

# **Growth Resources Reading List For the Small Congregation**



New Congregation and Growth Resources  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
April 2005

## BOOKS, ORGANIZATIONS AND WEB RESOURCES

Below are an assortment of resources to nurture growth and vitality. Most of the summaries were taken from the back of the books and the Alban Institute's or UUA's websites. To see more reviews and summaries and to access lots of other congregational resources, go to [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org) or [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

\* *Indicates a Unitarian Universalist resource.*

### BUILDING

Callahan, Kennon L. *Building for Effective Mission: A Complete Guide for Congregations on Bricks and Mortar Issues*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Callahan asserts that although we are no longer living in a "churched culture," we can rejoice that God now calls us to mission—to serve, using our individual and congregational strengths, and to work for justice and peace. This book describes concrete actions congregations may take to discover a mission and a focus for it, and to plan for accomplishing it. Later chapters discuss the physical plant that furthers a chosen mission, evaluating possible sites for location, mission potential, property characteristics, and financial considerations; describing facilities that allow efficient staffing, scheduling, and leadership; and showing how to develop a schedule for completing building plans.

### CHURCH GROWTH AND VITALITY

Alban Institute. *National Congregations Study*. 1988.  
[www.alban.org/NatCongStudy.asp](http://www.alban.org/NatCongStudy.asp)

Arn, Charles. "Multiple Worship Services and Church Growth." *Journal of the American Society of Church Growth*. 7 73 1996.

Callahan, Kennon L. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strategic Planning for Mission*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

In this groundbreaking study, Kennon Callahan identifies the twelve essential characteristics of successful, growing churches and offers all congregations a way to unlock their potential for effective

ministry. These twelve keys to an effective church include a concrete, well-defined mission; dynamic worship; small groups that build community; a few strong, well-selected programs and activities; solid financial resources. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* is regarded as the most useful and comprehensive long-range planning resource available.

Clapp, Steve. *Overcoming Barriers to Church Growth*. Elgin, IL: Andrew Center, 1994.

Clapp, Steve. *Plain Talk about Church Growth*. Elgin, IL: Brethren P, 1989.

Hadaway, Kirk C. *Church Growth Principles: Separating Fact from Fiction*. Nashville, TN: Broadman P, 1991.

\* Heller, Anne Odin. *Church Works: A Well-Body Book for Congregations*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 1999.

Using the human body as a metaphor for the congregation, this accessible and ingenious handbook provides essential advice for growing and sustaining a healthy church, including help for diagnosing the chronic ailments of church life. Covers vital congregational concerns—spiritual development, covenants and mission statements, growth and new membership, conflict resolution, lay and professional ministry, congregational structure and more.

Logan, Robert E. *Beyond Church Growth: Action Plans for Developing a Dynamic Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989.

Mann, Alice. *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1999.

Can waning and dying congregations actually live again? The author paints a picture of cautious but energizing optimism. Demographics, says Alice Mann, have not been friendly to mainline churches, but other factors can reverse a church's decline and give it new vitality. First, there needs to be a faith-based sense of purpose that extends beyond church walls, rather than a focus on survival and maintenance. To become vital, a church also needs a clear and positive identity, ongoing attention to nonmembers in the community, congregational harmony, positive relationships between clergy and laity, and small group programs in which

people can form deeper ties to one another and connect their faith with daily life.

Mead, Loren B. *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1996.

Seriously concerned about the church's viability, Mead explains the five key challenges congregations must face if we are to have churches in future generations that are stronger than ours. First, we must transfer church "ownership" to allow for greater lay responsibility and less "clericalism" (regarding clergy as a special caste). Second, new institutional structures (within and among judicatories, denominations, and faith traditions) are needed to support the work of local congregations. Third, we need to discover a "passionate spirituality" that integrates the rational with the emotional elements of faith and connects our knowledge with our experience of God. Fourth, congregations must generate and support community in our individualistic society. Fifth, we must become an apostolic people who view mission, not as a far-off institutional enterprise, but as a vital, caring concern for all of creation. This book is a provocative successor to Mead's *The Once and Future Church* and *Transforming Congregations for the Future*.

Mead, Loren B. *More Than Numbers: The Ways Churches Grow*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1993.

Mead explores what church growth and evangelism really mean in a time when it is mathematically impossible for every congregation to achieve significant numerical growth. He argues that spiritual, organizational, and missional growth are just as important as numerical growth, and that all four are needed for a truly healthy and growing church. The book includes many worksheets to help congregations determine the ways they are, and aren't, growing as well as stories of congregations that "grow" in ways other than in numbers.

Oswald, Roy M. *Making Your Church More Inviting: A Step-by-Step Guide for In-Church Training*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1992.

(Please see a description of this book below under the section called "New Comers/New Members.")

Ott, E. Stanley. *The Vibrant Church: A People Building Plan for Congregational Health*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1989.

\* Phillips, Roy D. *Letting Go: Transforming Congregations for Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1999.

Pioneering thinkers have been saying for decades that the key to church renewal lies in nurturing the ministry of the laity. Based on his 30-plus years of experience in parish ministry, Roy Phillips makes the case that in order to flourish, pastors need to let go of their traditional views about their role in the congregation. *Letting Go* forthrightly explains what it means for pastors to do less, so their members have the opportunity and freedom to grow.

Reeves, R. Daniel and Ronald Jenson. *Always Advancing: Modern Strategies for Church Growth*. San Bernadino, CA: Here's Life P, 1984.

Rendle, Gilbert R. *Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1999.

This handbook is designed to help prepare congregational leaders to deal with organizational tensions. It shows how to live creatively and grow by valuing differences, not ignoring or blending them. It explores the tensions that come with diversity and includes such practical resources as plans for leadership meetings, Bible studies, and an index of healthy and unhealthy conflict.

Roozen, David A. and C. Kirk Hadaway. *Church and Denominational Growth: What Does (and Does Not) Cause Growth or Decline*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon P, 1993.

Schaller, Lyle E. *Discontinuity and Hope: Radical Change and the Path to the Future*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon P, 1999.

American Christianity since 1950 has been marked by an unprecedented degree of discontinuity. Among the consequences are that it is now far more difficult to be an effective parish pastor, competition among churches is growing, and the rise of the very large regional church threatens the survival of smaller congregations. But these consequences, Schaller argues, are turning out to be signs of hope for the future of Christian churches in America. Difficulties and sources of despair are detailed, but concrete suggestions for overcoming them are given.

Schaller, Lyle E. *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon P, 1992.

Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development: A Guide to the Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*. Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996.

This book, based on a survey of more than 1,000 congregations around the world, offers a valuable contribution to the discussion of why churches grow. Rather than offering a model for church growth—a type of worship service or a style of leadership—Schwarz identifies the qualities that can be found in growing churches and offers guidance and action steps for increasing these qualities in individual churches. The qualities Schwarz lists include empowering leadership; gift-oriented ministry; passionate spirituality; functional structures; inspiring worship service; holistic small groups; need-oriented evangelism; and loving relationships.

Sullivan, Bill. *Ten Steps to Breaking the 200 Barrier*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill P, 1988.

Towns, Elmer L., John N. Vaughan, and David J. Seifert. *The Complete Book of Church Growth*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1981.

Wagner, C. Peter. *Leading Your Church to Growth*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984.

Wagner, C. Peter. *Your Church Can Grow*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984.

## CHANGE

Bridges, William. *The Way of Transition: Embracing Life's Most Difficult Moments*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2001.

Friesen, Peter and Danny Miller. *Organizations: A Quantum View*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002.

Hadaway, C. Kirk and David A. Roozen. *Rerouting the Protestant Mainstream: Sources of Growth and Opportunity for Change*. Nashville: Abingdon P, 1995.

Kotter, John. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School P, 1996.

Emphasizing again and again the critical need for leadership to make change happen, this book provides the vicarious experience and positive role models for leaders to emulate. It identifies an eight-step process that every organization must go through to achieve its goal and shows where and how people often derail. It is a practical yet inspirational resource for everyone who has a stake in orchestrating changes in their organization.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Ammerman, Nancy T. *Congregation and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

The impact of social changes—in population, economy, and culture—on more than twenty congregations in nine communities throughout the country are studied in this important book. With attention to such issues as changes in community racial composition, growing gay and lesbian populations in neighborhoods, transformation from rural to suburban cultures, an influx of immigrant peoples, and economic dislocation, the book identifies four basic approaches that congregations take in response to those changes: persistence, relocation, adaptation, and innovation. The great variety of choices made by congregations in similar circumstances is one of the many illuminating features of this book.

Foot, David and Daniel Stoffman. *Boom, Bust & Echo 2000: Profiting from the Demographic Shift in the New Millennium*. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company, 2000.

Demographics--the study of human populations--is a powerful but often underused method for understanding the past and predicting the future. David Foot and journalist Daniel Stoffman take a look at the importance of demographics. They try to predict what baby boomers, "baby busters," the "echo generation," and other groups in the coming years can expect. This fully revised edition of the highly successful *Boom, Bust & Echo* contains the most recent information on demographic trends and how they can affect your future.

InfoMaps Demographic Research,  
Percept Group, Inc. available through the UUA.

The UUA has contracted with a demographic research company called Percept Group, Inc. to get congregations a discounted rate on a demographic study package. Included is (1) information in tabular form based on the 2000 census for the study area(s) you have chosen for your ministry area, (2) trends and projections for the study area(s), (3) U.S. lifestyle data, (4) a guide to help you use this information. Also, you will receive six graphic representations of this data in the six InfoMaps you select. Examples of demographic information are Lifestyle Diversity, Median Age, Five- Year Growth, Percentage of 2000 College Graduates, and Number of Unitarian Universalists. Please see the UUA web site [www.uua.org/cde/education/demographic.html](http://www.uua.org/cde/education/demographic.html) and click on the link to request ordering information.

United States Census Bureau.

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/atlas.html>

For a quick look at the ways the demographics of the United States have changed as mapped by the 2000 Census.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Callahan, Kennon L. *Effective Church Leadership: Building on the 12 Keys*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

During the post-World War II era, the United States was a "churched" culture that encouraged the development of credentialed, professional pastors. With the current decline of mainline churches in our pluralistic culture, the "professional" pastor has become ineffective and must give way to the "missional" pastor. The reader will find practical help with the four central tasks of a missional leader: helping people rediscover power in the whole of their lives, helping people become communities of reconciliation, helping people discover meaning in everyday life, and helping people discover how they can make a difference.

Goetz, David L. *Building Church Leaders: Your Complete Guide to Leadership Training*. Matthews, NC: Leadership Journal, 1998.

This handbook contains reproducible handouts useful for leadership training and discussion on 12 crucial areas of congregational life: assessing church needs, character of a leader, reaching people, church health, spiritual care, handling conflict, recruiting and



staffing, finances, motivating leaders, worship, vision, and building a team. Selected by the editors of Leadership Journal, the material comes from leaders such as John Maxwell, Marlene Wilson, Bill Hybels, and others.

Huttenlocker, Keith. *Conflict and Caring: Preventing, Managing and Resolving Conflict in the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School P, 1996.

(Please refer to the description of this resource above, under the heading "Change.")

Lay Leadership web pages of the Unitarian Universalist Association web site <<http://www.uua.org/programs/layleader/>>.

These pages contain listings of training events, frequently asked questions, and helpful references for new and experienced lay leaders.

\* Philips, Roy. (Unity Church-Unitarian) *Transforming Liberal Congregations for the New Millennium*. Published by the author, 1996.

Born out of unease for the quality of life in churches, this book is inspirational for the focus on personal ministry. It is very useful in motivating volunteers and maximizing the effectiveness of all contributions and focuses on a personal ministry paradigm for lay leaders.

Rendle, Gilbert R. *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1998.

This practical guide is for congregational leaders trying to be faithful in a turbulent and unpredictable environment. It combines theory, research, and the author's extensive work with congregations facing change to provide leaders and others with practical diagnostic models and tools for leading change in a spiritual way. The case studies, analysis, worksheets, and games included in this book will help congregations and their leaders understand the varied reactions that change can elicit.

Wagner, C. Peter. *Leading Your Church to Growth*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

\* Bailey-Adams, Marcy. "Endowment Fund Guide for UU Congregations." Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, updated annually.

How to create and administer permanent funds that can provide additional financial security to congregations is detailed in this booklet. This is available at <http://www.uua.org/cde/fundraising/EndowmentFundGuide.pdf>.

Barrett, Wayne C. *More Money, New Money, Big Money: Creative Strategies for Funding Today's Church*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1992.

Every congregation has significant sources of new and untapped income. How to increase current sources, discover new and untapped sources, and cultivate major gifts and bequests.

Callahan, Kennon L. *Effective Church Finances: Fund-Raising and Budgeting for Church Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

Callahan, Kennon L. *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church: A Guide for Every Member*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Commission on Appraisal of the UUA. "Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity." Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1997.

The Commission on Appraisal of the UUA issued this report on congregational polity, including recommendations on governance and the relationship between congregations and the Association.

\* King, Jerald. *Asking Makes a Difference*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1996.

Asking people face-to-face is the most cost effective way to raise money for a congregation's operating budget. This is a how-to manual complete with necessary documents on a floppy disk.

\* King, Jerald. *Budgets with a Mission*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1996.

A step-by-step process for moving from a line item budget to a program budget and then to a mission based budget.

\* Landreth, Edward B. *Fundraising with a Vision: A Canvass Guide for Congregations*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1997.

*Fundraising with a Vision* provides answers to these and other important fundraising challenges. Beginning with tips on how to get your congregation comfortable with the topic of money, this book guides you step-by-step through the basic of planning and running a well-organized annual canvass—from creating a committee, recruiting canvassers, and planning a kickoff event, to doing canvass follow-up.

\* Peers, Lawrence X., ed. *The Congregational Handbook: How to Develop and Sustain Your Unitarian Universalist Congregation*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1995.

A reference guide that outlines the responsibilities of being a member congregation of the UUA. It provides a list of resources and services available to member congregations and offers guidance on major dimensions of congregational life.

## MULTICULTURALISM

Before we can effectively welcome in people from groups that have been historically under-represented in our congregations, we need to assess whether our congregational culture will be truly welcoming to people who deviate from the white, middle-class, able-bodied norm. Educating ourselves about the diversity of experiences we experience within our human family is an important part of our spiritual growth as congregations bound to “respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” We are fortunate that many resources have already been developed to help with this essential work (see below).

**Accessibilities Committee.** The Unitarian Universalist Association has committed itself to the removal of all barriers - attitudinal, physical, and programmatic - that prevent the full participation of persons with disabilities in the life of our Association. To provide strategic planning, implementation,

oversight, and support to our congregations the UUA Board of Trustees has appointed an Accessibilities Committee. People with disabilities often feel excluded from our UU communities because so many of our congregations have yet to remove the barriers that keep them out; barriers of architecture, attitude, and communication. They are excluded because our buildings and our attitudes are not flexible enough to admit persons with disabilities into the lives of our religious communities. Our faith calls us to begin the task of removing both the physical and attitudinal barriers to persons with disabilities in our congregations, so that all may share their gifts and talents in our religious communities. For general information on steps your congregation can take to be more accessible, go to <http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/accessibility/>. For an inventory your congregation can take to determine how accessible you are, go to <http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/accessibility/howaccessible.html>.

### **The Journey Toward Wholeness Anti-racism Program**

provides anti-racism training, resources, curricula, organizing strategies, and consultation to UU congregations, districts, clusters, committees, and affiliate organizations. The program focuses on both internal consciousness raising and institutional transformation, along with doing community justice work with an anti-racist lens. For more, go to <http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/antiracism/roadmap.html>. For information about specific programs, trainings and other resources, go to <http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/antiracism/resources.html>.

**Welcoming Congregation.** The Welcoming Congregation Program is a completely volunteer program for congregations that see a need to become more inclusive towards bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people. It consists of a series of workshops developed by the UUA. The goal of the workshops is to reduce prejudice by increasing understanding and acceptance among people of different sexual orientations. Some of the workshop titles include: How Homophobia Hurts Heterosexuals; Connections to Other Forms of Oppression; Gender Socialization and Homophobia; and Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality. Many congregations offer the workshop series several consecutive times as an adult religious education curriculum open to all members and friends. In some congregations the workshop series (and later the entire program) is sponsored by a Welcoming

Congregation Task Force/Committee created for just this purpose, while other congregations sponsor the workshop series through their Interweave chapters. In either case, the workshops are best facilitated by those that have experienced the curriculum. For information, go to <http://www.uua.org/obgltc/wcp/wc1expln.html>. For information on the steps to becoming a welcoming congregation and for print resources on a number of key related subjects, go to <http://www.uua.org/obgltc/>.

**Young Adults.** Ministry to young adults (ages 18-35) has been largely overlooked in our congregations. The mission of the Young Adult/Campus Ministry Office is to advocate, educate, train and develop resources for Young Adults, and those engaged in Young Adult Ministry, with particular emphasis on encouraging congregational based Young Adult groups, district-wide Young Adult structures and the establishment of Campus Ministries that reflect the Principles and Purposes of Unitarian Universalism and its commitment to becoming a culturally diverse, anti-racist, anti-oppressive institution. For information on specific grants and resources to assist congregations in becoming more welcoming to young adults, see <http://www.uua.org/ya-cm/resources/resourcesgrants.html>.

## NEWCOMERS/NEW MEMBERS

Oswald, Roy M. and Speed Leas. *The Inviting Church: A Study of New Member Assimilation*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1987.

Oswald, Roy M. *Making Your Church More Inviting: A Step-by-Step Guide for In-Church Training*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1992.

The fifteen-session workshop outlined in this book explores the ways in which congregations can more effectively invite, welcome, and incorporate new members. By listening to feedback from newcomers, participants gather valuable information to assess their congregation's "invitation quotient" and to develop concrete goals to make their faith community a more inviting place for visitors and potential new members. Designed for a small group of lay leaders led by a facilitator, the program fosters team building and spiritual growth while also enabling participants to feel more comfortable sharing their faith with others. Congregations whose members are often reluctant

to engage in evangelism efforts will find this book a helpful tool for developing strategies for revitalization and growth.

Schaller, Lyle E. *Assimilating New Members*. Nashville: Abingdon P, 1978.

Weeks, Andrew D. *Welcome! Tools and Techniques for New Member Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1992.

Andrew Weeks has used his own experience of visiting many congregations to provide an immensely practical, how-to book about welcoming ministries. Since he knows what is confusing, frustrating, and a turn-off for visitors to congregations, he has devised a detailed plan on how to get started with a welcoming ministry and how to integrate new members into the congregation. Included are numerous specific forms and brochures designed as templates. There are detailed instructions of what is needed in terms of people, time, and equipment to support a well-run visitor and newcomer ministry and a description of how to track newcomers. Learn more at his web site [www.magnetic-church.com](http://www.magnetic-church.com) about the process described by Andrew Weeks in *Welcome!*

## ORGANIZATIONS

### **The Alban Institute**

Is an ecumenical, interfaith organization founded in 1974, which supports congregations through consulting services, research, book publishing, and educational seminars.

The Alban Institute  
7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1250W  
Bethesda, MD 20814-3211  
(800) 486-1318 (301) 718-4407  
[info@alban.org](mailto:info@alban.org) [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

### **Center for Spirituality and Disability**

The Center is a resource for congregations and clergy, as well as persons with disabilities and disability-related agencies and organizations. They are advocates for more inclusive worship spaces and are involved in educating society about disabilities, working with congregations toward eliminating architectural and attitudinal barriers, training staff members, and supporting families and friends of persons with disabilities.

Center for Spirituality and Disability  
422 W. School House Lane  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
(215) 842-9627  
[JFMcIntire@aol.com](mailto:JFMcIntire@aol.com)

**Unitarian Universalist Association**

25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 742-2100 [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

**Willow Creek Association (Organization)**

Willow Creek Association is an international network of outreach-oriented churches. It is the organization through which Willow Creek Community Church of Barrington, IL shares published resources, sponsors conferences, and in other ways shares what they are learning about how the church can reach and disciple unchurched people.

Willow Creek Association  
P.O. Box 3188  
Barrington, IL 60011-3188  
[www.willowcreek.org](http://www.willowcreek.org)

**OUTWARD ORIENTATION**

\* Alexander, Scott W., ed. *Salted with Fire: Unitarian Universalist Strategies for Sharing Faith and Growing Congregations*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 1994.

All across the continent are Unitarian Universalist religious leaders with a new evangelical spirit. They are working in their local congregations and communities to make sure our liberal faith is given both voice and influence. Here are their voices, captured in one dynamic collection that is part philosophy, part practical advice, and mostly inspiration—each voice speaks with commitment and passion for the growth of Unitarian Universalism.

Shawchuck, Norman, Philip Kotlet, Bruce Wrenn, and Gustave Rath. *Marketing for Congregations: Choosing to Serve People More Effectively*. Nashville: Abingdon P, 1992.

Marketing can help religious organizations achieve their objectives in the face of such current challenges as a secularized

society, changing demographics, competition among congregations, and the practice of private faith rather than church attendance. Business terminology is used here to give detailed advice on developing plans for describing a congregation's "product," reaching its public, energizing its members and volunteers, and raising funds. Finally it is shown that marketing cannot result in effective ministry without the spirituality of leaders and workers and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the congregation. Two useful appendices give resources about marketing plans and procedures for evaluating the success of such plans.

### **PERSONAL AND SMALL-GROUP MINISTRY**

Arnold, Jeffrey and Herb Miller, eds. *Starting Small Groups: Building Communities That Matter*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

This book is a guide to the intentional creation of a small group ministry in a congregation.

\* Beard, Margaret L. and Roger W. Comstock, eds. *All Are Chosen: Stories of Lay Ministry and Leadership*. Boston: Skinner House, 1998.

More than 20 inspiring narratives, told by people who believe that the work of the church is the shared responsibility of the minister and the laity. Each story is an in-depth look at the work of ministering to one another.

Donahue, Bill. *The Willow Creek Guide to Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

Covering the gamut of issues related to small group ministry, this "one-stop shopping" for those in need of resources is brimming with ideas and methods for a variety of settings. It gives small-group leaders, ministers, church leaders, educators, and counselors a grasp of group formation and values, leadership requirements and responsibilities, the philosophy and structure of small groups, meeting preparation and participation, leadership training, and much more.



George, Carl F. *Prepare Your Church for the Future*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming Revell, 1992.

An exposition of the meta-church theory that organizes congregations into primary groups of ten with leaders who are trained and supervised to provide nurture and pastoral care.

\* Hamilton-Holway, Barbara. *Evensong: An Eight-Week Series of Gatherings*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1999.

Created to help a congregation grow closer by facilitating personal sharing and deep listening. Evensong's program is designed for small groups. Provides orders of service, sample invitation letter, songs, and readings. Each of the eight celebrations focuses on a different topic.

\* Hill, Robert. *The Complete Guide to Small Group Ministry: Saving the World Ten at a Time*. Boston: Skinner House, 2003.

This book lays out the history of the movement, provides how-to advice on starting small groups, and describes its potential impact on our denomination's future. Read the first chapter of the book at [www.swuuc.org/covenantgroups/books.html](http://www.swuuc.org/covenantgroups/books.html)  
See also <http://www.swuuc.org/covenantgroups/index.html> for more information, including *Covenant Group News* Vol. 2, No. 9, from which the list on pages 2-10 was developed.

Trumbauer, Jean M. *Created and Called: Discovering Our Gifts for Abundant Living*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998.

Recognizing that most mainline congregations do not assist members in discovering their gifts, this manual provides a comprehensive approach to recognizing different kinds of gifts, integrating these gifts, and applying them to the world's needs.

Wilson, Marlene. *How to Mobilize Church Volunteers*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress P, 1983.

Beginning with the familiar description of the "pillars" and the "pew-sitters," Ms. Wilson discusses how to motivate volunteers and how to avoid burning out your best people. The book points out common problems, establishes management principles,

answers questions, and offers a plan to turn the volunteer challenge into a reality. Especially worthwhile is the section on what motivates volunteers, levels of responsibility, and assessing talents and gifts.

### SMALL-MEDIUM-LARGE

Callahan, Kennon L. *Small, Strong Congregations: Creating Strengths and Health for Your Congregation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Callahan, author of *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, counters the conventional wisdom that bigger is better and that the future belongs to the megachurch with this celebration of small, strong congregations. "The twenty-first century," he writes. "is the century of small, strong congregations. . . . Around the planet, the vast majority of congregations will be small and strong, and the vast majority of people will be in these congregations." He examines the ways small, strong congregations live into their identity by focusing on mission, community, teamwork, and generosity and encourages small congregations to look to their own sense of calling rather than idealized pictures of what a congregation should look like.

Crandall, Ronald K. *Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon P, 1995.

Defining "small churches" as those with fewer than 100 worshippers, Crandall argues that small, declining congregations can grow and flourish. Based on research with 100 small churches (64 of which are United Methodist), the book explores those attitudes and behaviors that inhibit growth and those that can lead to revitalization. The author discusses the crucial role of the pastor and how pastors can be educated for more effective ministry in the small church. This book is useful for pastors and other leaders in small churches, for governing body executives who have responsibility for small churches, and for those who seek to train pastors and other leaders for the small church.

George, Carl F. and Warren Bird. *How to Break Growth Barriers: Capturing Overlooked Opportunities for Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993.

This book provides both rationale and method for moving a

congregation intentionally from one size to the next in response to God's call. Consolidating knowledge developed over several decades within the "church growth movement," Carl George challenges church leaders to a larger vision of their congregation's ministry, contrasts two models of the pastor's role ("sheep-herder" vs. "rancher"), describes what is required to break through three specific attendance barriers (200, 400, and 800), and introduces the idea of the "meta-church"—a cell-based strategy that allows for more continuous patterns of congregational growth.

McIntosh, Gary L. *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing out the Best in Any Size Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming Revell, 1999.

A noted leader in the Church Growth Movement in the United States, Gary McIntosh has summarized in very accessible terms the differences in style and structure among different sizes of congregations (which he divides into three size categories), typical obstacles to growth at each size, and the most promising growth strategies for each situation. He provides a fine diagnostic checklist for determining whether your congregation has a "single cell" orientation. The book will be especially helpful for clergy, but also appealing to the lay leader with a vision for growth (or confused about why change efforts have failed).

Mann, Alice. *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1998.

Starting with Arlin Rothauge's description of family, pastoral, program, and corporate size churches, Alice Mann explores the hindrances that arise in the "plateaus" between church sizes to form a glass ceiling against new member assimilation and participation. Mann explains that such hindrances arise because in a "plateau" the appeal of the previous size is compromised while the value of the next size is not yet realized. Without a response to these hindrances, a plateau can lead to a decline in church attendance. The author guides readers in addressing questions of whether their church should be growing and discusses the "why," "what," "who," "how," and "time frame" of size transitions. With biblical reflections and application exercises at the end of each chapter, this book will prove a valuable resource for churches challenged by being "in between" sizes.

Mann, Alice. *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2001.

This transition is frequently described as the most challenging of growth transitions for congregations, and this text is designed specifically for a congregational learning team. The book features a five-step process enabling the learning team to engage a wider circle of congregational leaders and members in study, discernment, and planning. The concept of passive barriers to growth is presented, and a tool is presented to help congregations measure their progress through the transition.

Schaller, Lyle E. *44 Steps Up Off the Plateau*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon P, 1992.

Schaller offers a wise, comprehensive, and practical overview of realities and possibilities in a congregation facing a size plateau. He explains clearly why many members and leaders prefer the status quo and offers a realistic assessment of the costs of each strategy he describes. This is not a "cookbook" with five easy steps, but rather a broad look at a variety of situations and strategies, organized around one of Schaller's signature questions: "How much change will this congregation support?" The short chapters and the "roadmap" introduction encourage lay, clergy, and denominational leaders to dip into the book at the point of greatest need and benefit very quickly from the author's expansive knowledge.

## **STAFFING**

McIntosh, Gary L. *Staff Your Church for Growth*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.

When is the time to hire another minister? How should a church begin the process of looking for support staff? What responsibilities should a new pastor assume? Would a part-time or full-time position benefit the church most? This book presents answers to guide you in selecting the staff that can help your church grow.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

\* Heller, Anne Odin. *Church Works: A Well-Body Book for Congregations*. Boston: Skinner House Books, 1999.

(Please refer to the description of this resource above, under the heading "Church Growth and Vitality.")

Mann, Alice and Gil Rendle. *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, by Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2003.

Authors Gil Rendle and Alice Mann cast planning as a "holy conversation," a congregational discernment process about three critical questions:

- Who are we?
- What has God called us to do or be?
- Who is our neighbor?

Rendle and Mann equip congregational leaders with a broad and creative range of ideas, pathways, processes, and tools for planning. By choosing the resources that best suit their needs and context, congregations will shape their own strengthening, transforming, holy conversation. They will find a path that is faithful to their identity and their relationship with the sacred.

Oswald, Roy M. and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr. *Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1996.

This is a book for congregations that want to discover who they are and where they come from. It's for those who want to clarify their purpose and discern God's vision for their future. Processes for strategic planning set forth in this book help congregational leaders to develop quality-of-life goals as well as program goals. This book outlines an adaptable structure that involves the whole congregation that encourages collective wisdom.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Los Angeles: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.

## SYSTEMS IN CHURCHES

Bishop, Helen. "Working Together: A Module on Human Resources."

A workshop on systems in churches offered by The Center for Leadership at The Mountain. Discusses roles of leaders in different organizational models. Contact The Mountain for more information.

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: Guilford Publications, 1985.

Friedman—for twenty-five years a congregational rabbi, family therapist, and counselor to clergy of numerous faiths—describes in detail how families do and don't work. Throughout, Friedman applies the prism of family systems theory to three "families": the clergy's own family, the congregational family, and families in a congregation. Friedman continually focuses on the powerful position of clergy for enabling family development around life-cycle events and associated rituals. With any family system, Friedman centers on behavior rather than on labeled individuals, and he demands our attention to process rather than to an "identified problem." This book, packed with theory and example, will repay reading and re-reading over the years. Whether one is clergy or a lay person, Friedman's work is at the very core of understanding one's leadership work with both the static and the changing "family," including one's own.

Oshry, Barry. *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995.

In this book about systems, power, and relationships is wisdom to help people in church communities gain insights into what drives their behavior. The author describes roles in social systems at work and at home and explains ways in which our structures influence our behaviors, providing a unique language for viewing organizations.

Richardson, Ronald W. *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership, and Congregational Life*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Family systems analysis, by charts as well as by clear exposition, shows how relationships are never simply one-to-one, because each person brings along the ins and outs of all his or her other relationships. Furthermore, triangular relationships develop, in which three people vary in their alliances, with one joining another against a third. Different congregational styles are described, and practical ways of changing destructive behaviors and achieving leadership are given. Discussion of this book could be an eye-opener in understanding the sort of trivial event that often grabs a congregation by the ears.

Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1996.

Applying the insights of systems theory to congregational life, Steinke argues that the congregation is best understood as a system and that the most effective way to nurture congregational health is by shifting the focus from single individuals or issues to the way the congregation functions as a whole. Steinke also discusses the ten principles of health, the "wheel of well being," and how anxiety can affect a congregation. He highlights the crucial role that leaders play in congregational functioning.

Steinke, Peter L. *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1993.

As an accompaniment to Edwin Friedman's *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, this book applies family systems thinking to guide the reader from a micro view of congregational relationships to a macro view. Drawing on biblical stories and contemporary congregational scenarios, Steinke clearly articulates our interrelatedness and its inevitable potential to produce anxiety and other emotions. Healthy responses to congregational struggles include focusing on self, not others; strength, not weakness; process, not content; challenge, not comfort; integrity, not unity; system, not symptom; and direction, not condition. This book is a valuable resource for congregational leaders and offers helpful examples of congregational problems and resolutions.