



The General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches
Growth & Renewal Day held on Friday 28th March 2008

Appendix 2: Detailed actions from afternoon groups:

Outcomes from Group sessions: How do we do that?

Theme:	Action – be specific!	Resources needed – (finance, people, materials etc.)	By when? Rough timeline with key milestones.	Measures. How will we know we have achieved this?
Numerical Growth	Appoint a 'Czar' in the congregation to take responsibility for numerical growth	Congregational support Marketing materials, media contacts, revised web-site	1 st October 2008	Review number in congregation
Numerical Growth	Team up with other congregations to build critical mass for a service/social event	Prepare place of worship	1 st October 2008	Critical mass achieved without outside help
Numerical Growth	Create a children's group	Leader & team trained CRB checks Facilities	1 year & review	Lively happy children and parents (5-10)
Numerical Growth	Appoint a national spokesperson	Person appointed Funding Publicity material	September 2008	Awareness of Unitarian movement & public

				prominence
Numerical Growth	Set up web-sites for all congregations in the U.K.	Refer to UCCN Consultancy Funding Regularly update web-site Provide a centralised resource e.g. technical support for smaller congregations	March 2009 (this time next year)	Check by timeline that ALL congregations have a web-site up & running
Spirituality	Questionnaire workshop	Group workshop	3 months	People are happy
Spirituality	Less use of Bible – use of other sources	Use of antiphonal readings	As soon as possible	If everyone leaves we've failed
Spirituality	Experimentation with worship space & styles	People	-	People want more & bring others
Spirituality	Passion, enthusiasm	Worship Panel	6 months	Anybody left!
Spirituality	Spiritual growth of congregation	Engagement groups	-	How happy – who turned up
Resources	Include 'How to welcome people' section in 'Help is at Hand'	Ideas Someone to write it Production costs	September 2008	New section delivered to all congregations
Resources	People who are willing to be welcomers	2+ people from each congregation – rota?	Ongoing	Monitored by congregations
Resources	Provision of learning resources in print & on the Web	People to write materials Web Masters to make it available online	Ongoing	Resources available in all formats

		Money		
Resources	Leaders – all varieties not just ministry, but also engagement groups etc.	People from congregations Teachers & trainers Good publicity	Ongoing	Use qualification/certificates for group facilitators Better led congregations & groups
Resources	Better web-sites, with good links between congregations & societies & GA & world	Web Panel resource Register of people with the skills Money	URGENT!	Fresh relevant web-sites throughout the denomination Numbers of hits Lessening numbers of congregations without a web-site
Resources	Music resources for worship & meditation	CD with new hymn book Decent equipment to play CDs on & someone to work it Music on web-site to burn to CD List of resources	2010 Ongoing “ “	
Resources	People generally – identifying skills	Skills register Sharing good practice Skills exchange	Ongoing	Jobs getting done
Resources	MONEY!	Fund-raising skills	Ongoing	Jobs getting done

Buildings	Help is at Hand for Buildings & Lettings	Buildings Advisory Panel via Education & Training Commission	Next Annual meetings ay latest	Publication
Buildings	Smarten up notice boards, exterior gardens Interiors to be smartened also	Varies according to location	Each congregation to fix their own timescale	
Hospitality	Make the place look warm & welcoming Have a specific person to welcome and not overwhelm them Encourage people to help in areas of the church when they are ready Open your church to groups outwith the church Imagine how you would feel if you were a newcomer going to attend your church	A small welcoming pack <u>offered</u> to visitors Guide sheet for services Seeing some sort of up to date advertising on the front of the building Keep contact by birthday, get well cards etc to let people know you are interested in their lives	As long as it takes to make people feel welcome at the pace of each congregation	Reaction from people Seeing the church membership replenish over the years Re-evaluation of church membership
Publicity	Update of congregational web-sites	UCCN volunteers already available Publicity for this service needed? Training on basic maintenance needed – ‘Help is at Hand’	6 months?	Lots of shiny new web-sites

Events	<p>Encouragement: persuade congregations/districts that events are a good thing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly insert in The Inquirer with events going on across U.K. collated and promoted • Also calendar on GA web-site 	<p>Person-hours to collate material and prepare publications</p> <p>Finance for printing/publishing</p> <p>Person hours for web development and site updates</p>	<p>Autumn 2008 then quarterly</p> <p>Autumn 2008 then rolling updates</p>	
Events	<p>Advice/support/information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplement to 'Help is at Hand' giving examples of events and information on best practice • Central provision of facilitator(s) to help congregations with events programme planning • More pro-active training of local events managers/group leaders/facilitators • Sharing of best practice at a local level (District/sister congregations) 	<p>Person hours for collation of information</p>	<p>As and when it is possible</p>	
Outreach - Community	<p>Service to local community (Faith in Action) Profiling – understand communities To engage with other groups To identify ourselves Ensure a national profile</p> <p>Monitor media for Unitarian response</p>	<p>Volunteers Training Prison visiting Information on problems, legal requirement Procedures Policy Means of Assessment Money Premises</p>	<p>Ongoing 6 months May require immediate action Depends on circumstances</p>	<p>Action plan fulfilled Statistics of contacts Press coverage Expressions of</p>

	Policy on emergency requests	Contacts Networks Materials Research Permissions Authority Task group, get agreement	From days to months Set up group/report back	gratitude Financial support New attenders Success stories Greater awareness of what we do Approval by committee & congregation
Who are we?	Covenant & review every 5 years (Macclesfield idea) Look at it at GA level; (like principles in USA)	People who have created covenants already (Macclesfield) Let <u>every</u> congregation know what they might do and how they can go about it	Next year come back to the GA meetings with an idea of covenant	Possible business cards, leaflets, posters at chapels.
Who are we? Additional notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem with theology – we can't be defined by it • Defining terms without strait-jacketing people • We meet to have respectful conversation with each other about theology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A place to explore in safety - Linked with values not theology • Let our children know who we are – RE • Need pride in Unitarianism 			

Additional actions left in the Executive Committee Surgery box:

New start	The GA needs to research the possibilities of new starts: 'study teams' to look at leadership, resources & possible areas (excited people!)	Minimal	6 months	When we start a new congregation
New start	Train workers, set objectives, vision GET ON WITH IT!	Trained leaders, money – nationally and from Districts, congregations etc.	1 year?	When new congregations exist and grow, thrive
Growth initiatives	Need to be publicised on a regular & frequent (not annual as at GA meetings) basis. Denomination (Congregations & Districts) must be informed & encouraged to take on board growth policies (i.e. theory & <u>action</u>).	A Panel (or CSC) must be appointed to oversee/manage/facilitate this		

Growth 'Targets'/Focuses Social action.	We didn't talk much about growth in social/political action. Could this be added? Thanks
Resources for new initiatives?	I wonder sometimes if we should institute a kind of triage with existing congregations. That a close look at the congregation's chances for survival be taken. Sometimes giving money to a congregation that refuses to try to change is only prolonging their demise. The money might be better spent on new initiatives.

Alternatives to Sunday services

Services need not necessarily take place on Sundays. People are busy, with other commitments, and might respond better to different times during the week. In addition, if services were held on other days (either instead of or in addition to Sundays), it would give us the opportunity to visit other churches than our own; we could all look at other churches with fresh eyes – and perhaps return positive feedback

