

# Session #9



*Resources are available –both human and divine –  
that can help to bring about the changes we seek  
These resources are a cause for ultimate optimism*

# Four Aspects of Growth

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

## 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.

## 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.

## Maturation Growth

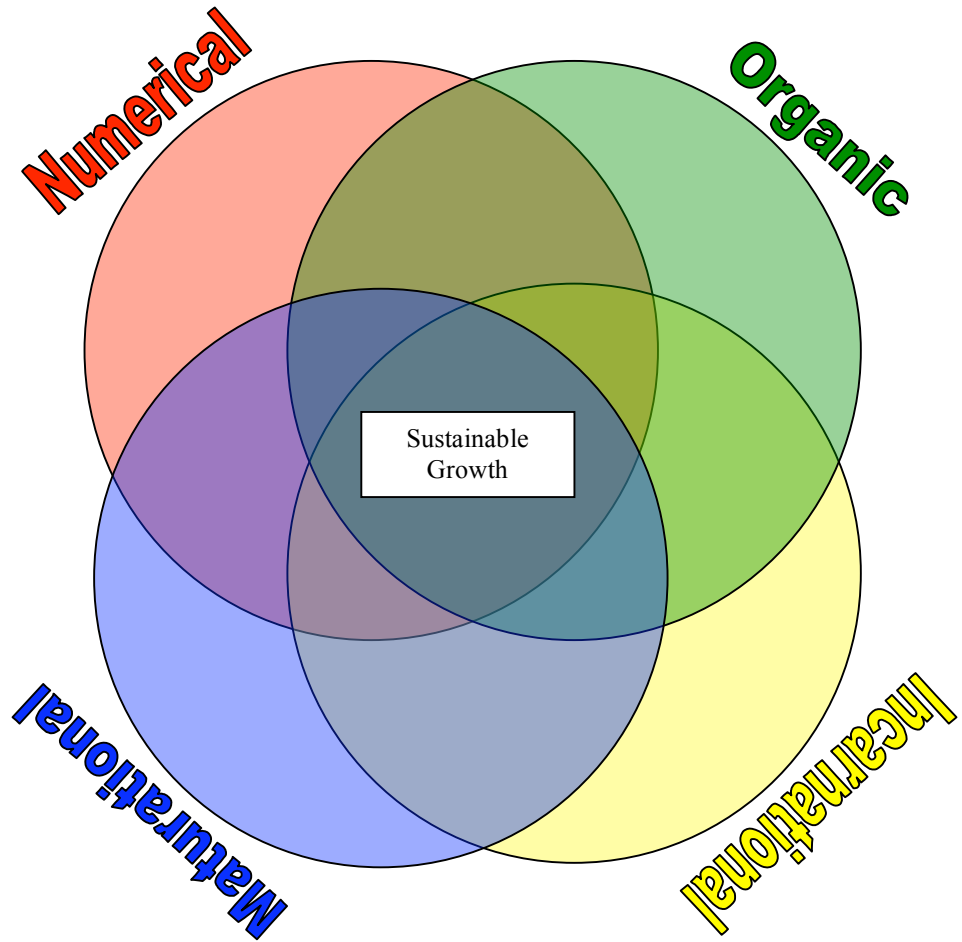
The ability of a congregation to challenge, support and encourage each one of its members to grow in the maturity of their faith, to deepen their spiritual roots, and to broaden their religious imagination. It is also the ability of the congregation as an institution to go deeper into the faith while 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?*

**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