



Our mission:
To **be** and
to **make**
disciples of
Jesus Christ

December 20, 2011

Dear UALC Members,

Attached is the final report of the UALC 2020 Committee. Thank you to Steve Heavilin (chair), Steve Bidlack, Matt Burkhart, Kelly Monroe Kullberg, Gene Pierce and Rob Twitchell for their service on this committee.

The UALC 2020 Committee was appointed by the Church Council in Fall 2010 to consider the effects of evolving cultural trends and technology on the church generally, and our congregation specifically. This committee was charged with addressing the remarkable changes that are and will be taking place in American society and the church. The committee evaluated how UALC can respond most effectively to those changes as it continues to strive to fulfill its mission “to be and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.”

The 2020 Committee’s final report includes, among other things:

- A timeline of the past 10-15 years at UALC and a current snapshot;
- Using extensive data from multiple sources, a listing of particular changes and challenges that UALC faces;
- A discussion of possible responses to these challenges; and
- A set of conclusions, focal points and recommendations for consideration.

The information provided by the report, and the conclusions and recommendations offered, will be one of the resources considered by the Council as it works in the next six months through a comprehensive process entitled “Clarifying Mission and Vision.” As the name implies, this process is intended to help UALC clarify and implement effectively its mission and vision. Clarifying Mission and Vision is one of the early phases of our Senior Pastor Transition Plan and will be conducted with the assistance of Church Innovations, an organization devoted to assisting churches. As part of the process, members of the congregation will be offered significant opportunities to provide input through a congregation-wide survey, interviews of a cross-section of UALC members and several focus groups.

I encourage you to read the attached report and provide your feedback at council@ualc.org. I also can be reached at 885-9181.

Yours in Christ,

Charles Oellermann
Council Chair



UALC 2020 COMMITTEE REPORT

October 18, 2011

INTRODUCTION

What should UALC look like in 2020? That is the question before the 2020 Vision Committee. Projecting into the future is a difficult task. After all, even ten years ago, the proliferation of social media was nascent, and people questioned the utility of a cell phone camera. With “change” as the only constant, how can we possibly anticipate the next nine years? Of course, the truth is that we cannot.

One thing is certain, however: *We cannot continue doing what we've been doing and, at the same time, expect things to change.*

For UALC to thrive, or even survive, until 2020, we must consider how we will we live out our challenges to grow up strong in God's word, build up our communities, reach out in mission, and branch out locally. In other words, “to be and make disciples of (and in) all nations.”

Other questions that must be considered include: What will the world (and our small corner of it) look like then? Who are the people most likely to see Jesus in us every week? How will changing technology and lifestyles impact us? How will God work through us in the next ten years to redeem our world?

These questions demand answers. And finding answers will require the congregation's sustained commitment to address the questions together so that 2020 finds UALC in the middle of God's plan for redeeming our world.

The answers are critical. Just to set the stage, we believe that, in the next nine years, God will either empower our church with a fresh invitation to join Him in His awesome adventure, or we will continue a downward arc into ineffectiveness and irrelevance.

In the last 55 years, God has certainly done much through UALC. But He wants to do so much more.

I. DISCUSSION

A. Where did we come from?

To see where we are going, we must first know where we came from. Here is some of UALC's recent history "by the numbers."

1989: Contemporary worship style begins as standalone service

2000: Mill Run campus opens

2002: Hilltop ministry begins with affiliation with Highland Elementary School and merger of Hilltop Lutheran Church property to UALC

Pastor Jim Wessel retires

2003: Pastor Paul Ullring becomes senior pastor

2004: Attendance peaks (2,470 attending weekly)

Pastor Jeff Marian arrives

Xalt-style worship begins

2005: Brodie Taphorn arrives

2006: Begin "Grow Up / Build Up / Reach Out / Branch Out"

Pastor Dave Mann and Pam Mann go to Haiti

Pastor Wessel disclosure

2007: Jubilee campaign to erase debt (raised about \$8 million in addition to tithes and offering)

Craig Courtney leaves

Rob Rucker begins ministry responsibilities

Congregational tithes and offering peak at \$5.2 million.

2008: Attendance Peaks in Jan/Feb/Mar

Pastor Marian leaves

Pastor Eric Waters arrives

2009: Sale of 16 acres at Mill Run

Congregation becomes debt free

Dan Clark arrives

ELCA “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” report delivered

2010: Scott Ford assumes leadership at hilltop

UALC leaves ELCA, joins NALC, and affirms its continuing relationship with LCMC

2011: Buff Delcamp, Brodie Taphorn, and Dan Clark called as UALC pastors

Pastor John Stolzenbach retires

B. What are we now, in 2011?

As of July 2011, attendance averages 1,983 each Sunday across three locations, nine services, and five different worship styles.

Total weekly attendance has declined since 2004, although 2007 and 2008 were stable.

Vacation Bible School draws 1,228 participants for two weeks in June, with about 400 teen and adult volunteers.

Annual giving is \$4,502,530 for the 2010 full calendar year.

C. What Are the Changes and Challenges We Can Identify Now?

Youth

Teenagers’ faith practices are at lowest levels since 1998 in six of nine categories.

1. Small group attendance
2. Prayer
3. Sunday School participation
4. Donations to churches
5. Reading sacred texts other than the Bible
6. Evangelism

(Source: Barna Research, July 2010)

In addition, the proliferation of extracurricular activities results in less time for our young people to engage on a spiritual level. Additionally, in this “post–Columbine” era , only students and staff are allowed on high school campuses. The “old” ways of reaching out to students personally at school (through which many in our church came to faith) is no longer an option. New outreach opportunities must be pursued in a way that accommodates new behavior patterns and methods of access.

Aging Congregational Leadership

As Pastor Paul has said recently, even the next five years will bring about a significant turnover with both our pastoral and support staff. By 2020, many of those currently involved in church and ministry leadership will be well into their seventies.

International Outreach

Ethnic and economic diversity is growing in our core residential communities of Hilliard, Dublin, Upper Arlington, Worthington and western Franklin County. (Source: Census Data as reported in the Columbus Dispatch, March 27, 2011.) Most of the residential areas around the Mill Run and Lytham Road campuses showed 25% to more than 100% increases in black, Latino and Asian residents in the last ten years.

There are dramatically more

- Internationals in the Central Ohio workplace,
- Latinos living in Central Ohio,
- Non–native born Muslims living in Central Ohio and
- International students enrolled at OSU for undergrad and graduate degree programs.

Declining US Economic Strength/Stability

Increasing economic difficulties and unequal growth is bumping some lower middle class Franklin County residents into the “working poor.”

One fourth of all Franklin County homeowners owe more for their homes than the property is worth on the open market, though this may be a temporary circumstance.

Cultural Challenges

9% of all adults have biblical worldview. (Source: Barna Research, March 2009)

Increased work, school and social pressure are discouraging regular participation in worship and Christian education programs throughout the week. Even weekends have more demanding schedules threatening the “Sabbath” for families and individuals.

In addition, the post-modern and “post-Christian” nature of our culture (where faith and a relationship with Christ are no longer assumed) makes the old ways of “doing church” ineffective. Historically, a focus on church membership, doctrine, and programs would result in a church that regenerates itself with each generation. Aside from the failures of that model over the last forty years to reach new believers, the model will not now even sustain an individual church. Ministry must take the form of mission work with pastors leading and equipping their members to live in constant mission outside the church. In effect, our congregation must be so impassioned—so motivated by the truth that those without Christ have no real hope—that they live out the Great Commission in their own life. In other words, UALC must grow by conversion and not by simply changing the address at which people worship. In this context, the needs of outsiders become paramount so that relationships may be built with—and the truth of Christ proclaimed to—those who need it most.

For too long, Christianity has been defined as “protecting the truth, insulating our children, and surviving the onslaught of competing thoughts.” [Source: TACiC p. 169.] The result has been “Christians who lack the vitality and depth that should mark Christ-followers.” [Source: TACiC p. 187] But in this new reality, and even more in 2020, the result of this continued trend can only be an ultimate demise.

Twenty Somethings

Nationally, religiously unaffiliated Young adults (18–29) have nearly doubled since 1980 (23% from 12%). (Source: General Social Surveys.) Our own church has shown a reduction in attendance by those in that age range, as well.

Contributing to the impact of these societal shifts is the fact that many graduating college students are saddled with heavy student loan debts. So much so that some sending agencies are turning down otherwise qualified missions candidates on account of heavy student loan debt. (Source: Christianity Today, June, 2011 edition)

Adults 18–29 are less likely to agree “Religion is very important” (45%) compared to adults 50–64 (59%) and adults 65+ (69%). (Source: General Social Surveys)

More Americans (particularly US-born upper income adults) are postponing marriage, having fewer children, and having those children later, thus limiting the reach and impact of one of UALC's most effective outreach and enfolding programs, Vacation Bible School.

SOURCE: Marriage age Data from the U.S. Census Bureau:

2010: men 28.2 ~~ women 26.1
 1990: men 26.1 ~~ women 23.9

See <http://marriage.about.com/od/statistics/a/medianage.htm>

Parent Age at Birth of First Child:

Rising Motherhood, 1990 to 2008 (% of births by characteristics of mother)			
	1990	2008	Percentage Point Change
Mother's Age			
< 20	13	10	-3
20-34	78	75	-3
35+	9	14	+5
Mother's Race			
White	65	53	-12
Black	16	15	-1
Hispanic	14	24	+10
Asian	3	6	+3
Mother's Marital Status			
Married	72	59	-13
Unmarried	28	41	+13

Note: 2008 data are preliminary. Percentages may not total to 100% due to missing data or rounding.
Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

PewResearchCenter

See link to full article about data at:

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1586/changing-demographic-characteristics-american-mothers>

The record is also clear that the church is not as successful at re-engaging twenty somethings after they marry and have children. Deepening the commitment to those youth

currently in the church (Grow Up!) is certainly vital. But finding new ways to be relevant to unmarried young adults is also necessary.

Changing Communications Vehicles:

The church's use of social media lags behind national usage rates reflecting the age of our congregation.

Social media is a growing vehicle for sharing information about UALC and Christian faith. But UALC is still identifying and developing its most effective social media leaders and deciding how much autonomy to provide pastors and ministry leaders in this area. In the "world," however, social media is successful because it is unfiltered and personal. Significant oversight, review, and editing are inconsistent with an effective use of social media that will connect personally with both congregants and future believers.

In addition, the use of visual aids in worship drags dramatically behind other similarly sized congregations. The days of monochromatic and static displays of worship lyrics are long past. Given the availability of reasonably-priced worship software, enhancing the Sunday morning experience would not be difficult and would permit the church to appear less arcane.

The use of electronic giving options, computer kiosks in the fellowship halls and lobbies, text messaged prayer requests, and the use of simultaneous sermon broadcasting should all be investigated and evaluated.

Theological Challenges:

Authors and seminary and denominational leaders are eroding authority of Scripture.

An increasingly militant and openly anti-Christian secular humanism/post-Christian cultural mindset is systematically attacking Christian orthodoxy, values, and lifestyle. Being a church in these circumstances is dramatically different than in a nation or society openly proclaiming itself as Christian. It is as if we are back in ancient Rome needing to engage an indifferent or openly hostile culture to grow. The comfort of our routine and familiar Christian vocabulary do us little good if we are unwilling to engage culture for the purpose God has placed us here: to win souls for Him.

Aging UALC population:

The author of *The American Church in Crisis*, David Olson, evaluates the ongoing national decay in mainline church attendance. Churches with declining membership, like ours,

usually share one or more of the following characteristics: a church that has been around more than 40 years; an aging congregation, and an aging leadership. While the result does not have to be a decline in membership, that is certainly the rule. To reverse the trend, UALC must invest in its youth and find ways to deliberately draw in those in their twenties and thirties to be mentored and developed. The perception that age is a critical factor in evaluating suitability for leadership must be changed.

D. What is our response to these challenges?

1. The message is “Jesus, not Church”
2. Boost outreach and evangelism programming
3. Re-center church teaching and worship activities on outreach and evangelism
4. Leverage the geographic location of each campus for outreach
5. Continue policy of funding programs, not buildings
6. Refocus on our local, neighboring communities as being a mission field

Create specific ministry outreaches to:

Target: High School / Youth:

- Youth sports and school organizations for leadership and networking
- Encourage our best and brightest college students to go into K-12 and college teaching careers to combat secular/humanist influences
- Provide opportunities for our youth to develop spiritually meaningful relationships with each other to have the opportunity to say “yes” to Jesus.

Target: Twenty Somethings:

- Large local corporations for Christian outreach in their workplace
- Apartment/condo communities and neighborhoods for coffee clubs and book clubs, guest speakers (Athletes in Action, topical leaders)
- Neighborhood relationships for book clubs and family party / game nights
- OSU and post college adults (learn from / partner with Inter Varsity/Campus Crusade and others)
- Create a network of “Fellows” to reach out to high school and college students
- Other activities targeted to adults but not focused on “families” [read: kids]

Target: Internationals on campus and the workplace:

- Boost grassroots IFI opportunities to congregation
- Build up welcome, literacy and tutoring programs for students and parents in ring suburbs
- Reach parents of grad students and senior internationals separate from students

Target: International missions

- Encourage outreach and summer missions trips.
- Integrate missions into VBS and Sunday School curriculum
- Integrate missions into Adult Education programs

Target: Future Believers and Seekers

- Alpha
- ESOL
- Being intentional about meeting a physical need in order to reach the core spiritual need

Target: Current UALC members

- We need to equip parishioners with a new mindset, skill set, and support network to embrace the new challenges before us.
- We need to intensify worship for our members and draw our members into an ever-deeper walk with Christ.
- We need to identify and enable grassroots leaders who are willing to step into responsibility for these efforts and make leadership and methods more accessible.
- The “community” structure, if it persists, must provide the opportunity for attendees (newcomers and regular attendees alike) to connect personally.
 - Ideas include extending youth Sunday School to permit a fellowship time and/or adult Sunday school following each service for parents.
 - Right now, there is a danger that each community is little more than an expressed worship style preference.
 - The opportunity for the whole church to gather with some regularity. Without that, we are on our way to becoming a group of *wholly* separate communities.

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CONCLUSIONS:

We can't do it. God can. Let us focus our energies at every level of UALC's activities on meeting this challenge as God leads us forward in the power of the Holy Spirit.

UALC is a success story as churches often reach the end of their life cycle after 50 years. UALC has much promise and overcome much in the last 10 years; however, we as a body of Christ have been entrenched in a comfort zone of being more "fans" than "followers" of Christ. Our membership needs a great awakening in order to uphold UALC's mission of "To Be and To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ". The goal is for each member to know and be equipped to act on "what does your love of Jesus call you to do?"

The UALC 2020 Committee offers Council the following focal points and recommendations for its planning to produce this great awakening:

1. Define benchmarks of how success and failure will be evaluated in UALC's mission of "To Be and To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ."
2. God has given each of us unique gifts to be used for His glory. Evaluate the UALC organizational chart to foster an environment with more individual and organizational freedom to follow the Holy Spirit's lead.
 - a. Consider restructuring the Senior Pastor's immense and diverse duties overseeing this large congregation, staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers. The Senior Spiritual Pastor would remain the top leadership position with the Chief of Administration/Operations Pastor added as a resource to the Senior Pastor. In no way does this suggestion impugn our current structure, but we must be open to such evaluation in order to efficiently and effectively pursue the four directions of growth in UALC's vision. The specific objectives of these two roles are:
 - i. Senior Spiritual Pastor to oversee content of worship, teaching and ministry and to mentor the pastoral staff to ensure each Pastor's unique gifts are being used in the right spot (manage the vision and oversee the spiritual health of UALC).
 - ii. Chief of Administration/Operations Pastor to oversee facilities and ensure right tools and personnel are in place to deliver worship, teaching and ministry (manage the daily organizational tasks to carry out UALC's vision).
 - b. Evaluate all the roles and responsibilities of all pastors and staff with one of the following or similar tools to affect necessary organizational change.

- i. D.I.M. (who Does it? who Influences it? who Manages it?)
 - ii. R.A.C.I. (Responsible. Accountable. Consulted. Informed.)
- 3. Define 3 or 4 things UALC would like to be known for as it cannot be all things to all people. Suggestions include:
 - a. Children’s ministries – VBS, Sunday School, Awana, Choir, and other special programs; the children are the church’s and greater society’s future
 - b. Adult education – Grow up strong in God’s Word – the lifeline and rules for living as followers of Christ · Fans become Followers · Equip parishioners to bring new people to Christ; replace themselves
 - c. Community outreach to meet the needs of the rapidly changing, culturally diverse neighborhoods surrounding UALC
 - d. Compelling and dynamic worship services where attendees have the opportunity to encounter and accept Jesus Christ not only as their Savior, but as their Lord.
- 4. African American pastor to lead Hilltop as its head, or create a joint African–American/Caucasian pastoral leadership team.
- 5. Evaluate the physical facilities and their necessity to the overall mission of UALC as defined in Item 3 above; determine each facilities best use for Grow Up, Build Up, Reach Out, Branch Out
- 6. Communications
 - a. Budgetary investment needed for upgrades in technology to do modern day evangelism with modern day tools
 - b. Independent communications specialist to evaluate UALC’s delivery mechanisms to communicate with “young” and “old” alike
- 7. Evaluate worship communities concept for its effectiveness to the overall mission of UALC
 - a. Subcongregations can provide for faster growth but should not be the final goal for a church. Intentional steps should be taken to find ways for the entire congregation to be unified and recognized around a common identity as followers of Christ. Community identity around worship style, socioeconomic status, or racial identity diminishes God intended primary identity. Providing diversity within the communities and the Church provides a stronger witness to the outside community (See Appendix A: *Bibliotheca Sacra* article “Implications for Contemporary Church Life and Missiology”).

- b. Human and financial inefficiencies of operating multiple services at multiple campuses
- c. Communication redundancies, including perceived “gate-keeping” function at staff levels. Staff should view congregants—particularly those leading ministries—as partners or clients, working together to share our Good News.
- d. Eliminate confusion for a newcomer of where and how to worship.
- e. If worship communities are the future of UALC, let each community Pastor steward a budget to do the ministry in his way under general guidelines.

* * *

If we are able to meet these formidable challenges, God will dramatically impact our world through UALC. If not, UALC will eventually disappear. And, though our memory of UALC will be fond, the void will be small, and we will have missed out on much that God wants to do with us.