

**MBD Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2008**

The meeting was held at The Winchester Unitarian Society in Winchester.

Present

Directors: John Laursen (Secretary), Pat Manley, Lynne Merl, Lilli Nye, Melissa Quirk (Vice-President and Chief Governing Officer).

MBD Staff: Terasa Cooley (District Executive), Liz Strong (Program Consultant), Andrew Tripp (Ministerial Intern for Marketing and Growth) with organizational assistance from Judy Murray.

MBD Moderator: Sheldon Bennett.

UUA Trustee: Paul Rickter.

The meeting was called to order at around 9am.

ACTION: Minutes of December 7, 2007 meeting were approved.

UUA Trustee Report

The Panel on Theological Education is re-vamping how it funds theological schools. Allocating funding for excellence in ministry at the schools is preferred over the traditional reliance upon grants for student scholarships.

Paul Rickter is the Liaison to YRUU Advisory Committee: Paul commented upon the ongoing communication struggles that may lead to possible policy decisions that would substantially change our method of conducting youth ministry.

Rob Eller-Isaacs and UUA Board continuing to move through means limitations policies for proposed move to Policy Governance.

Independent Affiliates are being reviewed; being encouraged to "cluster" under "themes" and communicating amongst themselves.

Urban Ministry considered a good model

Shifting expectations as definition of Independent Affiliates is changed.

Groups locally oriented to be more affiliated with District rather than nationally (this is through the UUA).

District President's Report

MBD can expect ~\$30k from Association Sunday.

The MBD intends to create a special fund to be concerned with Growth.

Other items discussed at this meeting include:

- The creation of a Young Adult Ministry position.
- Specific Congregational Transition Team support.
- Evaluation tools to be developed to measure effectiveness.
- Congregations Come First report promoting "regionalism" and sharing of resources equitably. For a variety of reasons, some Districts enjoy more resources than others.
- Legal and "Identity" obstacles to be specifically addressed.
- Larger districts already feel that they are too large geographically.
- District being comprised of mostly small congregations that have more connection with their district than with the UUA.
- Regional change occurring, organically, as staff resources are shared amongst Districts.

By-Laws

John Laursen has prepared a case statement for the proposed changes to the by-laws to be presented at the 2008 Annual Meeting. Sheldon Bennett, Pat Manley and John will work together on the presentation. All materials have been posted on-line.

Annual Meeting, April 13, 2008

- Calls have gone out to MBD congregations for delegate registration
- Emphasis upon church leaders to become delegates
- Keynote speaker will be Kay Montgomery, the Executive Vice-President of the UUA
- Thus far, the new AM format has been positively received
- Reports from Paul Rickter, Terasa Cooley, Liz Strong, Sue Adams for the Woburn Fund, Nancy Nichols, Jim Sherblom, and the Nomination Committee and Fair Compensation Team
- APF and District Dues distinction: what services do each provide? What do the congregations want?
- Awards considered?
- Recognizing Liz Strong, Jim Stanton, Jim Sherblom and Barbara Bates
- Nom-Com will be nominating Jeff Beckworth from the Reading congregation. Another director will need to be identified. Sheldon Bennett will continue to serve as District Moderator

District Executive Report

- Relocation of District office to new location in Watertown begun
- Two new staff searches begun: Program Development Director (Acting position)– to be concerned with restructuring of growth and marketing efforts, healthy congregational training, RE development, DYSC and RE development. Young Adult Ministry (12 hours)– Intended to identify and expand connections with UU young adults and campus ministry groups. Terasa and Liz have created teams to help with the search. Position descriptions have been posted on the MBD and UUA websites.
- Emphasis upon the efforts of staff to support Unitarian Universalism according to our Ends
- UU University speaker to be Nick Carter, President of Andover Newton Theological School
- GA taking place in a Federally designated security zone, though area relatively economically accessible. Video available on YouTube.
- Drew Tripp's work emphasizing Growth of UUism via task force focusing upon "hospitality" over, necessarily, marketing and outreach– that growth is not about amassing people but to grow the movement in substance as well. Drew has also been working on bringing those involved with membership from various congregations.

RE Consultant Report

- Liz highlighted the development of the District's Ethics and Safety Guidelines. However, Liz highlighted that stricter sets of guidelines established by individual congregations will hold precedence.
- Liz noted several transitions amongst congregational DRE's in the District.
- Andrew Taylor is presenting three workshops on social action topics in March and April, 2008.

Thoughts about Board discussion topics and tasks for 2008-2009

- Will consider at the June 7 meeting. Information gathered from AM will be helpful.
- Board Policies to be reviewed and updated

Discussion Topics

- Augmenting Board policies
- The continuing concern about how the Board knows it's doing it's work
- Pat and Lilli offered presentation on Growth and Maintaining Our Congregations:

MBD congregational membership has decline by 10% over the last 5 years

Growth reports not based upon strong data. What do we know?

Federated churches skew the data, but most MBD congregations have declined

Trends indicate that congregations are tracking membership more carefully; particularly as dues are membership-based.

Three handouts presented showing changes by percentage, size, and type.

Looking at congregations in the context of the local community would augment information about the growth of UU congregations

Who attends MBD workshops?: Regardless of topic, this info would be helpful in discerning those most interested in change and growth

Current info indicates, given national trend in decline of "Protestant" congregational membership, a possible lack of interest in general growth. How to engage congregations and members in an interest in the growth of the entire UU movement/faith?

Terasa has noted that the Arts and Crafts of Leadership workshops are topic driven. Those attending do so for the topic rather than geographic proximity.

Healthy Congregations are those that can address dysfunction, if not, they cannot grow, but remain "content" as they are.

This brings up the issue of "What is Healthy?" The following criteria have been offered by Alban Institute Consultant, Gil Rendle, as indicators of health:

1. Empowering style of pastoral leadership
2. Gift oriented lay ministry; does congregational structure support generosity?
3. Passionate Spirituality
4. Functional structures that work!
5. Inspiring worship
6. Small groups that encourage the relation of faith to life
7. Loving relationships: those that assert that love between parties of differing opinion can reach open and settled consensus
8. Need oriented outreach

Radical hospitality grows out of all of these criteria.

Congregational health will promote growth

District growth assumes that people identify with identify with the broader movement of UUism rather than only their particular congregation.

Marketing, therefore, needs to be regional. In New England, congregations tend to act "competitive" with each other, not necessarily acting toward common growth, but individual church growth. Due to disparate resources, some churches grow, while others do not.

Healthy congregations, interested in growth, do not try to be "everything to all."

A "Sense of Scarcity" is noted throughout the District. There is a general over-reliance upon other income besides pledging such as endowments and trusts, in-church daycare centers, etc.

Conclusions of Discussion

How does the Board assess the meeting of its Ends? Should the Board consider a reliable survey tool? In that case, then, how to "own" and use the resultant data constructively?

How to be engaged with the constituency?

Complications of creating a survey instrument that effectively measures the accomplishment of the Ends.

Present the Ends of the District at each District workshop and event

Develop covenantal relationships between congregations based upon common social justice goals

Terasa will develop an evaluative instrument intended to aid the Board in the gathering of reliable data from stakeholders. This tool will be vetted by the Board then distributed to all District constituents for whom we have email addresses.

The Board remains committed to continually refining who it serves and supports.

:Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Laursen, Secretary