

Association of Unity Churches International

Contact

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June/July 2008

Be Not Afraid!

Use current technology to reach your audience

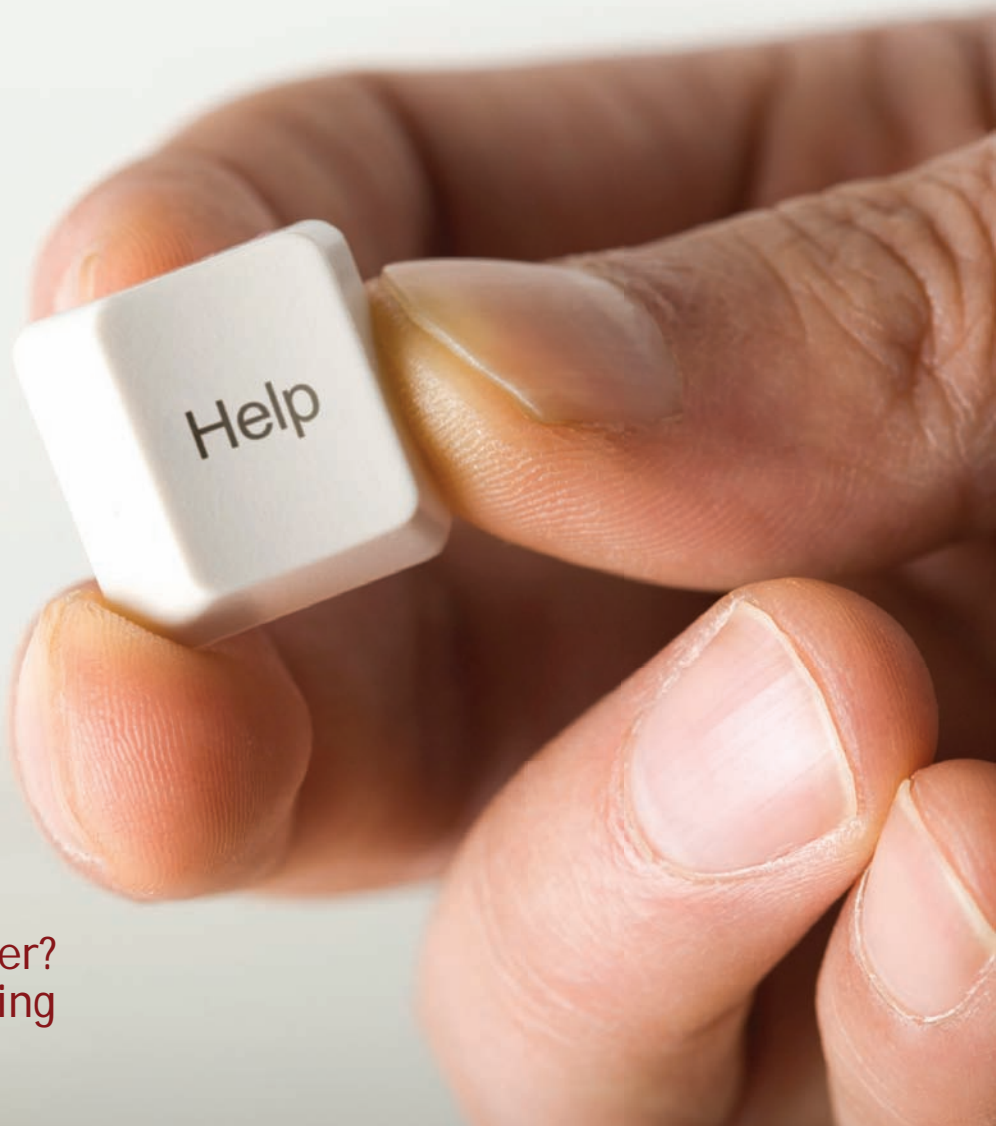
PAGE 10

How Easy Is It to Find Your
Church Online? PAGE 6

Websites for Ministries
PAGE 14

Making Your Website Great
PAGE 18

PLUS: Is Jesus My Way-Shower?
and Email Marketing



Contact

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EDITORIAL PURPOSE

To support thriving ministries by providing timely, practical information for ministries and individuals.

For a free subscription, contact Cheryl Vestal at the Association of Unity Churches International: graph@unity.org.

Contents

June/July 2008

Features

8 Those Were the Days...

by [Wayne Manning](#) / The dawn of the World Wide Web.

9 Websites for Ministries

by [David Durksen](#) / A website is about being present to those you serve.

10 Be Not Afraid

by [Joanna Carrell](#), [Sally Falk](#), [Rachel Simpson](#) / Social networking sites are easy to use and effective at reaching your audience.

12 How Easy Is It to Find Your Church Online?

by [Mindy Audlin](#) / Tips on helping people use the Internet to get the word out about your church.

18 Making Your Website Great

by [Cheryl Harrison](#) / Today, 70 percent of people looking for a new church home look for it on the Internet.

22 Unity Podcasting and Live Streaming Sites

A list of some of the Unity ministries who offer online audio.

28 We Started From Scratch to Rebuild Our Website for You

by [Lisa Wittman](#) and [Bernadette Swanson](#) / A glance at what's included in our Association's website.

In Every Issue

- 4 Feedback
- 5 Letter From the Editor
- 6 News From Our Chair
by Dan Holloway / Knowing God More
- 7 President's Letter
by James Trapp / Thriving in Unity
- 14 News from Unity®
- 15 Book Review
by Edith Ann Washington / *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*—Another rare gem.
- 16 Perspectives
Is Jesus My Way-Shower?
- 19 Financial Statement
- 20 Regional News



- 21 Calendar of Events
- 24 Resources You Can Use
- 23 Technology
by Rob Wheeler / Every website should measure performance.
- 26 In Theory
by Lisa Wittman / Used to its best advantage, email can help you get the word out.
- 30 Outreach
by Barbara O'Hearne / Welcoming guests into your church.



Feedback

To read the full responses or to read past issues of *Contact* go to www.unity.org/ContactMagazine.

Music and the Basics

I thank you for the magazine; it does actually help me get a feeling for what's going on in the wider Unity movement. One thing that seemed curious about this past issue, though, was that there was nothing (that I could find) about music in there.

I function with a three-pillar model for success: ministry program, music program, and youth program. I felt as if this time the magazine was intended for ministry only. There was a little bit for youth leaders on the back page, but nothing for the worship arts leaders. It seems to me that a music minister would have had much to contribute to a discussion about how the foundational principles are relevant and contemporary. What are some examples of foundational principles in today's service music? What are some news ways to sing old hymns? Who are the truly Unity-specific top touring artists, rather than the general wider New Thought or positive musicians?

One other more philosophical point I noticed, though it's not truly a criticism, more an observation. The basics themselves were not ever listed in the issue: 5 principles, 4T's, any of that. I know that all ministers have a slightly different idea of what's really foundational about Unity's teachings. However, if we are to achieve what Trapp is calling the "shared vision," and if we are looking to expand *Contact* (and the movement) beyond the circle of the familiar, if we want it to grow, it'd be wise to actually mention these things overtly and explicitly. Are we hiding our assets, obscuring our message? Or are we clear about it and can we say it again and again?

Thanks for listening, and again thank you for the magazine.

Erin McGaughan

Seattle Unity Joyful Arts Ministry

Have something to say about what you have read in *Contact*? Send your comments to dom@unity.org.

Unity Is a Cult

Your April/May 2008 issue of *Contact* was, as always, wonderful. Seeing the picture of the first ordination class of Unity in 1933 was a very special treat.

What got my heart strings moving was the article "Unity Is a Cult." Jim Marshall wrote that "calling Unity a cult ... provided a beautiful opportunity to write an article refuting that statement ... take every opportunity to get Unity out there and make it known in the community where you live ..."

My spiritual calling for the past three years has been to take Unity to Muslims, who consider Christianity polytheistic. It's been rewarding to dialogue with a Sunni Muslim (who heads the World Muslim Congress on the Internet) and promote Unity's monotheistic teachings. But most rewarding had been dialoguing with the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam for the past three years and breaking down the barriers that separate us—the barriers being primarily their fear of Christian proselytizing and contempt for polytheism.

I will be happy to furnish a list of topics that we have covered in dialogue during the past three years, along with papers disseminated to these Muslims, if this is needed. I pray the Association will help in this peace movement.

Marylou Ghyst, LUT

Dallas, TX

Letter From The Editor

W

“What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.” Matthew 10:27

Lisa Wittman, lisa@unity.org

We've probably all thought at one time or another that technology is our greatest blessing and our greatest bane. On the plus side, we can probably all picture Charles Fillmore using a website and maybe a blog to get his ideas out to the world. There have even been conversations about whether Jesus would have used all the new technology. Would he have sent instant messages—a Sermon on the Mount for the day? One way or another, it's all about sharing what we have with the world.

In this issue, we feature our new website, along with how you can find the information you're looking for. Our resident next generation folks share great ideas about using the web in ministry. You'll find email, Internet and website tips, along with other items about outreach and the popular new book by Eckhart Tolle.

Whether you're taking baby steps into technology or embracing it full out, I hope you'll find something useful for your ministry and life in this issue.



Knowing *God* More

Dan Holloway, dan@unityrev.com

This is really the thrust of our convention theme of “Getting to Know You.” It is a profound thing to know God. We may well find that when we seek to know ourselves and others for who we and they really are, we know God more. And when we choose to put our mind on God, it turns out we see God in others and in ourselves. I am delighted that many of you have sent in your pictures to our Association so we can all “put a name to a face.” Thank you for this! It will help us all to remember one another as a name comes up in conversation.



I am concluding my service as board chair this month. It has been a positive and eventful time. Certainly in many ways, through many circumstances and opportunities in this past year, I have gotten to know God more, and to know you more, too. I have seen the excitement continue to build about where we are going as an association, and the commitment on the part of so many to help us get there. It's been a year of supporting a vision, and helping to shape the ways and means to achieve that vision.

In the last year we had a regional Appreciative Inquiry Summit where teams were formed to “Build Amazing Partnerships and Grow Enlightened Leaders.” We had midyear meetings that helped us restructure and clarify how our ministry teams align with and help demonstrate the mission of our Association.

There is a greater sense of commitment, which continues to build. There are many strategic initiatives and intents in which we are engaged at this moment to support our vision: “centered in God, we co-create a world that works for all.”

Our relationship with Unity (School) grows stronger and more mutually supportive. We had the first joint board meeting between Unity and the Association in May. We have been working together to make Unity Institute all it can be for our Unity movement.

All of these things require us to step up a bit. We must be willing to remember that we are on a spiritual path together, and that each of us carries some light along the path. With each of us helping to light the way (enlighten the way?), we see the path more clearly. We see we are intertwined in ways we are aware of and in ways we continue to discover. Just by committing to the work of our Association, we are making a difference in our churches, our communities, and the world. We are growing the consciousness of our ministers, licensed teachers, leadership, congregations, and more. We are moving forward and upward. In short, we are knowing God more!

President's Letter

Thriving in Unity Our Time Is Now

James Trapp, ceo@unity.org

This is truly an amazing time to be alive. Even in the face of growing global chaos, there is evidence the seeds of transformation are springing to life. As we open our collective eyes and see the work to be done, we might feel overwhelmed and small. Yet people all over the world are realizing “if it is to be, it’s up to me.” We, each one of us, make up the collective. And when we join together and do what needs to be done, transformation occurs.

Unity, as a spiritual movement, and our Association, with more than 900 spiritual centers and churches worldwide, are uniquely positioned to nurture these seeds of transformation beginning to take root and grow. The Unity message has never been more needed than it is today. We must share that message with passion and conviction, boldly be all that we are, and confidently do that which is ours to do.

What Is Ours to Do?

Three years ago, our ministers, licensed teachers, leaders, and staff came together and identified three key focus areas: grow unity, foster vibrant leaders, and have a positive impact on the world.

At last year’s Unity People’s convention I shared a vision that essentially put those three directions into the form of intentions.

In brief, that vision is:

“We are the fastest growing transformational spiritual movement in the world. Our congregants, leaders, and our new and established ministries are thriving, whole, healthy, and prosperous. We work closely with leaders around the world to bring forth ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ as one human family living in a world that works for all.”

How Will We Do It?

Your home office staff has been hard at work compiling the input from several years’ work of our ministry teams and our entire membership into a detailed strategic plan upon which we can act. It is the sum of the wisdom from every corner of our worldwide membership.

Perhaps you have seen the plan we rolled out in early 2008. Excited by its potential to take our home office, regions, ministries,

leaders, and congregations to the next level, many of you have asked us how you can get involved and share the vision and plan with others.

What’s Next?

Thriving in Unity: Get Into It! is a program we are developing to invite all Association members (all leaders and congregants) to join us in taking the next steps. This program supports churches, centers, ministers, teachers, and lay leaders in sharing the strategic plan. It also provides concrete action steps our ministries can take toward greater growth and vitality.

This campaign is an invitation to each and every one of us to say “Yes!” Yes to the call to express our passion, yes to the call to demonstrate Principle, and yes to model for the world enlightened leadership and a thriving spirit, which are so desperately needed. In the coming weeks and months, you will hear more about Thriving in Unity and how you can participate. Please visit us now at www.unity.org/thrive for details and to download the strategic plan.





It was great fun in those days, inventing ways to show who we were and what we were about.

by Wayne Manning

When Janet and I joined Phil and Dorothy Pierson in Sacramento, California, in April 1995, I had just become aware of the World Wide Web and the promise it held out for communication and commerce. I was an “early adopter,” and began quickly using online banking as that became available, and online shopping.

It was also clear to me that a website worked for its owner twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and the only nourishment it required was frequent updating. In early 1995 there were only two Unity websites out there: Unity Church of Austin under the leadership of Linda Pendergrass; and Unity Church of Victoria, B.C. Canada, with David and Alice Durksen. Christ Unity Church in Sacramento became the third.

It was great fun in those days, inventing ways to show who we were and what we were about. I built our first website using Notepad, learning raw HTML code by looking at the source code for the first CNN website, whose layout I liked very much. One of the first things I did was create a directory of Unity sites, beginning with those three, and encouraging other churches to come online. That growing list was the standard online reference for several years, with many links to it.



I joined the Association Board of Trustees in 1996 and began having conversations there about the Internet and how it could serve us. My dates are fuzzy here, but early on I had a conversation with Young Bae, who commissioned me to build a site for the Association. Pete Rhea, who served for many years at Unity Village, had taken the ministry in Bellingham, Washington, and, along the way, he acquired the rights to the domain name, unity.org. He gladly gave that to the Association for our use, and it was a wonderful gift. It doesn't get any better than unity.org to identify to the world who we are!

That's the bare bones story. I managed the site for a couple of years or so. Association management soon saw the utility and promise, and had a first-class site developed and that has continued. Our website and the Internet in general serve us well today. Who knows what hidden promise still lies within it as new discoveries and applications are found?

I'm glad to have been a part of the beginning.

Wayne Manning is a retired Unity minister from Auburn, California.

Websites for Ministries

by David Durksen

A website is about being present to those you serve and wish to serve when they cannot be physically present with you. It is a way of drawing the circle larger to bring in those who will allow you to express your mission and vision to change our world for the better.

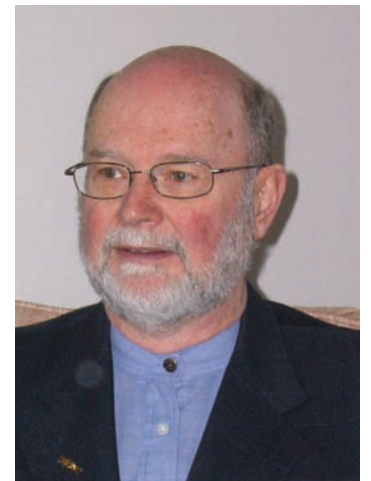
Websites for churches are now easy to set up and a very cost-effective way for both staying in touch with your current members and for reaching out to those you would like to serve. Most sites now allow for regular updating by individuals who have only basic typing and computer skills, so it is now easy for a ministry to have an excellent web presence.

The keys to an effective web presence: Knowing whom you are trying to reach

The answer involves a clear, concise statement of who you are and how you make a difference in our world. This statement reminds those you already serve why they are a part of your ministry and how their support transforms our world into the world we all desire to live in.

Knowing what you want to tell those you reach

The answer to this statement lets you know how simple or complex your site will be. [A quick diversion—your website will be a group of pages linked together. At any one moment you must limit the information to what can be placed on a half sheet of paper (5½ X 8½ inches). Web sites work best when they contain pearls of information on each screen rather than tomes of verbiage.] If your only goal is to let people know your services and activities, with instructions on how to find you, this may be offered on a single page. However, you likely have a diverse spectrum of interests represented by both those you currently serve and those you desire to reach. This will involve creating a template that will have a central screen for reading the pearls with outer borders that allow the viewer to select items or topics of interest that will then appear in the central screen. You can present a large volume of information in a user-friendly environment that allows the viewer the security of always knowing where he/she is on your website.



Knowing how you will measure the effectiveness of your site

Time, finances, and energy are all precious resources. If the efforts placed into a website, or any endeavor, do not move you toward your goals and objectives, you are far better off doing something else. Therefore, you will want to have ways of monitoring the effectiveness of your web site. You may include: forms on your site to be filled in; documents and audio/video files that may be downloaded; host-monitored or open discussion, and much more.

David Durksen began working with the Internet in the early 1990's while serving Unity Church of Victoria. David now works with Unity Internet Ministry to assist ministries—ministers, boards and congregations—to create the dynamic spiritual communities for the 21st Century that will fulfill Charles Fillmore's dream that Unity become the reincarnation of the 1st century church.

Be Not Afraid!

by Joanna Carrell, Sally Falk and Rachel Simpson
Shaky hands, sweaty forehead, dry mouth ... No, it's not public speaking that's striking fear in the hearts of ministers everywhere, it's networking online!

"Oh, my church is covered. We already **have** a website," you say. But that's not the same thing. Your website is just sitting there waiting for people to discover it. Don't wait for them to come to you, go where the people are!

So where **are** all these people? They're connecting with each other on social networking sites. They're also searching for entertainment and inspiration in the form of videos, blogs (short for "web logs") and podcasts (audio broadcasts) online.

People spend hours online each day, shopping, emailing, and searching for information. With social networking sites being five of the top ten websites in the world, they have become major players in this online information frenzy. MySpace has over 100 million users and gets 300,000 new subscribers each day—most being over the age of 30. So take a deep breath and let's get networking!



Joanna Carroll, Sally Falk, and Rachel Simpson



How do these things work, anyway? MySpace & Facebook

On these sites, you can create your own single web page within the website. You can post your church web and street address, church news, event photos, blog entries, audio, video and anything else you want people to know on this "profile" page. People can also send messages to you and post comments on your page.

After you have set up your page, you can search for congregants, church staff, etc. to add to your "friends" list (and people can search for your church to add to their list). This is how you connect with others. Ideally, someone will see your church listed on her friend's MySpace or Facebook page, and she'll say to herself, "What's that Unity church all about? My friend John seems to like it, so maybe it's something I would like too." Then she views your church's profile, goes to your website, and hopefully becomes involved in your church.

YouTube/GodTube

When you sign up for YouTube, you again get your own web page, known on YouTube as your "channel." Here, you can upload your own videos (up to 10 minutes in length) and even display other people's videos on your channel. This is a great way to post meditations and highlights from your Sunday services or workshops. Most of the content on GodTube is from "traditional" Christian denominations.

Blogging

A blog is an online diary. People write blogs about all kinds of things—family, hobbies, business practices, etc. Then others

search for blogs that interest them, and post comments about what the “blogger” has written. Imagine: You touch on a topic in a Sunday service, but don’t have time to go into further detail. You say “I’ll have more about this on my blog this week. Let me know what you think.” (The address of your blog is of course printed in the Sunday bulletin everyone is holding.) Congregants go to your blog and post their thoughts and questions about what you’ve written. What a great way for congregants to connect with each other and with you, and for you to see that they are “getting” your message!

Podcasting

Podcasts are pieces of audio that you can place on any webpage, including the sites listed above. People can listen to them right there on the webpage, or download them to an audio player (i-pod® or other MP3 player) and listen to them “on the go.” The advantage to podcasts is that anyone in the world can listen to your service, workshop, music, or meditation. Your congregation can grow infinitely without having to find a bigger building. Now **that** is a church without walls.

Perhaps the best thing about these sites is that you can join them for free. They also work together: you can post videos from YouTube on your MySpace page, link to your blog from MySpace, and so on.

Is it Safe?

Safety is a main concern people first have about joining a social networking site. But have no fear. On all of these sites, you have complete control over what shows up on your page. You have to “approve” before someone is listed as your friend. You can also make sure that anyone else’s comment is approved by you before it is posted.

Continued on page 25

Dive In!

by Rachel Simpson

Jamie Sanders, at Unity of Pensacola, Florida, set up a MySpace page for his church. He shared a bit about his experience with us:

What have been the effects of having your church on MySpace?

We are finding that we have many hits to the page and each week new people are asking to be our friends, etc. A friend of mine once said, “Exposure is exposure, baby...” The more we can share the energy and message of Unity the better—it is for all of us in the movement.

How does your church use MySpace (and has it been an effective tool)?

I post pictures of our people, along with upbeat music, and I have added some inspirational videos as well. People locally have come to the service because of what they found on the MySpace page. It is another great tool for reaching out.

Was it easy to get set up? Have there been hiccups?

I have found that it was pretty easy to set up.... I have to constantly log in and check who has messaged or who is sending a friend’s request, but it is always fun to see who is checking out the site and leaving messages.

Here are just a few of the Unity churches that are already on MySpace. Look at the “Friends” lists on these pages to find even more Unity centers.

www.myspace.com/unityofpensacola
www.myspace.com/unitychurchnacogdoches
www.myspace.com/unitycenteraustin
www.myspace.com/unityofdivinelove
www.myspace.com/ingu
www.myspace.com/iyouaisummit

Other sites that are doing great things with video, music, and more:

www.cor.org Church of the Resurrection. Use of video appeals to different learning styles. Their teen site, rezlifekc.org, is hip and current and has parent info.

www.generationaxis.com Willow Creek’s young adult site has graphics and music that is of the generation.

www.se.nextgenerationofunity.com Southeast region’s Next Generation of Unity page. Content and calendar are current. Photos are arranged by event which draws participants to the site.

How *Easy* Is It to Find Your Church Online?

“Dear Mindy, Thank you for faithfully posting your Sunday messages on the web page. I start every Sunday by listening to the previous week’s talk. Although I can’t be there physically, in Spirit I am with you always. Extend greetings to all of my friends at Unity. I love you all...”

By Mindy Audlin

Bill lives more than 1500 miles away from Unity Church of Wimberley in Wimberley, Texas. Yet he attends Sunday services every week—all by virtue of the internet.

Maria and Bob are first-time visitors. They traveled more than half an hour to arrive at our Unity church. When asked how they discovered our ministry, Bob replies, “We went online and found three churches that had audio on their website. We liked yours the best!”

A Unity church in Arizona podcasts their Sunday services through Unity.FM, Unity’s online radio network. Within the first month, their Internet traffic jumped by 800 listeners.

Technology has removed all geographic barriers to carrying forward the Unity message. With it, we find unprecedented opportunities for outreach without major investments of time and money. Here are a few tips to get the most out of today’s constantly expanding technological opportunities.



Tip #1: Get Googley

When was the last time you Googled your ministry? How easy is it for people to find your church on the internet? Try experimenting with keywords like “church, spirituality, name of your town.” What do you notice comes up first?

Also, try Googling other Unity churches. Type in the keyword “Unity” and visit other sites for ideas. (www.google.com)

When we were creating our church website (www.unityofwimberley.com), I was inspired by a Google search. One site that I liked had a link to the designer at the



bottom of the page. I clicked on the link and discovered that the site sold templates. For less than \$50, you can have a professionally-designed site. Just customize with your own content and graphics. (Visit www.mindyaudlin.com/churches.htm for more information and links.)

Tip #2: Blog It

A blog is essentially just an online journal where you can keep ideas, resources, or even audio and video. Most blog sites are free. The best known are www.blogger.com and www.wordpress.com

Why blog? By adding fresh content (and lots of links!) to your blog, you will move up in search engine rankings. Many news services peruse blogs to find experts they can reference for features. This can lead to great free publicity for your ministry. Plus, informative posts will keep people coming back to your site on a regular basis. The last thing you want people to see when they load your website is old or out-of-date information.

Some great things you can include in your blog:

- Transcripts of your Sunday services,
- “Extras” that you didn’t get a chance to talk about in your Sunday lesson,
- Personal insights to help you connect more with your online congregation.

For a great example of how you can use a blog, visit Paul Hasselbeck’s blog for his weekly program on Unity.FM, “Metaphysical Romp”: www.metaphysicalromp.blogspot.com.

Tip #3: All About Archives

Nothing paints a clearer picture of your Sunday service than audio or video of your message. There are many services you can use to do this. For short video snippets (less than 10 minutes), YouTube (www.youtube.com) is a great free resource. People can share videos with friends, plus you can embed the video into your website. Consider creating a short welcome video to use on your homepage.

To create an archive of Sunday talks, I use www.blip.tv. This allows you to upload audio or video of your lessons. It also allows you to:

- Crosspost your content to your blog for easy linking,
- Generate an easy iTunes link for iTunes users and,
- Distribute your programs through RSS feeds (a fancy phrase for “podcasting”).

The key is to take it step by step. Ask for help from your congregation—especially the teenagers! Don’t worry if it’s a little confusing at first. Before you know it, you’ll be receiving contributions to your ministry from people you have never met, from places you have never been. But most of all, you will know that Unity’s message has broken beyond the boundaries of your community and is blessing people all around the world!

For more resources for processing donations, e-newsletters, and using professionally-designed web templates, visit www.mindyaudlin.com/churches.htm.

Mindy Audlin is the network producer for Unity.FM, Unity’s online radio network (www.unity.fm). Unity.FM offers a free one-hour teleclass each month to walk you through the process of setting up an audio archive, a podcasting feed, and an iTunes link. For information on the next class, contact info@unity.fm.



Unity Village Lyceum Will Invite Controversy, Debate

This fall, Unity Institute will launch an annual Lyceum at Unity Village to bring together some of the world's top spiritual leaders for provocative debate and discussion. This year's event will be held November 3-6.

The Lyceum will be an educational symposium open to teachers, writers, and students of spiritual and theological studies from around the world. Unity Institute professor Thomas Shepherd says it is like an educational Woodstock at Unity Village: ...“a scholarly smorgasbord for all the left-brained, intellectually-starved New Thought types.”

Guest speakers this year will include Bishop John Shelby Spong, feminist theologian Dr. Nancy Howell, and biblical scholar Dr. Bart Ehrman. These speakers, along with UI faculty members, students and other visiting scholars, will participate in lectures and panel discussions on groundbreaking controversial topics in religious studies.

Early registration for the Mon–Thurs Lyceum ends August 31. Prices increase after that. Tuesday and Wednesday evening lectures by Bishop Spong on “The Future of Western Christianity and the American Dream,” and Dr. Ehrman on “From God the Problem to God the Solution: Different Biblical Responses to Human Suffering,” will also be open to the public, with special event pricing tickets to be sold by TIX.com. For tickets, go to www.unityonline.org.

www.unityonline.org/lyceum. These evening events are also included in the total registration price.

Unity ministers, licensed teachers, graduate students and others may also participate in the events by submitting abstracts of papers on any topics they would like to present (the deadline for abstracts is July 15). In addition to the formal “Call for Papers,” Unity Institute is providing a new opportunity for young people (14 to 19 years old) in the New Thought movement to participate in an essay competition on the Lyceum theme of “Culturally Christian, Spiritually Unlimited,” (the deadline for entries is July 1). Three top young scholars will be invited to visit Unity Village and will be recognized during the 2008 Lyceum events.

For rules and information about the Call for Papers and the young scholars essay competition, contact Lyceum coordinator Victoria Cromwell at 816.251.3535, ext. 2065 or email cromwellvj@unityonline.org. You may also contact Victoria about registration information, or go to www.unityonline.org/lyceum.

The original Lyceum was a school near Athens where Aristotle taught in the Fourth Century B.C.E. In the 19th century, Josiah Holbrook started the Lyceum movement in America. It consisted of groups of people in various locales who sponsored lectures, public discussions, concerts, and other educational and cultural experiences for adult learners.

Unity® is a partner organization to the Association of Unity Churches International. It provides education, prayer through Silent Unity and publishing of *Daily Word*, *Unity Magazine* and other materials.

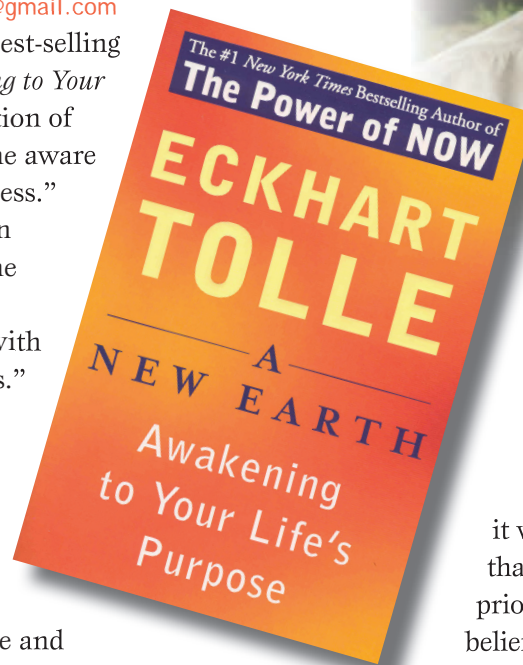
An Evolutionary Process

Reviewed by Edith Ann Washington, 4ewashington@gmail.com

This is another rare gem by *New York Times* best-selling author Eckhart Tolle. *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* explores deeply into the realization of the now moment by helping the reader become aware of who you really are, Spirit, "one consciousness." He states, "Awareness is conscious connection with universal intelligence." Which is "the one indwelling consciousness or spirit in every creature, every life-form, recognize it as one with their own essence and so love it as themselves." This oneness is everything and everywhere. Tolle talks about the beauty in all that we see as part of a necessary evolutionary process we all have to encounter in order for us to awaken to our oneness. Tolle explains that in order for us to fully awaken, we have to let go of the outer manifestations, what we see and what we do, and become aware of the "inner essence."

Tolle points out that to discover who we really are, we must be willing to not only become aware of our ego beliefs and prior conditioning, we must be willing to become free from them. At that point, people will not identify themselves as their career, name, body, or past; they will know they are Spirit, not ego. We dissolve ego and transcend time by letting go of "psychological time" and being in the present moment. This is when there is no more separation between God and everything in the universe. We totally realize from within our oneness. This is when we know that heaven is not a place but an "inner realm of consciousness ... and its meaning is in the teachings of Jesus."

Anyone who feels drawn to the Unity movement, New Thought, or spiritual transformation of any kind, will benefit from reading this book. This book is in alignment with Unity's beliefs. We live, move, and have our being in alignment with the teachings of Jesus. He loved everyone unconditionally, without judgment, no matter who



Eckhart Tolle

it was. This book states that we must let go of our prior conditioning and ego beliefs. In essence, that is Unity's Law of Mind Action, "Thoughts held in mind

produce after their own kind." It speaks to our use of denials and affirmations. It further concurs with our belief of one presence, one power in the universe, God the omnipotent good. Lastly, it relates to our improving our conscious contact with God as we are able to release our belief in being separate from each other. Knowing this means nothing unless we become willing to apply it in our daily lives (the now moment). In other words, it works if you are willing to work it.

Edith Washington is a licensed Unity teacher and currently a third-year ministerial student at Unity Institute located at Unity Village headquarters. She is affirming her graduation with a Master's of Divinity and ordination in June 2009. Her home church is Unity South Church in Bloomington, Minnesota.

Is Jesus My Way-Shower?

The way I see it, it doesn't matter whether the historical Jesus actually did or said the things ascribed to him.

by E.J. Niles,
nilesej@unityonline.org
In 1896 Charles Sheldon wrote a novel *In His Steps* where the characters in the book, when faced with any decision, asked

themselves the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD) The slogan is still alive and well in some circles. You can find bracelets and WWJD buttons on the web and in Christian bookstores.

The problem with the question is that we really don't have any way to know exactly what Jesus actually did so we can only speculate about what he might do in a certain situation. The only history we have about Jesus' life is what we find in the four biographical accounts in the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. No other accounts of Jesus' life exist. None were written by eyewitnesses.

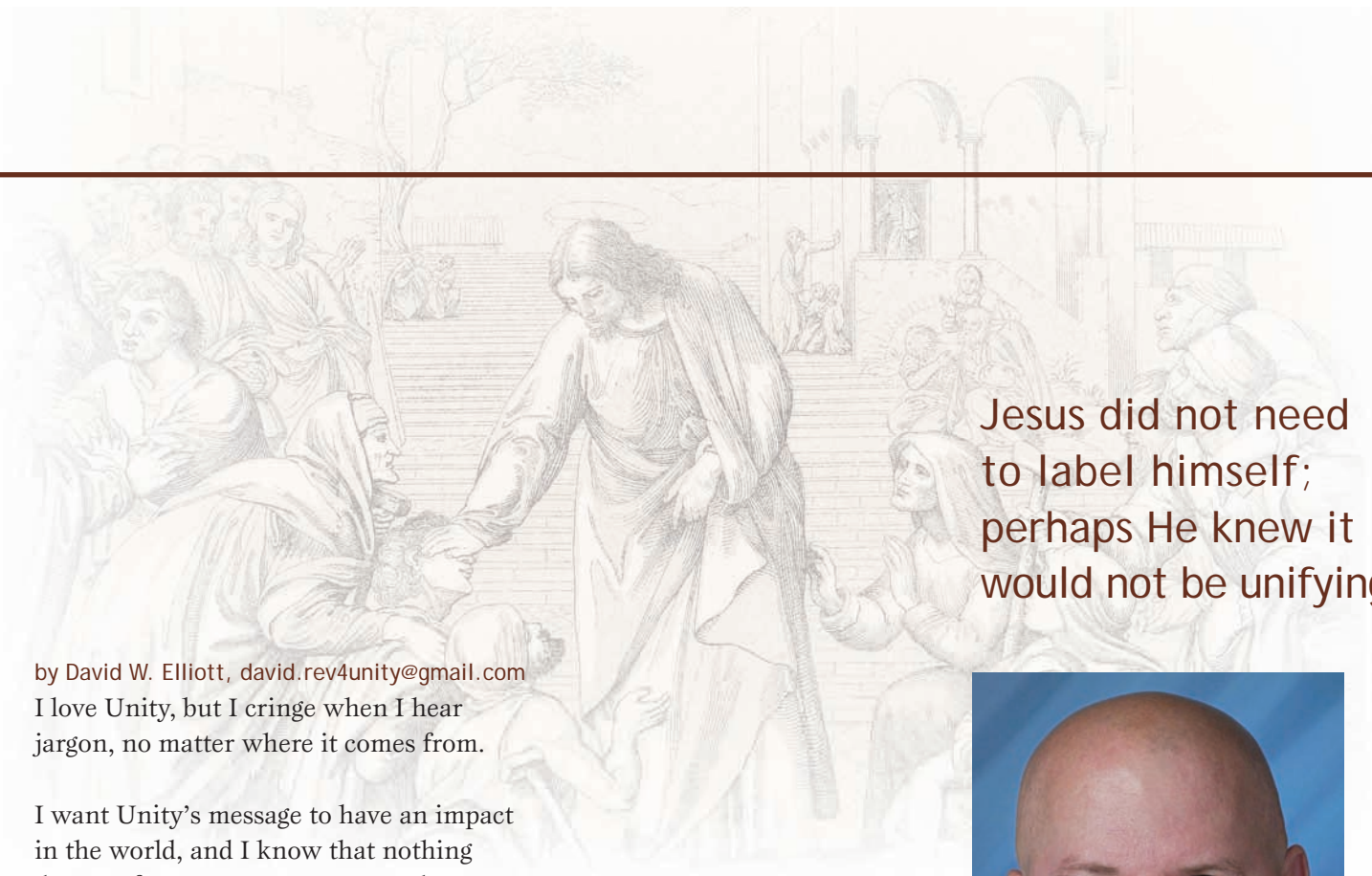
And, because the accounts themselves have been copied many times and undergone many translations and versions, we can't know for certain if he really did or said the things ascribed to him. What we can do is look to the words in the Gospels to give us a notion of what was in the consciousness of their writers.

And the writers put into the mouth of Jesus words such as, "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you, be merciful, forgive." These were words that were radical in the time of Jesus. They are still radical and they seem almost as impossible to practice even today. They challenge people through the ages to know that they have within them the possibility of being more than what they have believed themselves to be.



So I can claim Jesus as my Way-Shower. The way I see it, it doesn't matter whether the historical Jesus actually did or said the things ascribed to him. What matters is that it came into the consciousness of writers, ahead of their time, that it was possible for human beings to live the kind of life they said he lived and to say the kinds of things they said he said; that it was possible for humans to realize their divinity.

They used stories told to them of a man called Jesus and they reflected their own understanding of a person who knew God as abundant life and unconditional love. That is enough for me to know that I want to live that kind of life. And whether he actually said, "What I do you shall do also," there were those who thought it was possible and through their writings challenged us to follow his example.



Jesus did not need to label himself; perhaps He knew it would not be unifying.

by David W. Elliott, david.rev4unity@gmail.com
I love Unity, but I cringe when I hear jargon, no matter where it comes from.

I want Unity's message to have an impact in the world, and I know that nothing detracts from any message more than jargon: words and word usage that only have meaning to certain people. When jargon is used within a group for a long time, it eventually sounds correct among its members, but the rest of society is left out.

The word "shower" rhymes with "power," and it means a place to get clean, a sudden rainfall, or a party before a birth or wedding. There is no generally-accepted definition of this word that means "one who shows the way." There is also no generally-accepted pronunciation with a long "O" sound.

Inventing a new meaning and pronunciation, and publishing it in our own dictionary were worth a try, but it's been decades now; the only people who use the word this way are in New Thought circles and nowhere else.

It's no surprise that, listening deeply within our movement, one can hear a desire for Unity to be a visible, powerful

presence that relates to the entire world, while *at the same time* hearing persistent, invented language that slows its progress. We create our experiences through our words, and to me, jargon is a huge hurdle to becoming more influential.

Does our continuing to define Jesus as Way-Shower spring from a desire to show our traditional-Christian neighbors that we are like them, and to put them at ease? This term does not accomplish that. It makes us seem odd.

This same jargon distances us from people of other faiths, too. And "way-shower" is not the only persistent piece of jargon we use.

Consider our use of the word "Christ," which to most of the world means "Jesus," or at least refers to Him. Our use of an invented definition—even while claiming it to be the original definition—doesn't help things with Christianity, or with the other religions of the world.

Jesus did not need to label himself; perhaps He knew it would not be unifying. I love Unity, and I want Unity to be a unifying, not separating, influence in the world.



Making Your Website *Great*

by Cheryl Harrison

Your church is an expression of the Divine. And your church website? If it is less than wonderful, breathe ... and consider just three practical reasons to make it great:

1 The ways people find Unity churches may be changing. Traditionally, 70 percent have come with friends. Today, 70 percent of people looking for a new church home look for it on the Internet. Half of all newcomers to New Life Unity Church in Tampa, Florida, have found that new church through its website, reports Virginia Walsh, the founding minister.

2 There's no going back now. Just seven years ago, only one in five Internet users visited a church or other religious website. Today, two of every three Internet users turn to the web for information about churches, religion and spirituality, according to studies funded by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

3 People who use the Internet for religious or spiritual purposes are in a position to provide a lot of support to the churches that attract them, the Pew Project reports. The Internet's spiritual seekers are more likely to be middle-aged, college-educated, and relatively well-to-do ... and there are a lot of them—more than eight million in the U.S. alone.



How Do I Make My Website Great?

Whatever the condition of your website—wonderful or woeful, or worse (you have none)—here are just a few tips for making it great:

- Make sure that most or all of your home page is visible when the page opens. Many visitors to your website will not scroll down, so they'll never see the info that's below the bottom of the opening screen.
- Welcome outsiders by using only inclusive, commonly understood language in your website copy. If you want newcomers to feel really at home, avoid terms and acronyms commonly used in New Thought but not in the mainstream press ("Truth principles," "ACIM" for A Course in Miracles).
- Publish real people's pictures and stories about how they found Unity (and why they love it). These vignettes will help web visitors connect ahead of time to your community. People connect to people!
- Here's a "don't": Don't use an entry page (a "splash page") featuring a movie, music or sign-up form, to open your website. Splash pages "are intensely irritating to users," note the experts at www.gospelcom.net. "Equally annoying are websites that automatically play music when the visitor arrives at the home page." Many will simply leave your site, rather than click through to your home page.

Go to www.WeeklyWebTips.wordpress.com for lots of other great ideas.

Cheryl Harrison is the founding director of Friends of Ministry, Inc. She is the former marketing, events, and volunteer director for First Unity Church in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Financial Statement

FOR THE PERIOD OF
10/1/2007 TO 3/31/2008

	Total Fund		
	Actual (YTD)	Budget (YTD)	Annual Budget
Love Offerings (Undesignated)	\$ 1,107,036	1,396,311	2,792,621
Love Offerings (Designated)	102,088	27,850	55,700
Grant Incomes	238,445	600,000	1,200,000
Program Incomes	253,384	509,937	1,019,874
Total Revenues	\$ 1,700,953	2,534,098	5,068,195
Program Expenses	(1,211,739)	(1,786,631)	(3,573,262)
Support Services Expenses	(519,317)	(765,699)	(1,531,398)
Total Expenditures	\$(1,731,055)	(2,552,330)	(5,104,660)
Increase from Operation	\$ (30,102)	(18,232)	(36,465)
Less: Tithe Paid	(110,704)	(139,631)	(279,262)
Increase in Net Assets	\$ (140,806)	(157,864)	(315,727)
Capital Expenditure	(33,412)	(60,750)	(121,500)
Depreciation	55,328	55,330	110,659
Accrued Income	125,283	163,283	326,566
Total Cash Flow	6,393	(1)	(2)

What Is Your Real Investment Risk Tolerance?

by Morgan Barclay

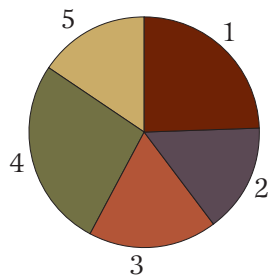
The stock market has been in a downtrend since November 2007. This event provides an opportunity to examine our individual level of tolerance to swings we have seen in the stock market this year. I invite you to test your risk tolerance at the following three web sites:

- allegacyfcu.org/calculatorairisktolerance.html
- individual.ml.com/?id=15261_45434
- finance.yahoo.com/calculator/career-work/inv-08

After testing your risk tolerance, go to mitrust.com and review your portfolio performance. Does your risk tolerance from the Internet quiz really match your reaction to the change in your portfolio during this year?

The market is down about ten percent as of March 30th. For discussion purposes, let us assume your portfolio is down about the same. If your risk tolerance quiz score indicated you would accept moderate risk, then a ten percent drop in value of your portfolio should be acceptable. Remember the overall trend of the market provides a positive ten percent average yearly return. For a more detailed discussion of this complex topic with examples, see unity.org/pension.

WHERE DOES OUR MONEY GO?



- 1) Education, Leadership & Ministry Development
- 2) Minister & Ministry
- 3) Communications
- 4) Administration & Building
- 5) Executive Office

DOES OUR ASSOCIATION TITHE? 10/1/2007 to 3/31/2008

Complaint-Free World	\$8,079.54
Unity work in South Africa	2,581.10
<i>The Secret</i>	1,081.10
Unity Institute	16,527.59
Silent Unity	12,392.95
Unity	6,998.45
Spiritual Life Center (Unity)	25,000.00
International New Thought Alliance	11,501.14
Association for Global New Thought	17,055.14
Academy for Peace of Costa Rica	3,662.19
St. Luke's South Hospital	1,500.00
The I Am Foundation	<u>4,324.38</u>
Total	<u>\$110,704.03</u>

Regional News

Northwest

Philip Zemke, minister in Bozeman, Montana, is following in the tradition of early Unity ministers and teachers who pioneered the West. He has served the Bozeman ministry for twelve years, the first five in a 500-mile round-rip every week from Missoula.

Ordained through the Association's Field Licensing Program, Philip still takes to the road. Twenty years ago he joined Unity in Missoula and started circuit riding. For the last couple of years, he has traveled regularly to Livingston, Billings, and Great Falls. He's scheduled to go to Salt Lake City and Park City, Utah—possibly a regular addition to his travels. He also currently serves as chair of the Northwest Region.

"When an open church wants to hold to Unity principles and wants someone to lead, you go when you're called," says Philip.



Philip Zemke, minister in Bozeman, Montana.

South Central

Unity of Wimberley, Texas, used a blog to help their congregation select their new minister, **Rudy England**. It helped the community have a transparent and heart-centered discussion surrounding the candidates and the needs and wants of the participants. Mindy Audlin, who pioneered that church, now serves as Network Producer of www.unity.fm.

The YOU Service Project for **Unity Church of Fort Worth, Texas**, is helping children who qualify for food assistance programs receive nutritious food for the weekend, not just on weekdays. Counselors from the schools identify the children to receive the food (snack sacks); church and community partners shop for the goods, pack the sacks, and deliver them.

In Memoriam: Juanita Holdcraft, licensed teacher from Garland, Texas.

Eastern

In Memoriam: Anna May Nielsen, retired minister from New York, New York.

Southwest

Unity Church of Yucaipa, California, came up with a great fund raising idea. Suzanne Leonard, minister, shared, "We decided to go on a 'pay as you go' cash plan with fundraising for extras not in our current budget. Easter baskets was a fun idea and we had six beautiful baskets that were presented. They brought enough for 20 outdoor white plastic chairs for our summer weddings and events. One was a garden basket with containers, seeds, candles for outdoors and, of course, all the baskets had a chocolate bunny in them!"

In Memoriam: Hilda Kellis, minister from Spokane, Washington.


Prosperity in Action

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- Work with a prosperity partner
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Prosperity in Action (PIA) is designed to clear your limited thinking and beliefs around money, allowing you to awaken to a new paradigm of prosperity!

PIA is a co-creation of Pat Williamson, Unity minister in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Mackey McNeill, CPA, PFS, IAR; and Spirit. Course materials are \$45, which are yours to keep and include the award-winning book, *The Intersection of Joy and Money*. The course is a six-week commitment.

www.lamPIA.com
For more information contact pam@CultivatingProsperity.com.



Calendar of Events

2008



June 23-27

SEE Classes, Unity Church of Wimberley, TX; contact info@unityofwimberley.com

July 5-11

Adults of Unity Conference, contact Kim Shawd, convast@unity.org

July 13-18

IYOU Appreciative Inquiry Summit, contact Rachel Simpson, youast@unity.org

July 27-August 1

Child/Teen Ministry Week, contact Kathy Kellogg, kid@unity.org

August 9-10

Certified Spiritual Educators Intensive, contact Kathy Kellogg, kid@unity.org

August 10-15

Skills Demonstration Seminar; contact Shirley Kennedy, lrc@unity.org

August 11-15

SEE Classes, Unity in Marin, Novato, CA; call 415.475.5000

August 18-23

Sound Connections New Thought Music Conference, Unity Village, MO; contact Richard Mekdeci, music@unity.org

August 21-26

Canada Regional Conference, Edmonton, Alberta; contact Sharon Clements, revsharon@rogers.com

August 25-29

Peacemaking Skills Institute; contact Cathy Christy, dmast@unity.org

September 11-21

11 Days of Global Unity; contact info@11daysofunity.org

September 22-25

Ministerial Candidate Admissions Interview Week; contact Jo Ann Spruill, registrar@unity.org

September 29-October 3

Eastern Regional Conference, Hershey, PA; contact Richard Bunch, richardbunch@unityrichmond.org

October 6-10

Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (www.lmpeacecenter.org/MSTI.html), San Diego, CA; contact Blair Tabor, revblair@unitysandiego.org

October 13-16

Southeastern Regional Conference, Stuart, FL; contact Charline Manuel, charmanuel@msn.com

October 13-16

South Central Regional Conference, Unity Village, MO; contact Wendy Burroughs, revwendy@liveyourgreatness.org

November 2-7

Skills Demonstration Seminar; contact Shirley Kennedy, lrc@unity.org



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Crossing
Point

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Recovery *centered in* Unity Principles

“Reverend Jack Boland’s son is carrying on the good works - effectively blending 12-step recovery with the teaching of Unity spiritual principles.”

– Rev. Ron Scott
Renaissance Unity
Warren, Michigan



The
Crossing
Point

Life Healing Centers

Mr. Gary A. Boland
Executive Director
The Crossing Point

Mr. Boland Office: 703.229.5447
Unity Admissions: 703.229.5452

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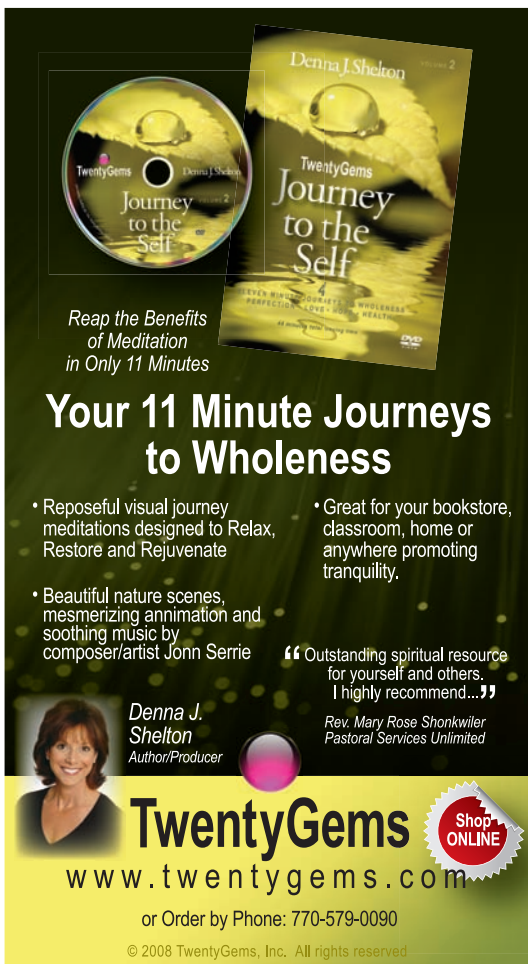
(retired Unity of Ft. Lauderdale prayer
chaplain recently relocated to San Francisco)

bdamico@vmdirect.com
www.vmdirect.com/bdamico
954.612.1271

Unity Podcasting and Live Streaming Sites

www.unitychurchofknoxville.org Unity Church of Knoxville, TN
www.unitygreaterportland.org Unity Church of Greater Portland, Windham, ME
www.unitychristchurch.org Unity Christ Church, Golden Valley, MN
www.praisecast.com/clients/unitywdc/podcasts.html Unity of Washington, DC
www.unityofmobile.com Unity Christ Church, Mobile, AL
www.unitymedford.org/live Christ Unity Church of Medford, OR
www.unityoflivonia.org Unity of Livonia, MI
www.unityinthefoothills.org Unity in the Foothills, Torrington, CT
www.SoundofUnity.com a Unity audio library
www.unityofwimberly.com/podcast.htm Unity of Wimberly, TX
www.renaissanceunity.org Renaissance Unity, Warren, MI
www.unityofgreaterlansing.org Unity of Greater Lansing, MI
www.unitychapel.net Unity Chapel, Southgate, MI
www.unitynow.com Unity Now, a Spiritual Awakening Center on the Internet
www.unityrochester.org Christ Church Unity, Rochester, NY
www.unityhawaii.org Unity Church of Hawaii, Honolulu, Oahu, HI
www.livingwaterunity.org Living Water Unity Church, Arvada, CO
www.ucop.org Unity Church of Overland Park, KS
www.unityinedinboro.com Unity in Edinboro, PA
www.unityinnaperville.org Unity in Naperville, IL
www.unitycolmo.org Unity Center of Columbia, MO
www.godpods.com Unity Center of Columbia, MO
www.jdbottorff.com Unity Church of Grand Junction, CO
www.unity-kitchener.org Unity Centre of Practical Christianity, Kitchener Ontario Canada
www.unityhouston.org Unity Church of Christianity, Houston, TX
www.unitymelbourne.org Unity of Melbourne, FL
www.unityofsavannah.org Unity of Savannah, GA
www.unityberkeley.org Unity of Berkeley, CA
www.uccl.org Unity Church of Crystal Lake, IL
www.unityofolympia.org Unity of Olympia, WA
www.unitycenteraustin.org Unity Center: A Church of Positive Prayer, Austin, TX

If your ministry is currently podcasting or audio streaming on your website and you are not on this list, please email your information to radiomd@unity.org.



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Author/Producer

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Our name says it all



Friends of Ministry

Visit us at www.FriendsofMinistry.com
to discover all the ways we can support you.

Having a Website Is One Thing, Reaching an Audience Another

by Rob Wheeler

If we build it, they will come ...

Actually, when we build a website, nothing will happen until someone sees it. Your congregation may mention it to their friends, and others may visit should they happen to stumble across it, however, that doesn't encourage repeat visits. The question becomes how do you promote your website?

Adwords (or any search engine ad at all)

Google is a household name and, at the moment, the top dog of search engines. Adwords lets you create simple, effective ads and display them to people already searching online for information. However, there are many other decent search engines that will get you good traffic as well.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is very important. The whole point of online promotion is to get people to find you and that means being on top or as high as you can be on search engines. Search engines are the #1 way people find things on the net.

Keywords

Know what keywords your audience will be using, and write content that conveys your message and matches those keywords. If you're having a hard time coming up with keywords, follow this logic: If you were online and wanted to find a website like yours, what would you do? What word

or phrase would you type into a search engine? Ask yourself that question and then ask everyone you know. You will learn what people are searching for.

Page Titles

Titles like "untitled" or "Home Page" are less likely to attract attention than "Christ Unity Church | Medford | Oregon" and every page should have its individual title which should be unique and keyword rich. Also add Meta tags with keywords and descriptions to all your pages. (From Wikipedia: "Meta elements provide information about a given webpage, most often to help search engines categorize them correctly. They are inserted into the HTML document, but are often not directly visible to a user visiting the site.")

Measure

Every website should measure performance. If you aren't measuring what's happening, you aren't really promoting at all. Even though SEO generates "free traffic," we all know that it's anything but free. What you really need is a planning cycle. You start with assessing your current situation and setting some goals. You make the plan, execute it, measure the results, and go right back into another cycle. Remember, SEO is a long term process.

There are a number of ways to promote your site. The more continual, consistent effort you put in, the greater the benefits for your website and ultimately your church attendance.

Rob Wheeler has been an Internet marketing consultant and webmaster since 1998. He is a life-long Unity Student and currently serves as the Coordinator and Administrative Director of Christ Unity Church of Medford, Oregon.



Resources You Can Use



www.Wordtracker.com—Find the most popular keywords.



www.adwords.google.com—Using Google to advertise.



www.htmlgoodies.com—Tips, guides, and references for developing a website.



www.addme.com offers tools for search engine marketing.



www.spamcheck.sitesell.com is a free site that will check your copy and report what elements might be caught by spam filters.



www.greatchurchwebsites.org gives tips and ideas for churches.



www.pewinternet.org has done research on how Americans use the Internet, including for religious purposes.



www.icontact.com or www.constantcontact.com—email marketing services.



www.gaptechsolutions.com provides content manageable websites for churches.

www.google.com/analytics/home—helps you track where your visitors come from so that you know what search engines are finding you.

www.netmechanic.com—A free graphic optimization tool that allows you to speed up page loads without losing quality. Reduces file size, but not image size.

www.ezine-tips.com/etopa and www.marketingsherpa.com—weekly email advice for e-newsletter publishers.

www.webempoweredchurch.org—supplies church website technology.

www.wikipedia.com has definitions of almost anything if you get lost in tech terms.

Other Helpful Sites

www.metaphysicalromp.blogspot.com

www.mindyaudlin.com/churches.htm

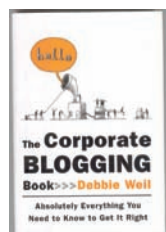
www.weeklywebtips.wordpress.org

www.unity.org—Search “privacy” and you’ll see our privacy policy.

Books of Interest:



SEO Fast Start is a nice introduction to search engine optimization, and a quick read. You can get it free as a download at www.seoresearchlabs.com.



The Corporate Blogging Book—A clear-eyed look at blogging as a marketing communications strategy—what works, what doesn’t, and why creating and maintaining a good blog is worth the effort.

How do I do this?

A simple “fill in the blank” process will get you up and running on these sites. After initial setup, maintenance is minimal. Many churches already send email updates or printed newsletters—simply copy and paste this information into a blog or MySpace bulletin to keep your page updated (in fact, emailing your newsletter and/or writing a blog instead of mailing a paper newsletter is a great way to reduce your church’s carbon footprint). Keep in mind that social networking sites help people find you. Just give people a taste of what you’re about and point them to your website to learn more.

If you still don’t feel comfortable doing these things yourself, draw on the resources you have in your congregation:

- Many congregants with families have digital video cameras. Ask if someone is willing to tape the service and download it to a computer.
- Set up a technical volunteer position with a title. Teens want this kind of experience on their college applications and this gives them a chance to get more involved in the church.



The October/November theme for *Contact* will be **International Ministry.**

If you provide services or products that relate to international ministries, there is ad space available for you to reach 7000 *Contact* subscribers. For ad rates and information, see www.unity.org/ContactMagazine or email graph@unity.org no later than August 1.

CELEBRATING ONENESS, HEALING THE WORLD

11 days OF GLOBAL UNITY

A Season of Interfaith Celebration

SEPTEMBER 11 – SEPTEMBER 21

This year Unity, the Association of Unity Churches International, and Association for Global New Thought will join in a worldwide celebration of oneness with hundreds of organizations who are collaborating under the umbrella “We, The World.” Beginning with Unity World Day of Prayer and continuing through to International Day of Peace, Unity is inviting participation in events for 11 days, through workshops, inspirational talks, interfaith prayer ceremonies, concerts, special events, dances and discussions. By partnering with like-minded organizations, we will expand Unity’s impact in affirming, creating and celebrating the dawning of a new era of global peace, transformational healing and sustainable living.

SAVE THE DATE

Involve your church through activities such as:

- Daily Peace Vigils • Abraham Walks • Peace Day Parties
- Peace Flags • 11 Days of Affirmations • Peace Readings
- Golden Rule from 13 Faiths • Noon Meditations
- Awaken the Dreamer Symposiums

Also join us through activities at Unity Village:

- Arun Gandhi & Interfaith Dialogue • Gregg Braden Workshops • Lynne McTaggart Intention Experiments
- Mega Posipalooza • Earthdance • World Day of Prayer
- Interfaith Prayer Services • Sound Connections Retreat
- Film Festivals • Awaken the Dreamer Symposium
- Partnerships with Green Organizations



MAKE PEACE YOUR BUSINESS

Peace begins with me and spreads throughout the world one person, one family, one church, one community at a time.

What will your community do?

More information will be coming as we continue planning and creating. For more information contact info@11daysofunity.org.

To find resources for your own community, check out www.11daysofunity.org

Email Makes for Good Marketing

Used to its best advantage, email can help you get the word out



by Lisa Wittman, lisa@unity.org

No issue of *Contact* on technology could be complete without a review of how to use email to market your ministry. Just as with other methods, there are some key points that make it more useful.

Begin by thinking of your email list as a valuable asset. It must be treated with great respect, or you'll find yourself blacklisted and blocked before you know it. Following are some tips from an email marketing workshop that might apply to your church.

Permission

There are several levels of permission, but the main thing to remember is to *never* send email you don't have permission to send. One level is opt-out—giving the least respect to your recipients, this is where you send an email without permission, but allow them to opt-out of future transmissions. I get annoyed whenever this happens to me, how about you? Think of your recipients first.

The second level is opt-in. This is where people have to initiate the request to be added to your email list. Double opt-in is even better. It means that after they have requested it, they receive a confirmation

email that asks them to re-confirm their signup. This gives the highest level of privacy, but it can be difficult to administer by hand.

The more privacy you allow your recipients, the more committed they are to your information and to receiving it. The ideal situation is when you have 100% of your recipients reading your email. With opt-out, your crowd is definitely uncommitted, and probably annoyed.

When I signed up for a bookseller's card, for example, I got on the email list automatically. It requires a password to opt-out. I didn't care enough about it to save my password, but I never read their email, and I'm doubly annoyed that they make it difficult to get out of it. I am even considering blacklisting them with my provider, which could mean no one at yahoo.com will get their email. It's easy to get blacklisted, but not so easy to get off that list. This is not the state of mind you want your recipients to have, and it reduces the value of your asset, the email list.

So, never use opt-out—use opt-in at least. Make them take the first steps to you.

With all those caveats, here are some things to do:

- When people give you their information, give them something in return (i.e., newsletter, special bulletin)
- Ask one survey question with the confirmation—find out who they are. This establishes the connection.
- If you get an email address without permission, you can email them once to ask permission. Best to tell people you will email them when they give you their address.
- Post your privacy policy at signup, and be impeccable about holding to it.

- Create an unsubscribe page with other options—make it easy.
- Link on every page of the e-letter to the subscription box—can include one survey question (such as what is the relationship, how did you find us, what were you looking for at the site, did you find it, how did you decide to give).
- If you don't send a newsletter for a few months, email for permission again.
- The goal with your e-letter is always to get them to the website, to become more involved.
- Use spam content checkers.
- Open test accounts with major ISP's so you can see how your email looks, and what people are receiving.

How Marketers Use Email

Eighty percent of those who visit a website never return, which is why you want them to sign up for your e-letter. The disconnect occurs in not generating a response from the “customer,” and involving them in a relationship with you. Remember that their primary goal is to find information at your site, so make sure to give it to them.

When you email, keep in mind:

- The “from line.” If we don't recognize it, we junk it.
- In the subject line, try to make it read like a *USA Today* headline: active, interesting, with the main point.
- Include a footer with these items: your name, physical address, phone, link to unsubscribe, suggestion to forward the message to a friend, link to subscribe, link to privacy policy.
- Give people the direct link to the information you refer to in your email, so that the reader goes directly to the area of interest.
- If you receive bounces, delete both hard (message that the address is wrong) and soft (message that an email box is full) bounces, unless you know the people personally and can make corrections.

Prospecting

How do you get more people on your email list? Here are some ideas for doing that:

- Keep the key info “above the fold” or in the preview pane.
- If possible, track where people go on the site from email.
- Have a button on the home page to sign up/register.
- When talking with people on the phone, ask for their email and permission to send them something pertinent.
- Include the website address on all your printed materials, and on your outgoing phone message.

Thanks for Your Feedback!

In February, we celebrated the first anniversary of the new *Contact*. We included a feedback card for your input as to how we're doing with the new format. There were 5 questions:

1. I found something I could use in my ministry.
2. I found the format easy to read and could locate information.
3. I read the magazine cover to cover.
4. I found the topics interesting and helpful.
5. Overall the magazine represents the Association well.

The multiple choice responses ranged from Always to Never. Assigning numbers to these responses, where 1 is Always, and 5 is Never, we were able to come up with an average response for each question:

something I could use	1.7
easy to read	1.4
cover to cover	1.6
interesting/helpful	1.7
represents Assn.	1.2

The closer to the number 1, the more you thought the statement was always true. Out of the 50 who responded, we're proud to see a high satisfaction level with the magazine. In your write-in comments, you also indicated lots of enthusiasm.

We will continue to look for ways to improve and refresh the material we have available. If you have a story about a success in your church, email dom@unity.org. It may benefit other ministries to hear about it.

We Started from

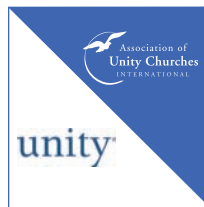
To Rebuild



We've heard from many of

you that our new website is better than ever. After almost a year of work, www.unity.org is easier to use and packed with helpful info for ministers, licensed teachers, leaders, educators, and congregants. Get your bookmarks set—here's a glance at what's included.

www.unity.org



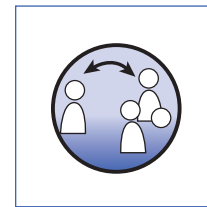
Learn about Unity and the Association

- **Find out more about the Association**

Not sure who the Association is and how it operates? What we believe? Whom to contact? Find this and more at unity.org, and click on “About Us” in the left menu.

- **What are we doing to support you?**

Watch an inspiring short video about our strategic plan and learn more about how we're serving the movement at unity.org/thrive.



Network with other Unity people

- **Find a church, minister or licensed teacher**

You'll find a complete list of ministries, along with self-selected ministers and licensed teachers, in our directory. Find out about workshops, products or other areas of interest for the individuals listed. Go to unity.org/directory.

- **Attend an event**

People tell us they really value the chance to network with each other at our events. Our convention, music conference, and youth events are at unity.org/events.

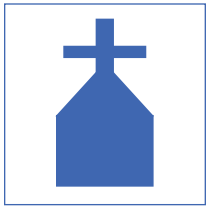
- **Find ideas from other ministries**

If you're looking for ideas that have worked in other Unity ministries, or ideas we're seeing at the home office, you'll find them here in different categories. Check out unity.org/onlinecommunity.



Scratch

Our Website For You



Make your church more effective

- **Find training**

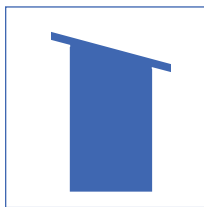
Whether you want to be a better leader in your ministry, or become a minister or licensed teacher, you'll find helpful training opportunities for all levels at unity.org/training.

- **Bylaws & policies**

Rather than reinventing your church's bylaws or policies, check out the suggested ones at unity.org/boards.

- **Administrative tools & church supplies**

All aspects of church administration are covered: marketing, prosperity, accounting, pension, human resources, peacemaking. See unity.org/tools.



Find Sunday service resources

- **Sermon and service resources**

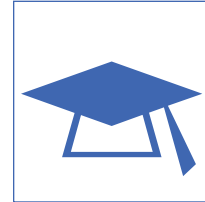
Are you looking for sermon and service ideas? There is a wealth of information in Info Xchange, unity.org/infexchange.

- **Music resources**

Find uplifting and appropriate Unity/New Thought music and music conference information at unity.org/music. You can locate musicians in our directory at unity.org/directory. Use the second Search option and choose Musician from the drop-down menu in Affiliation1.

- **Speakers, authors**

If you are looking for someone to bring in for a Sunday service or workshop, check our directory, unity.org/directory. Use the second Search option and choose Author or Speaker from the drop-down menu in Affiliation1.



Education for All Ages

- **Youth & Family resources**

Do you need advice on setting up a youth & family ministry program? Are you an adult working with children, or need risk management information? Are you a Youth of Unity member (YOUer)? All this is covered in our "Youth" left menu item at unity.org.

- **Curriculum for children/teens**

You can find an overview of curriculum for children through teens/young adults in our Youth left menu item and at unity.org/curriculum.

- **Small group ministry**

We have resources for your small group ministry programs. Check it out under unity.org/smallgroup. There are also some free offerings in the Info Xchange at unity.org/infexchange.

- **Become a certified Unity leader**

Information on all levels of certified leadership are under Ministries/Leaders (left menu). Then select Leadership Training from the drop-down menu. For those interested in postgraduate credits, see unity.org/postgrad.

Welcoming Guests



by Barbara O'Hearne

In 2000, a group of citizens in Royal Oak, Michigan, decided to address the issue of homelessness. They formed an organization called the South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless (SOCH). Their vision was to create a daytime drop-in center for the homeless where men and women would have a safe place to shower, make phone calls, have a meal, explore job opportunities on a computer, update or create resumes, store their belongings, accept mail, and receive information about other social services.

The group invited Chuck Hancock, senior minister at Unity Church of Royal Oak, to be part of SOCH and joined forces with a coalition of clergy to actualize the vision.

Welcoming in

The Welcome Inn, located in the Unity church, started out as a place for homeless people to keep warm until other churches opened, and has grown into much more. Its mission is “to offer professional and volunteer support services to guide the homeless towards independent living,” reports Chuck. For the past four years, Chuck and his congregation have volunteered, raised money, and hosted the Welcome Inn. It is the only daytime center for the homeless in this wealthy county.

Operating on a budget of \$81,500, including a \$30,000 grant from the County Mental Health Department, Unity Church of Royal Oak and other congregations hold fund-raisers and solicit funds to support the program. Funding supports four staff members and three part-time bus drivers in addition to other expenses. Chuck adds, “Twice a week, a group of nurses in a master’s program at Wayne State University come to the facility to work with our guests.” The Welcome Inn is open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. from December through March.

Eighteen community-based organizations refer people to the Welcome Inn, and posters in the local library give information. This year 139 volunteers from the Unity church and other congregations averaged 205 volunteer hours per week. The average age of a guest is 46, 82 percent males and 18 percent females. Women with children are referred to other agencies.

Breaking the cycle

Upon arrival, each guest is registered and interviewed to determine the services they need. The staff and volunteers work to help the men and women overcome obstacles to housing and jobs. For example, they accompany people to get state IDs—required to get a job. Guests ride one of the buses for showers at another agency four times a week and to laundromats twice a week. At the end of the day, they go to one of the ten area churches for an evening meal and to sleep. In the morning, they take a bus back to the Welcome Inn. Services include medical attention and referrals, substance abuse meetings, placing people in drug and alcohol rehab, help for mental health issues, computer training, legal advice, bus tickets, reading materials, case management, friendship, and socialization.

For meals, congregants at twelve churches brought 430 casseroles for use as needed last year. On Thursdays Chuck personally pays for and cooks for the 70 guests. He shares, “They really like my hamburgers and ribs.” As funds become available, the church will purchase more tables and chairs to accommodate up to 100 guests.

“We are working to break the cycle of homelessness by adding structure to the day,” says Ed Czerniakowski, Volunteer Coordinator, in a recent newspaper article in the *Daily Tribune*.

Cultivating mutual respect

Ray Watson, the manager of the Welcome Inn, stresses “the mutual respect between staff and guests.” In a meeting at a local church, he asked for a show of hands from those who have seen homeless people in their community. Only a handful of the 115 people responded. “I think a lot of people don’t see homeless people because they look right through them. Homeless people are invisible to society, which is why my whole thing is to treat our guests with respect.”

The following was in a recent report to supporters. “SOCH is a faith-based organization. We pray every morning before we start the day and before our afternoon meal. Guests of the Welcome Inn lead us in prayer both times of the day. In the mornings we review what is scheduled for the day, shower, laundry, clothes closet, etc., how the previous night was at the shelter, and if there is any improvement we can make for our future days at the Welcome Inn.”

Chuck relays a story of one 50-year-old woman the police brought to the Welcome Inn. She was “out of it” and said she was trying to find her sisters who lived in a city that began with D. She had taken a bus from California to Denver then Des Moines ending up in Detroit with \$16 out of \$4,000 ATM withdrawals. The staff

contacted authorities in California to find out she had been missing for over a month and apparently was off her medicines for manic depression. The staff was able to get her into treatment and reconnected with her sisters after 30 years. In a recent follow-up she was living with one of her sisters and doing well.

A note from a recent guest says it all. “Finding the Welcome Inn and seeing how warm, friendly, and kind all the volunteers are toward those of us in need has truly restored my faith in the goodness of people. Thank you so much. With gratitude, S.U.”

Chuck currently serves as the Chair of SOCH and can be reached at han9544@aol.com.

Barbara O’Hearne can be reached at 816.531.3353 or bohearne@kc.rr.com. She believes that giving back to one’s community is a gift from God.





Spirit Rising

2009 Unity People's Convention
DoubleTree Hotel, Overland Park, KS
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For more information, see www.unity.org/convention



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