

# Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex Growth Strategy for Unitarian Universalism

## Introduction

Development of a Metropolitan Strategy for Growth of Unitarian Universalism grew out of the need to find a new way to address extension and growth efforts.

Continentially:

- 1969 was a membership peak (280,000)
- 1969-1983 showed sharp decline
- adult membership growth in UU congregations has been consistent but modest (usually less than 1% a year).
- Totals from 2000 directory: 155,449 certified members; 61,482 RE
- Fewer UU's proportionally than there were at the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America.

Southwest District growth is somewhat better. In the last 10 years, membership of district congregations increased from 8208 to 9272, a 14% increase. Texas did even better, going from 4018 UU's to 5048, a 26% increase in membership.

The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, like the Houston area, is growing at about 25%. The fastest growing membership in Texas (and in the district) is in Austin. San Antonio and Corpus Christi have also done exceptionally well. But DFW provides a strong base where there are a number of churches, most of them growing. Included in the DFW area are nine congregations: First Unitarian Church, Dallas; Horizon UU Church, Carrollton; Community UU Church of Plano; First Jefferson UU Church, Fort Worth; Westside UU Church, Fort Worth; Denton UU Fellowship; UU Fellowship of Dallas (Oak Cliff); Pleasant Valley UU Church, Garland; Arlington UU Church. Sometimes, Red River UU Church in Dennison is included, as it is part of North Texas Association of UU Societies (NTAUUS), though it is outside the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.

The combination of recent growth, good continuing increases in population and a network of solid churches made the DFW Metroplex a good place for a pilot project for the UUA's Metropolitan Growth Strategies, initiated by The Rev. Bill Sinkford. The Metropolitan Strategy developed from the UUA Executive Staff Strategic Plan advocates "a major revision of the existing extension grant-making programs, moving toward a strategy in which underserved and/or high-potential metropolitan areas are identified and locally tailored growth plans developed and resourced." Details of this planning document are in Appendix A.

## History of the Project

Bill Sinkford, who at the time was the Director of the Department of Congregations, Districts and Extension (CD&E) of the UUA, led a meeting November, 2000, at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. Tracey Robinson-Harris, also of CDE, was present and took notes. Participants invited were district staff, ministers of churches in the DFW area, along with the lay people they chose to invite. A summary of the minutes, including people in attendance, is included in the Appendix B.

Eric Posa established an email discussion list to follow up the discussion. There was a brief flurry of discussion, with campus ministry getting a lot of attention initially. Significant interest in a new church start was also registered.

The next step was to have a large weekend meeting dedicated to planning. Tentatively, a meeting was scheduled for a May weekend; however, with some significant people unable to participate at that time and no one to coordinate the tasks locally, the meeting was postponed for late summer or early fall.

With the need for coordination clear and after the blessing of the DFW area ministers, Tracey Robinson-Harris and Bob Hill agreed to hire a consultant to work with the project. Jonalu Johnstone, who also served as the District Growth Consultant, was hired beginning July 1, 2001, to serve as Planning Coordinator. The UUA agreed to commit other resources, as well, including the involvement of Wayne Clark, the Director of Congregational Fundraising Services, for assistance in strategic planning.

Two meetings were planned for October 4 at First Church, Dallas, both including Wayne Clark. The people invited to the afternoon meeting were selected because they were important lay and clergy leaders in the area. They would likely -- and did -- become a Steering Committee for the project. Included among them were Dennis Hamilton, minister of Horizon Church; Laurel Hallman, minister of First Dallas; Marty Robinson, a lay leader, one of the founders of Horizon; and Howard McMahan, a lay leader from Westside with strong links to the district and NTAUUS. At the afternoon meeting, intense discussion created a change in the approach to be taken. Recognizing that a sizable group from different congregations wanted a new church in Northeast Tarrant County *quickly* and asserting that leadership was needed more than solicitation of ideas, the Steering Committee nixed the original plan to hold a planning weekend with broad participation in November. Instead, the committee listed its goals:

1. Plant a large church in a strategic location.
2. Develop a satellite by First Church, Dallas.
3. Grow Horizon from a midsize to a large size church.
4. Promote the growth of small and mid-sized churches.
5. Acquire land in strategic locations for future churches.

The evening meeting, attended by a cross-section of lay leaders and clergy, included a presentation on demographics by Lyssa Jenkins, President of the First Church Dallas, and Vice-President for Research of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce and a presentation by Jonalu Johnstone on the findings about growth in the Southwest District among UU's during the last ten years. Wayne Clark also expressed the UUA's support for the project.

Additional members were added to the Steering Committee, based on the recommendation of the current members, as well as ministers and others involved in the conversation. The final committee included 3 ministers (of the churches which include members in the area most likely for the new congregation), the President of the North Texas Area UU's (NTAUUS), the cluster group that includes Dallas/Fort Worth, a District staff member (Jennifer Nichols-Payne, the Lifespan RE Program Consultant), and lay leaders who had previous involvement in church start-ups. Steering Committee members were drawn from six different area congregations.

A general informational meeting (Nov. 28, 2001) was held for finalizing the charge to the Steering Committee (found in Appendix C). Prior to the meeting, the Steering Committee held extensive conversations about the stakeholders, about the authority with which the Committee was constituted and acted (acknowledging tensions with congregational polity), about the relation to the UUA, and about other groups with which we wanted to network. Though stakeholders were not enumerated in the charge document, there was agreement that the stakeholders include congregations, their members, ministers, UUA, SWUUC, NTAUUS, and the larger community. Invitations to participate (as, for example, in the Nov. 28 meeting) would be open, though the decisions made were not expected to be approved by all individual stakeholders. This allowed the Committee to be open to possibilities -- regardless of level of support -- while maintaining communication with all stakeholders.

Following the November 28 meeting, the Steering Committee, being fully charged, appointed task forces for each of the goals that had been enumerated. Members of the Steering Committee chaired each task force (Large Church Start -- Laurel Hallman and Dennis Hamilton, Co-chairs; Land Acquisition -- Ron Suiter and Steve Lewis, Co-chairs; Horizon Growth -- Marty Robinson; Small to Midsize Church Growth -- Mike Ellsberry). All members of the Steering Committee, except the Chair, served on at least one task force. Task force members were solicited from the churches, from the people who had attended the various large-group meetings that were held, and from key leaders known by the Steering Committee.

Additionally, the chair of the Steering Committee or his designee met with the boards of area congregations to explain the goals and process and to solicit task force members. This helped to build support for the project as well as broaden participation. Several task force members came from these visits with boards. Each task force worked on its own, with regular reports to the Steering Committee. The Planning Coordinator provided support as requested to the task forces, working most closely with the Large Church Start and Small to Midsize Church Growth Task Forces. The Steering Committee met about monthly, with most Task Forces meeting more often. The plan was for each task force to develop its own report, including program, personnel, resources (including budget) and timeline.

Once plans were compiled, Steering Committee members developed an Executive Summary and budget that included all aspects of the plan. The overall draft report – with maps and oral exposition -- was presented to members of all task forces on May 19, where it was warmly received. Purposes of that meeting included:

- to be sure everyone involved in the process is acquainted with the full plan.
- to allow feedback to the plan from task force members.
- to give task force chairs an opportunity to present the plan to a supportive community.
- to identify any problems with the plan or presentation that needed correction before making presentations to congregational Boards, the UUA, and a larger group of stake-holders.

One topic with considerable contention was the process for hiring for the Large Church Start. The task force recommendation was to hire an administrator first. The initial Steering Committee decision was to complete a Ministerial Search first. Ultimately, the task force recommendation won out because of the length of time it would take to conduct a ministerial search. Having a staff person would help keep momentum going.

Steering Committee Chair Howard McMahan, with some assistance from other members presented the final report to all ten congregations. (The Dennison church (Red River) had a visit though it is outside the Metroplex.) All congregation boards endorsed the final plan.

After revisions and refinements, the plan was submitted to Tracey Robinson-Harris and Wayne Clark at General Assembly, June 21, 2002. At this meeting, we identified a fiscal agent, NTAUUS. In an area without an established cluster organization, one of the churches or the district might serve this role. We agreed to appoint a Search Committee for the New Church Minister. Members were to include:

- local ministers,
- potential members of the large church,
- a district staff member,
- persons with RE involvement and/or a young adult, and
- representatives from the UUA (the Large Congregations Staff person and another congregational services representative).

We discussed and agreed on particular individuals to invite to join the Search Committee. Three of these had been part of the Steering Committee, and an additional one had served on the New Church Start Task Force. We determined to use the criteria and salary guidelines from the UUA New Congregation Formation Task Force. At this meeting, Wayne expressed that he was ending his involvement, since the planning process had been completed.

As the UUA Board had already approved funding for the project, no further presentation was required. Tracey agreed to come to Dallas/Fort Worth for further discussions and celebration in August. The series of meetings she participated in included:

- the first meeting of the Ministerial Search Committee
- a meeting with the Steering Committee to review the report, answer questions, discuss resources available from the UUA, and further plans for implementation
- a tour of the area, pointing out prospective church placements,
- appointment of a Search Committee for an administrator, and
- a reception to celebrate approval of the plan. Besides inviting everyone on our contact list, congregations and the press were encouraged to attend.

## **Current Status**

We have now fully entered the implementation phase of the project. The Steering Committee remains in place to coordinate and oversee implementation of all parts of the project. A Search Committee is at work looking for a Minister to lead the new church, and a subcommittee of the Steering Committee has selected an administrator to be hired early in 2003. In early 2003, First Dallas will begin planning development of a satellite operation, which is part of the overall plan. Horizon continues with its planning process. Potential funding sources are being explored for the Small to Midsize Church Task Force recommendations.

With NTAUUS established as the fiscal agent and the understanding that contracting of staff will be through the UUA until a legal church is incorporated, some of the lines of authority have been established. However, questions of authority and finances remain. For example, part of the plan involves First Dallas and Horizon Churches specifically. In what ways are they accountable to the Steering Committee... or the Steering Committee to them? With specific funding for the new church at least partially established, questions remain about how other parts of the plan may be funded. Questions about land acquisition for future congregations remain unanswered.

## **Role of the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee was central to development of the plan. Members represented all the major – and some of the smaller – churches. Ministerial participation was crucial; three ministers served on the committee. Lay people included those who have been active in district work, people who had helped to start congregations, and people with particular skills related to the tasks of their groups (finance, real estate, etc.). Steering Committee members also played important communication roles, as they also served in other capacities with particular groups, such as the New Congregation Start Task Force of the UUA.

The chair of the Steering Committee was an experienced lay leader who had time and energy to devote to the project. Besides general chair duties such as developing agendas (in discussion with the Planning Coordinator), he met with congregation boards and chaired the selection committee for the administrator. Communication with the Planning Coordinator was crucial.

As the plan itself neared completion, the role of the Steering Committee changed, yet the group felt the need to continue. The goals shifted from plan development to implementation. Though the Steering Committee itself is not responsible for implementing the plan, they remain a monitoring body, accomplishing such tasks as appointing the Search Committee for the minister for the new church. No doubt changes in roles and responsibilities will continue.

## **Role of the Planning Coordinator**

The role, as determined by initial contract with the UUA, was:

- assisting leaders in the Dallas/Forth Worth metropolitan area to develop a long-term, comprehensive, collaborative growth strategy;
- researching best practices in congregational development and demographic trends in the DFW metro area in order to influence decisions to be made related to a metropolitan strategy and new congregation planning;
- developing resources to support a new congregation;
- creating scenarios, including timetables and budgets, to aid in decision making;
- maintaining contact and facilitating communication among interested individuals, congregations, the Southwest District and the UUA;
- planning meetings as needed, for decision making.

Much of my energies were spent in communication with people concerned with the project – on and off the Steering Committee and Task Forces. When all was going well, little effort was needed. At times that the process bogged down, or there were disagreements among participants, more work was required. Other tasks included sharing resources and research with the task forces, setting up and keeping records of

meetings, checking in with task forces about their progress, maintaining a database of contacts for the project, serving as a point person, etc.

The position was set-up as quarter-time, averaging 3 units per week. The truth is that some weeks I did not work on the project, while other weeks I worked as many as 11 units. The monthly average was actually 12 units. My work as Growth Consultant for the district did help, since my knowledge of area churches and people gained from that work enhanced work on the DFW project. Besides, as I attended meetings related to the Growth Consultant position, opportunities arose to communicate about the DFW project.

Immediate supervision was provided by the District Executive (Bob Hill). This was helpful because he had a foot in both worlds – the district and the UUA – without being intimately involved with the process of creating the plan. That is, though he attended some meetings, he was not a part of the Steering Committee, did not attend all meetings, and did not participate in any of the task forces. This combination of distance and involvement provided a good perspective for the supervisor of the Planning Coordinator. Of course, supervision in such a circumstance will never be close; the Planning Coordinator must be a self-starter and independent worker. Admittedly, the relations were complex (who do I call? Tracey? Bob? or Howard?!), but good communication makes them manageable.


## Recommendations

- Ensure broad involvement in the process. That does not necessarily mean a lot of large meetings. We secured involvement through:
  - a) maintaining communication with the Board and minister of each congregation in the area. Each church Board – regardless of the congregation size or relationship with the district or NTAUUS – was given an opportunity for 2 presentations by Steering Committee members about the project. We always sought to include rather than exclude, even congregations we might expect would be hostile to our goals. Eventually, all congregations in the area endorsed the plan.
  - b) involving a large number of people in task forces. Our total membership of Steering Committee and task forces was more than thirty people from seven different congregations.
  - c) maintaining communication and building commitment of other groups, including NTAUUS and the District Board. NTAUUS even contributed money towards miscellaneous costs, such as copying, supplies, and refreshments at meetings.
  - d) talking across the district about the project, including to representatives of Houston area churches, to ministers in the district, in the District newsletter, and at district meetings.
  - e) celebration. Our reception for Tracey Robinson-Harris in August, 2002, celebrating acceptance of the plan by the UUA included about 80 people, representing 8 different congregations.
- Coordinate efforts and use association resources. It was helpful to have a member of the Steering Committee serving on the New Congregations Start-up Task Force of the UUA, as he kept us informed of their deliberations. Also helpful was a connection with Large Church Ministers through another Steering Committee member. Our New Church Start Task Force was able to interview UUA Large Church Consultant Stefan Jonasson, who later served on the Search Committee for the minister. Wayne Clark's assistance with planning was invaluable.
- Conduct research beyond the association. Other denominations and independent churches offer models and approaches that we need to explore, not only nationally, but locally, as what works in one region may not translate well to another. In our case, visits to large churches in Dallas/Fort Worth (Large Church Heaven!) were extremely fruitful, giving task force members pictures of what they had read about. We all read *The Very Large Church*, by Kennon Callahan and distributed a reading list (in appendix) of other resources. Local demographic research, of course, adds a great deal to the planning process; we relied on Lyssa Jenkins, a UU who is Vice-President of Research for the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, and for our Land Acquisition Task Force, on UU's with local real estate knowledge.

- Be sure the people with the most at stake are involved or represented on the Steering Committee, or on Task Forces. At minimum, keep communication with stakeholders clear. Stakeholders include not only those who are enthusiastic about growth, but also those who have reservations, especially if they have influence among UU's in the area. This could include ministers or key lay leaders of congregations near a potential start-up church; ministers or key lay leaders of small congregations who fear they will be left out of the process; ministers or key lay leaders of large churches who may have their own approach; and potential funders of the plan.
- If there is not clear articulation of major goal areas by area leaders, as we had through our Steering Committee, then a weekend retreat may be required to form some consensus. Several people in Dallas/Fort Worth, both on and off the Steering Committee, raised serious opposition to the idea of a weekend retreat. Some described frustration with the process at the initial meeting (November, 2000) where ideas were brainstormed. Ideals about process may vary regionally, but here UU's were ready for the Steering Committee to propose and develop the goal statements without much input, quite likely because the leaders involved in the Steering Committee were widely respected people who knew what area UU's wanted and what their priorities were.
- Realize that other work will branch out from this. For example, though our final plan mentioned nothing about campus ministry, energy for campus ministry that was expressed through the process was reflected by two of the area congregations working with campus programs. The Fall Leadership Conference for the District was influenced by conversations in our Steering Committee and Task Forces. Talk of growth in the area generated talk of growth in our churches. That's all OK; everything doesn't have to be part of the plan in order for something to happen around it. Simply being part of the conversation gives energy to other endeavors.
- Hiring a Planning Coordinator for the process is a good idea. Church leaders, lay and ministerial, are -- appropriately! -- centered on their own churches. Someone needs to devote time and energy to making sure that the process is started and continues on schedule. Ideally, that person should be a UU living in the area, who has some expertise in planning and/or church growth. If there's a part-time Growth Consultant available, that could be perfect! Attending Extension Training was not particularly helpful to me, having been through it before in 1993 and having done extensive work with church growth issues since then. However, if someone did not have church growth background, such training would be crucial.

Committed to the growth of UUism wherever it occurs, I remain available for questions and discussion about the process, hoping that we can be helpful to UU's in other places who begin a Metropolitan Strategy for Growth of UUism.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonalu Johnstone

## Appendices

- A. from UUA Executive Staff Strategic Plan
- B. Summary of Nov, 2000 Meeting
- C. Charge to the Steering Committee
- D. Reading List

## Appendix A. from UUA Executive Staff Strategic Plan

### Objective 1. Extension

*“To undertake a major revision of the existing extension grant-making programs, moving toward a strategy in which underserved and/or high-potential metropolitan areas are identified and locally tailored growth plans developed and resourced.”*

#### Rationale:

Following a period of sharp decline in membership (1969-1983), adult membership growth in UU congregations has been consistent but modest (usually less than 1% a year). Total membership (215,000 in 1999) still remains 25% lower than its high of 280,000 in 1969. In an era of expanding total population, the proportion of persons who are members of UU congregations is substantially lower currently than at the time of merger in 1961.

Beginning in the mid-1980's, the Association adopted an intentional strategy to support growth of the movement, funded substantially by monies from Shelter Rock. The strategy was to support (1) the movement of small congregations into full-time ordained ministry and (2) the formation of small, new congregations with full-time ministry. The grant-making programs relied on local energy and initiative, which the Association could support, rather than analysis of opportunities/needs. Financial support for congregational growth was thus not only centered in small congregations, but also skewed toward areas which most rapidly accepted the growth agenda.

The effort has born fruit, with more than 120 small congregations supported into full-time ministry, a substantial number of ministers trained to support growth, and a broad ownership of the importance of numerical growth for the movement.

However, the vast majority of congregations supported have plateaued at pastoral size (under 150 adult members) where financial support for ministry remains a challenge (See Fundraising Objective). It is difficult for congregations at this size to sustain sufficient energy and sense of mission to offer significant UU presence and voice in their communities (See Vision and Voice Objective). Few “Beacon” churches have been created.

Reliance on local energy has also reinforced a kind of demographic determinism (we replicate who we are) and focused support in increasingly suburban and ex-urban areas as white, middle-class flight from urban centers accelerated.

Our strategies have left most existing mid-size and large congregations feeling under-supported, except at times of ministerial transition or conflict. The expansion of effective leadership training (See Leadership Training Objective), continental conference and consulting programs has helped, but for most of our leadership Extension has come to mean support for small congregations. And, importantly, we have not developed models to support more rapid growth.

The imperative for growth was based in part on fear that the demographic bulge of the baby-boom generation would pass the movement by unless we organized ourselves to capitalize on it. Recent psychographic studies indicate a large, receptive potential audience for our faith (See Objective 2). The aging-out of the baby-boom generation offers greater possibilities for growth of our movement rather than an end to opportunity. To capitalize on this opportunity will require flexibility in the use of our financial resources and a shift toward intentional, pro-active planning. It will require a larger view of the needs in areas, rather than a narrow view based on the needs of existing small worshipping communities. Increasingly we will need to ask how congregations can work together, building both on the strength of the independent single congregation and on the possibility for lateral support which is also central to our polity.

**Activities:**

Articulate a growth objective for the movement, using as a convenient benchmark, 1/10% of the population of a given metropolitan area being members in UU congregations in that area.

Metropolitan areas will be selected for special emphasis based on an evaluation of the top 100 metropolitan areas in the US and Canada to determine:

- (1) areas of relative strength and weakness for UUism vs the 1/10% objective
  - (2) relative strengths of our congregations in the area (including site, worship, social ministries, religious education, stewardship)
  - (3) growth trends (both demographic and psychographic) in the area
- (Peter Francese, the founder of American Demographics Magazine, has agreed to assist with the demographic analysis)

Convene conversations in 25 metropolitan areas (over 5 years) to assess willingness (and readiness) of existing congregations to participate in the development and implementation of a metropolitan growth plan.

Structure growth plans with appropriate resourcing for execution. These will be flexible and tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of the area. Possible components might include:

Training for congregational leaders in growth skills (visitor tracking, new member “assimilation”, etc.)

Support for additional staffing in existing congregation

Use of advertising/PR (See Objective 2). This could be tailored to the strengths/opportunities in particular areas, but would typically involve our greatest strengths as movement: comprehensive sexuality education, “welcoming” and anti-racism/anti-oppression work

Support for public witness work on a metropolitan basis

Selective new congregation formation, as well as support for justice-making and non-congregational ministries (to youth and young adults, for example)

Growth plans would receive input from and be evaluated by a new “Growth Council” made up of staff, volunteer leaders with demonstrated congregational growth success and, possibly, representatives of funding sources.

Develop a financial resource plan for support of these efforts drawing on the Veatch Program, Capital Campaign funds (both from Handing on the Future and the new Capital Campaign), Chalice Lighters, local “angels with a commitment to growth and the Fund for Unitarian Universalism.

Execution of this plan assumes continuation of the effective Extension training efforts (See Leadership Development Objective) which become resources. The existing Extension Ministry Program (Phase 1) will be substantially reduced and the New Congregation Ministry Program shifted to support the metropolitan planning process. A very select number of high potential individual sites for New and Extension Ministry will continue to be supported.

Additional staff support will be needed to convene and lead the metropolitan conversations and execute the growth plans. Evaluation of staff needs (and the extent to which a reduction in the Extension Ministry Programs would create excess capacity) remains to be done.

## Appendix B Summary of Meeting Minutes

November, 2000

### First Unitarian Church, Dallas

#### Persons Present:

The Rev. Bob Hill (District Executive)	David B. Gray
The Rev. Marjorie Montgomery (District Program Consultant for RE)	Ron Suiter (Community, Plano)
The Rev. Jonalu Johnstone (District Growth Consultant)	Rusty Pafford
The Rev. Dennis Hamilton (Horizon)	Paul Maginnis
The Rev. Craig Roshaven (First Jefferson)	Linda Franklin
The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong (Community, Plano)	Hardy Sanders (First Dallas)
Mary Bielass (Intern Minister, First Dallas)	Betty Sanders (First Dallas)
Jon Reid (Intern Minister, Community Plano)	James T. Brown (former DE; First Jefferson)
Myrtle McMahan (Westside, Fort Worth; District APF Consultant)	Eric Posa (Denton; RE Assistant, Horizon)
Howard McMahan (Westside, Fort Worth)	Rick Magnis
Marty Robinson (Horizon)	Philip Douglas (First Jefferson)
	Lyssa Jenkins (First Dallas)
	Pat Heidel
	Dan Sexton (First Jefferson)
	Kristin Robertson (First Dallas)

#### Meeting Summary

Bill Sinkford presented the vision of development of a Metropolitan Strategy. Ideas were brainstormed, including the start-up of a new congregation and outreach to young adults, especially in college. Participants listed a number of items as necessary for this planning process to be effective:

#### Initial needs identification of mission, goals and priorities)

- a thorough demographic study
- Energy in particular places
- Assessment of status of UUism in DFW over last five years: what is happening; numerical track and histories
- Understand barriers to growth for current congregations: land, money, people
- Reading list of things that we can use to educate ourselves
- what kind of people are attracted to what kind of churches and why?

#### Later needs(development of strategies and implementation)

- Effective ways of inviting people who do not know us to come out and be part of a new church (mail, PR, phone bank, flyers, etc, best practices to attract members to a new congregation)
- Best research out of Hartford Seminary; congregational studies theory
- If we focus on congregational start - what resources give them the best kick off?
- Non congregational model: Young Adult for example -- might need to invent the wheel.
- How much money we have and can expect to have?
- Stealing what you can from other groups to help us do this
- More about how urban ministry programs can work
- Develop a name bank of realtors for land purchase
- Professional leadership comes before land most all of the time. Hire a minister
- Identifying the qualities of ministers that are particularly effective
- Media sources that we can tap to reach wide range of people
- One UUA resource that may be available is advertising test funding
- Push the envelope of change worship on Wednesday night for example and consider sharing space; push envelope of the way we have always done things
- Congregation known as "social beacon" push the news out to those we think will come; broader vision

- No one project can meet all ministry needs in DFW long view and large plan can go further
- What level of program and resources are needed; how do we match congregations and their characteristics with the size of the congregation
- Need to identify how much money we can raise locally and how much UUA can contribute

➤ **Appendix C**  
**November 28, 2001**

**CHARGE FOR THE COMMITTEE TO FOSTER GROWTH OF  
UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISM IN THE  
NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS METROPLEX**

While the U-U congregations in the Metroplex have been growing the rate of growth has lagged far behind the rate of increase in area population. One result of this trend is reduced influence and importance of the U-U voice and presence in community life as our voice comes from a smaller percentage of citizens. Today there is approximately one member of a U-U congregation for every 3,000 persons, a minuscule presence.

The Growth Steering Committee (GSC) will guide the preparation of a 5-10 year plan to focus and coordinate activities for the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference, the North Texas Association of Unitarian-Universalist Association and local congregations to accelerate the growth of U-Uism in the Metroplex to three times the current number or 5,100 members by December 31, 2011.

The GSC will:

- Assure that all stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of the plan.
- Identify the relative potential for growth of:
  - existing congregations.
  - sponsorship of new congregations by present ones.
  - start up congregations in under served areas of the metroplex.
- Identify available and potential resources required for implementation and secure commitment of the resources.
- Recommend specific goals for meeting growth targets and monitor achievement of goals.
- Recommend allocation of funds from UUA, SWUUC, and NTAUUS for specific programs and projects.
- Evaluate programs and projects for effectiveness and portability.

The plans will be divided into three sections:

- Immediate action plan—2002-2004
- Intermediate plan—2005-2008
- Long range plan –2009-2011.

**THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Throughout the process outlined below there must be continuous communication to and participation of all stakeholders. Of all the elements and steps contained in this charge, this is the most critical to the success of the effort. There must also be a culture in every participating congregation that not only welcomes growth, but also pursues it, both in numbers and depth of religious experience.

Preparation of a plan of the scope envisioned by the UUA and the Metroplex Representatives that attended one or both of the meetings held to date will require a major effort and time commitment.

Task forces will be appointed to prepare a strategic plan outline for each of the major goals:

1. Plant a large church in a strategic location.
2. Develop a satellite of First Church, Dallas.
3. Grow Horizon from a midsize to a large size church.
4. Promote the growth of those small sized churches that want to become midsize Churches.

5. Acquire land in strategic locations for future churches.

A member of the steering Committee will chair each of the task forces.

The Plan outline will lay out the necessary steps to move from where we are today to achievement of the specific goal.

Three categories of requirements will be addressed:

Programming

Staffing

Facilities

An estimate of resources required to achieve each step in the process be prepared. For the initial planning phase, where the required resources will come from is not an issue. That will come later as the strategic plan outlines are merged into an over all plan.

At that time over all priorities will be established and the anticipated sources of required resources be determined.

Completion of this initial phase of the project is scheduled for April 30, 2002.

## Appendix D Reading List Church Growth Topics

Compiled by The Rev. Jonalu Johnstone  
For Dallas/ Fort Worth Growth Strategy Task Force

### Books

Alexander, Scott, Ed., *Salted with Fire: Unitarian Universalist Strategies for Sharing Faith and Growing Congregations*. Skinner House Books, 1994. A source for inspiration and ideas that are explicitly UU. Twenty-two essays from diverse authors, including Marilyn Sewell, Tony Larsen, Brent Smith, Suzelle Lynch, and Charles Gaines.

George, Carl, *Prepare Your Church for the Future*. Revell, 1991. Describes the metachurch (“large enough to celebrate, small enough to care”) from an evangelical Christian orientation, showing how it is a model for the future. The ideas are inspiring even if the theology has to be overlooked.

George, Carl, with Warren Bird, *How to Break Growth Barriers: Capturing Overlooked Opportunities for Church Growth*. Building on his earlier books, George applies his approaches to specific growth barriers typically found in churches (200 attendance, 400 attendance, etc.).

Mann, Alice, *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*. The Alban Institute, 1998. An accessible description of the dynamics of congregational shifts from family to pastoral to program to corporate size church, including discussion of adding worship services and staff. Also addresses making the size transitions of growing smaller.

Mead, Loren, *More Than Numbers: The Way Churches Grow*. The Alban Institute, 1993. An accessible overview of the various types of church growth: numerical, maturational, organic, and incarnational. An excellent starting point for exploration of the topic of church growth.

Oswald, Roy M. and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr., *Discerning Your Congregation’s Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach*. The Alban Institute, 1996. Provides specific workshop plans and meeting strategies for planning in a congregational setting. A strong underlying spiritual component.

Rendle, Gil, *Leading Change in the Congregation*. Using practical experience and research, discerns how leaders can work with change in their congregations.

Roozen, David A. and C. Kirk Hadaway, *Church and Denominational Growth: What Does (and Does Not) Cause Growth or Decline*. Abingdon Press, 1993. Compilation of a broad selection of research-based essays. Not as accessible as Alban books, but full of trends, analysis, and useful facts about what does and does not correlate with growth.

Schaller, Lyle, *The Very Large Church: New Rules for Leaders*. Abingdon Press, 2000. Places large churches in the context of cultural shifts to larger institutions. Examines the rules that operate differently for large churches.

### Periodicals

*Congregations*. A bimonthly publication of The Alban Institute, a recognized leader in providing resources for clergy and lay people. The Alban Institute, 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1250W, Bethesda, MD 20814-3211 [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

*Net Results*. A monthly publication of ideas for evangelism and strengthening churches. Christian orientation. Net Results, 5001 Avenue N, Lubbock, TX 79412-2993