

Session #6



*We deny the immaculate conception of virtue
Good things are brought about by hard work done by human
hands*

Four Aspects of Growth

Paraphrased by Connie Goodbread and the Rev. Susan M. Smith
From *More Than Numbers* by Loren Mead

Maturation Growth

The ability of a congregation to challenge, support and encourage each one of its members to grow in the maturity of their faith, to deepen their spiritual roots, and to broaden their religious imagination. It is also the ability of the congregation as an institution to go deeper into the faith while maintaining the welcoming path for newcomers. *Question for reflection: If I was a better UU next year than I am this year, how would I know it?*

Incarnational Growth

What are the “outputs” of the congregation’s ministry? What is it that the congregation seeks to export from its life back into the life of the world, the social environment in which it exists? What are the good works that we are doing that will make the world a better place? *Questions for reflection: If someone were describing our congregation would they mention our core shared values? If someone were discussing one of those values in the community, would they think of including our congregation?*

Organic Growth

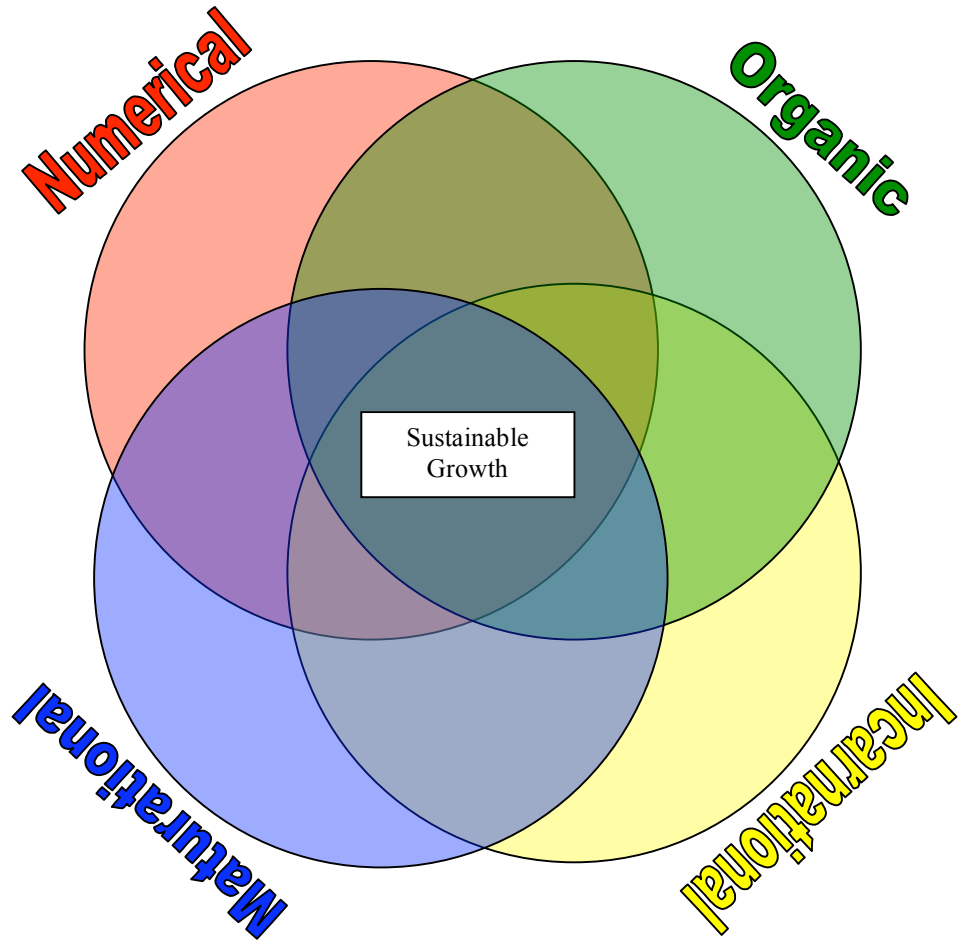
The task of building the community, fashioning the organizational structures and infrastructure, developing the practices and processes that result in a dependable, stable network of human relationships and systems in which we can grow and from which we can make a difference. It is also the physical plant and the staff needed for the size of the congregation.

Numerical Growth

Adding new members while maintaining the numbers that are already within the congregation. Keeping track of losses and understanding why they happen. Understanding that some losses are healthy or inevitable. Changing the things that need to be changed in order to retain healthy members. Never compromising ethics or principles.

None of these four can be ignored. Maturation Growth (personal, interior) and Incarnational Growth (corporate, active, public) should frame plans for Organic Growth (infrastructure) and will drive Numerical Growth (membership and financial). All congregational mission/vision/strategic planning work must include all four, but a great many include only Numerical and Organic largely because this is our secular comfort zone.

Sustainable Growth Diagram



Leadership is the spiritual process of discerning what one believes (*clarity*), acting on that belief in the public arena (*decisiveness*), and standing behind that action (*responsibility*), despite the varied responses of people (*courage*).

- Rev. Frank Thomas

Leading For Change

Connie Goodbread

- Understand the deepest reasons for the existence of the congregation
- Understand yourself who and what you serve remember you are a servant leader
- Ask, “What happens if we don’t do this?”
- Ask, “what happens if we do this?”
- Act with humility
- Take a principled stand for the good of the whole (the common good)
- Identify the individuals or group(s) that will be the most affected or have the most to lose
- Involve them in the process early
- Stand with the people as they struggle with their emotions
- Do not stop the process because of discomfort
- Expect, invite and empower additions to the vision
- Expect sabotage and don’t let it take over
- Celebrate success
- Thank people
- Thank them again
- Move forward
- Assess – What did we learn? – How has this changed our plans?
- What is the next principled change that is needed for the good of the whole (the common good)

Ten Keys to a Compelling Mission Statement

The more elaborate a mission statement is, the less likely it is to be understood and remembered. A clear, concise mission statement, however, can become a compass for your journey or your church's journey.

1. Your mission is larger than any job or task. Being a teacher is a profession; educating others can be a mission which transcends any particular employment circumstance. The average person can expect to have seven employment changes in a lifetime. The mission of a church may change in response to changes in leadership, demographics, or societal conditions.

2. Your mission is much more than your role. We all have various roles we fulfill: spouse, parent, manager, friend. But roles change, too. Who were you before you took on your current roles? What mission did the founders of your church have in mind? How is your church different now?

3. Your mission is not your to-do list. In *First Things First*, Stephen Covey notes the huge distinction between what is important and what is urgent. Most to-do lists contain activities which seem to be urgent, but may not be important. That is often true of church work, although one must remember that serving members is a main role of the church. Contemplate the big picture. Focus on your core values. Develop your mission first, then list corresponding goals. Otherwise, you can be very busy following a to-do list without creating anything worthwhile.

4. You are already living your mission on some level. Living your mission may not require massive changes. You can begin right where you are now. Increase your awareness daily of what is really important to you. What do you want to be known for? For what would you like your church to be known?

5. A fundamental faith statement: you were born with a purpose. Everyone's life has a mission. In the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, Jimmy Stewart portrays a suicidal businessman who experiences what the

lives of his friends and loved ones would be like without him. We tend to forget that we are part of an interconnected web. As church leaders, we tend to lose sight of our churches' reasons for being. Holding up the church's purpose can call members back to mission.

6. Your mission may not appear to be grand. You don't have to be Mother Theresa. You just have to find your mission and be yourself. Some blacksmith must have been responsible for putting horseshoes on Paul Revere's steed, thereby contributing to the birth of a nation of freedom. Your church's service on any Sunday may lift someone off a path of despair, and its very existence is an encouragement to Unitarian Universalists everywhere.

7. Your mission is a perfect fit for you. Your mission, almost surely, is not something you loathe doing. What CEO in his/her right mind would have the sales team switch to accounting? Your life's mission probably involves something you feel comfortable doing. Living your mission is more likely to produce joy than suffering within your inner being. Seek a mission that fits, for yourself and your church.

8. Your mission is probably not the same as the missions of those around you. While crafting your mission statement, temporarily disassociate yourself from your peers. The values and goals of those in our networks can crowd out our own self-discovery. Similarly, your church should craft its own mission, knowing it may lead to a path (because of its size, location, membership) different from that of other churches nearby.

9. Your mission is your heart's desire. Ask yourself: Considering all my goals and values, is this the highest and best use of the time remaining to me in this life? Ask your fellow church members: Is our church making the highest and best use of its situation and resources?

10. Your mission inspires you to take action. Great leaders understand their missions well enough to describe them succinctly. Nelson Mandela's mission, for example, was to end apartheid. All Souls Church, Tulsa, has this as a mission: to civilize Tulsa. In creating a mission statement, favor

action verbs that mean something definite to you. Join the 1% of the people in the world who have a clear sense of who they are and where they are going. And help your church reach a similarly clear sense of mission.

*Adapted by Bob Hill from a *Top 10* piece by Barbara McRae,
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Mission, Vision & Long Range Plan

Words of Wisdom

Know & Trust Thyself —*Your Mission & Vision are uniquely your own.*

Claim your strengths and build on these first.

Remember to study your environment and its needs.

The Process is at least as important as the Results.

The process should be about creating opportunities for conversations about what is most meaningful — what are the most heartfelt aspirations of members.

Engage as many members as possible in the process.

“The universe is made up of stories, not atoms” (Muriel Rukeyser)

Plan & Prepare the Process

- Articulate why you are undertaking the process
- Lay out the steps — determine whether you will design & facilitate your own process or bring in a consultant
- Coordinate with the church calendar
- Communicate..., communicate... communicate: newsletter, pulpit announcements, sermons, town hall meetings, etc.

Focus on “Mission” & “Vision” rather than “statement.”

Remember to monitor progress and report out on a regular basis.

Keep it Fresh (3- to 5-year renewal period)

The Ministering Congregation

A "ministering congregation" is one that has a communal sense of call, knows the community that it is aiming to serve, mobilizes its resources and programs to respond to the diverse ministry needs of its gathered congregation and surrounding community, and provides a formation process to engage its membership in this shared ministry.

A ministering congregation:

1. is mission focused
2. is committed to spiritual growth and development of its membership and the congregation.
3. knows its surrounding community and is responsive to the community's needs for ministry.
4. is clear about its ministry focus groups.
5. has outreach that is intentionally coordinated with all the congregation's programs
6. has small groups that are a source of pastoral care, religious education, membership assimilation, and leadership development
7. conceives its programs as "ministries" to the congregation and the surrounding community
8. has an intentional and ongoing "shared ministry program" [process for helping lay people discover their gifts and live out their ministries in the church's ministries and in their daily lives]
9. understands religious education as a formation process for the ministry of the laity
10. is able to reach out to and serve more diverse populations within the community
11. is committed in word and action to anti-racism, anti-oppression and to being a Welcoming Congregation
12. has responsible stewardship and engages in a mission budget process that is informed by its sense of mission as a congregation within a particular community
13. is "Association-al" and has covenantal relationship with other UU congregations in the area, district and continent
14. engages with other faith communities in common social ministries, advocacy or service.

*(These materials are from only one of hundreds of resources available at uua.org that explain **The Uncommon Denomination** program. Though the advertising component of this program is the best well-known, the website materials associated with it provide outstanding tips for best practices in healthy congregations.)*

Rules to Promote Rational Thinking

By: Martha Davis, Ph.D.; Elizabeth Eshelman, M.S.W.; & Matthew McKay, Ph.D.

Evaluate your self-statements against these six rules, or guidelines, for rational thinking.

The situation doesn't do anything to me.

It doesn't make me anxious or afraid. I say things to myself that produce anxiety and fear.

Everything is exactly the way it should be.

The conditions for things or people to be otherwise don't exist. To say that things should be other than what they are is to believe in magic. They are what they are because of a long series of causal events; including interpretations, responses from irrational self-talk, and so on. To say that things should be different is to throw out causality.

All humans are fallible creatures.

This is inescapable. If you haven't set reasonable quotas of failure for yourself and others, you increase the prospects for disappointment and unhappiness. It becomes all too easy to attack yourself and others as worthless, bad, and so on.

It takes two to have a conflict.

Before beginning a course of accusation and blame, consider the 30 percent rule. Any party to a conflict is contributing at least 30 percent of the fuel to keep it going.

The original cause is lost in antiquity.

Trying to discover who did what first is a waste of time. The search for the original cause of chronic painful emotions is extremely difficult. The best strategy is to make decisions to change your behavior now.

We feel the way we think.

This is the positively stated principle behind the first statement in the list. This statement reinforces the idea that events don't cause emotions - our interpretations of events cause emotions.

INSIGHT

Recognize that there are three levels of insight necessary to change:

1. Knowledge that you have a problem, and awareness of some of the events that may have caused the problem.
2. Seeing clearly that the irrational ideas you acquired early in life are creating the emotional climate you live in now, and that consciously or unconsciously you work fairly hard to perpetuate them.
3. The strong belief that after discovering these two insights, you will still find no way of eliminating the problem other than steadily, persistently, and vigorously working to change your irrational ideas.