more
FACT: Growth Over 5 Years

- South: 52% (UUA), 31% (Mainline), 45% (Evangelical)
- Northeast: 44% (UUA), 20% (Mainline), 33% (Evangelical)
- NorthCentral: 46% (UUA), 22% (Mainline), 33% (Evangelical)
- West: 54% (UUA), 31% (Mainline), 34% (Evangelical)
FACT: Vital & Contemporary Worship

- Congregations named by leaders as “spiritually vital and alive” most likely to be growing
  - 67% of UU congregations growing attendance by 10% or more reported vital and alive (42% of Mainline, 52% Evangelical)
- “Vital and Alive” is different in UU context
  - For others, it can be indicated by drums and electric guitars – especially for Mainline
  - Not so for UU
FACT: Guitar & Drums Often/Always
For many congregations, good indicator of contemporary worship
  - Within UU, usage is much less
For those UU who do use, may have an impact
  - Less likely to use guitar and drums if congregation has older members
  - If older members, use of guitar and drums has little impact on worship attendance
FACT: Growing by Age

- Congregations with older populations less likely to have a 10% or more increase in attendance
- UU congregations growing more with older members
  - Is this better reporting or growth?
- Clear that if not attracting young people, are less likely to grow – demographic reasons
FACT: Percentage Congregations Growing and Proportion of over 65
FACT: Lay Leader Involvement

- Better predictor than age as to whether increased attendance
  - If more successful at increased lay leader involvement, then more likely growing
- Perception is what’s seen here, not necessarily reality of leadership depth
- Reveals openness of congregation to change and new ideas (and therefore new people)
FACT: Percentage of Congregations Growing and Lay Leader Rotation

- **UUAA**
  - Same People: 28%
  - Some New Only: 49%
  - Lots New Volunteers: 60%

- **Mainline**
  - Same People: 14%
  - Some New Only: 25%
  - Lots New Volunteers: 44%

- **Evangelical**
  - Same People: 27%
  - Some New Only: 39%
  - Lots New Volunteers: 49%
STUDIES
