

United Church of Christ Youth and Young Adult Ministries Program Assessment

Summary:

A version of this document was shared with the Collegium and Mission Planning Council in June 2009. The advisory committee met in April 2009 to process responses from four regional focus groups (funded by gift from the Ashley Fund of the Minnesota Conference), network contacts, and the online survey results to date (now numbering over 1,000). A concise version will be posted to www.ucc.org/youth and www.ucc.org/young-adults in July. Conferences will receive detailed custom reports of local responses.

While the contents of this report focus on the national setting, we encourage conferences to also consider these recommendations transposed into their own contexts, including the task of mapping out their own publics.

Purpose and History:

The goal of this year-long assessment was to provide national staff and conferences with sufficient input to identify and prioritize the most effective structure for a comprehensive youth and young adult ministries program throughout conference and national settings. A Summit on Youth and Young Adult Ministries was convened in February 2008 with the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, key conference staff, and several young leaders to explore ways of assessing the future shape of youth and young adult ministries in the UCC. Based on recommendations from that group, the Rev. Kelly Burd was called as interim minister for youth and young adults to carry out essential program functions and Mr. Thom Chu was retained as a consultant to carry out the assessment.

Consultant Duties and Responsibilities:

- a) Develop a survey instrument that will be available online and in written form
- b) Prepare process for regional and targeted focus groups
- c) Facilitate focus groups in four or five regional locations to be determined with the Youth and Young Adult Program Advisory Committee
- d) Interview key stakeholders at scheduled events where stakeholders are in attendance (e.g. National Youth Event, PAAM Convocation, CYYAM meetings, and other events)
- e) Prepare summary reports for the Advisory Committee's review
- f) Make recommendations to Advisory committee regarding other opportunities to achieve the desired outcomes of the Needs Assessment
- g) Prepare and submit a final report in consultation with the Advisory Committee which includes recommendations for the future structure and function of youth and young adult ministries in the United Church of Christ

Thomas K. Chu

UCC Consultant for Youth and Young Adult Ministries Advisory Committee
Recommendations

Advisory Committee for Youth and Young Adult Ministries Recommendations
Connecting vision and values, publics, and specific areas of ministry

Vision and Values Propelling the UCC's Ministry with Youth and Young Adults:
We believe:

- (A) . . . that the whole church needs the vitality and vision of youth and young adults.
- (B) . . . that youth and young adults are a part of the voice and vitality of the church today.
- (C) . . . that we should have effective ministry with youth and young adults.
- (D) . . . in a vigorous intellectual faith
- (E) . . . that vital ministry is oriented towards local congregations (of many kinds).
- (F) . . . the future of the UCC depends on the vitality of this ministry.
- (G) . . . that the UCC needs to be present in the life transitions through youth and young adulthood.
- (H) . . . our ministries with youth and young adults need to engage their cultures, and ways of thinking, knowing, and working

Youth (who have a focus unique from young adults):

- (J) All youth are our youth
- (K) We must go to them (where they are)
- (L) God is already at work in the life of youth
- (M) . . . are actively seeking a relationship with God
- (N) . . . have gifts to enhance the ministry of the local church
- (P) . . . bring a perspective that is missing and needed in the UCC
- (Q) . . . celebrate being part of a diverse church
- (R) . . . yearn for acceptance and belonging in the whole church
- (S) . . . have a compelling desire to serve in and build a better world

Young adults (who have their own unique focus):

- (T) All young adults are our young adults
- (U) God is already at work in the life of young adults
- (V) . . . feel a need for fellowship and community with other young adults
- (W) . . . have a unique UCC identity to be nurtured
- (X) . . . celebrate being part of a diverse church
- (Y) . . . have a compelling desire to serve in and build a better world
- (Z) . . . have diverse lifestyles (class, educational attainment, household status)

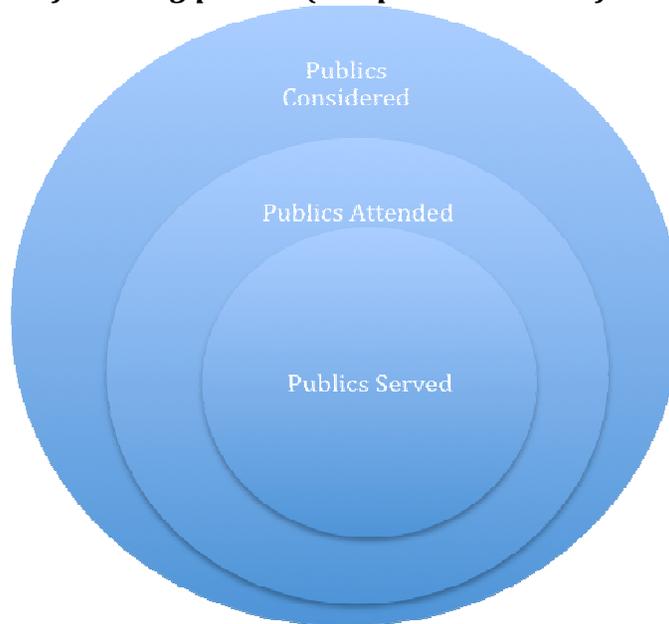
Campus ministry (which has its own unique focus):

- (AA) STEP student ministry and student leadership is important
- (BB) UCC has a valuable presence in ecumenical and interfaith ministry on campus and in the church
- (CC) UCC students have a role in the global Christian community
- Campus ministry is a holistic ministry in a special workplace
- (DD) . . . is a local church setting with a mission-style ministry
- (EE) . . . is a place where young adults explore their calling and vocation

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We reach out to the following publics (sample illustration following):



<i>Sample Publics Served:</i>	<i>Sample Publics Attended:</i>	<i>Sample Publics Considered:</i>
(1) Youth (13-18)	(20) Christian educators	(30) Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
(2) Student Young Adults (19-30)	(21) Clergy in formation who want to work with young people	(31) Formula of Agreement Partners (PCUSA, ELCA, RCA)
(3) Non-student Young Adults (19-30)	(22) Ecumenical ministries: NCC, WCC, CESC, WSCF	(32) Unitarians and other religious groups, including programming, policies, communications
(4) Young Adults with families (19-30)	(23) Interfaith youth and young adult work	(33) Macro factors shaping youth and young adult lives—culture, trends, mental health, education
(5) Adults who work with Youth	(24) Conference staff and conference networks	(34) Council of Conference Ministers
(6) Adults who work with Young Adults	(25) COREM and HUGs groups	
(7) Youth and Young Adults in COREM and HUGs groups	(26) Other national staff and ministries that have connection and interest in youth and young adults	
(8) Young People interested in doing justice work	(27) OCWM, OGM, OWL, Coalition for LGBT Concerns,	
(9) Youth and Young Adults who serve on governing boards (mainly national)	(28) The Fellowship Network	
(10) Outdoor Ministries	(29) Mission Partners	
(11) Joshua Generation (young adults of color out of the Urban Ministries Network)	(30) Publishers of resources	
(12) Chaplaincies at UCC colleges, campus ministries	(31) Seminary professors	
	(32) Large UCC congregations	

Growing out of our visions and values and serving, attending, or considering our publics, we identify six areas of ministry:

These statements were ranked by the Advisory Committee on Youth and Young Adult Ministries out of their meeting of April 25-26, 2009, each followed by specific recommendations synthesized by Thom Chu out of online survey suggestions, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with key leaders:

I. Providing training for youth, young adults, and ministers with youth and/or young adults in:

peer leadership, group management, and denominational leadership; creating programmatic opportunities for youth and young adults to develop and exercise their leadership, including taking advantage of existing ecumenical offerings, e.g. Princeton Forums, NCCCUSA, Formula of Agreement partners.

Specific recommendations:

- Support NCCCUSA's Youth Worker Summit December 1-4, 2010 www.youthworkersummit.org (publics 5, 20, 21, 24)
- Support Student Ecumenical Partnership (STEP) student leadership event scheduled for summer 2010 (publics 2, 12, 30)
- Target and resource conference-setting and association-setting trainings (publics 1, 5, 20, 21, 24)
- Consider reconfiguring NYE and General Synod activities to focus on leader development (of both constituents and volunteers/paid staff) with increased time duration, activity intensity, and topical depth (publics 1-12, 20-32)
- Actively pursue collaborations and sharing resources with Covenant and Formula of Agreement partners
- Attend to the specific needs of particular publics

II. Developing resources with UCC flavor (highlights on UCC identity and distinctives):

including collaborative development of homegrown resources, identifying non-UCC resources and adapting or commending them; including worship and music.

Specific recommendations:

- Communicate more clearly and more often existing resource-development efforts that include younger leadership, including Faith Practices, *Stewardship in the Household of God*, and *Sing!* Prayer and Praise songbook
- Engage conference- and association-setting youth- and young adult-serving leaders again to identify, commend, and adapt non-UCC resources

III. Supporting UCC conferences and associations:

By intentionally reaching out to conference and association leadership, paid and volunteer, through multiple means of communication and hosting common space for sharing ideas, learnings, insights, and relationships

By networking, gathering, and motivating across every setting of the UCC: conference, [region], association, congregation

Specific recommendations:

- Schedule regular one-on-one communication with key leaders
- Offer specific supports to conference- and association-setting leaders in process facilitation, change management, and skill-building (including care and nurture of volunteers)
- Seek specific feedback from key leaders on programmatic emphases and special projects
- Host an online space for sharing best practices and suggestions

IV. Activating every environment to reach youth and young adults:

Going to where they are, including schools, outdoor/camping ministries, campus ministries, allied youth- and young adult-serving agencies as well as congregations; Including creating communication channels to and among youth, young adults

Specific recommendations:

- Develop more supports to congregations reaching out to daily environments (schools, youth-serving and young adult-serving agencies and institutions)
- Continue to develop connections with outdoor/camping ministries
- Commit to a specific emphasis on campus ministry (as a separate missionary environment) distinct from non-student young adult ministries
- Coordinate communications to various publics with more advance planning (e.g. timing multiple messages on the same topic, nurturing interest over months and years for intense engagements including internships, mission opportunities, scholarships), create “hub” messaging (whether through KYeP or other facility) that reaches publics on a weekly/biweekly basis with capacity to measure total message openings, click-throughs, and responses

V. Offering and supporting opportunities for youth and young adults to engage in mission service:

Supporting local initiatives, developing and communicating opportunities beyond the local setting, helping volunteers to tell their story, individually and together, in a faith-based way.

Specific recommendations:

- Increase time horizon in notifying and nurturing members of target groups:
- Consider selectively tracking runners-up for internship and mission service positions individually for their potential in other settings

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- Create more spaces for younger people to tell their mission service stories, including those not coordinated through Church House staff

VI. Integrating ministries with youth, young adults into a wholistic congregational strategy for church vitality:

Putting concerns and interests of youth and young adults into the general flow of planning for outreach, hospitality, stewardship, worship, leadership development and succession planning, vocational discernment, service, pastoral care.

Putting younger people in their “proper place”—needn’t be at the center to belong.

Specific recommendations:

- Establish realizable benchmarks in each area with plans for interpretation
- Create online consultation spaces to gather input and support from younger constituencies—an applied extension of the general myUCC approach

In order to achieve these goals, we need:

1. . . . dedicated staff who will be adequately supported by administrative staff, program funds, and other infrastructure over a sustained period.
2. . . . sufficient staff capacity to acknowledge the unique needs of youth, young adults, and campus ministry.
3. . . . stakeholders from key publics to be involved in shaping job description and mission plan.
4. . . . stakeholders from key publics to be involved in the search and calling of staff.
5. . . . a durable superstructure drawn from across the UCC that will steward this work into the future.

National Setting Planning Grid (organized by area of ministry)

National Setting Ministry	Youth	Young Adults	Campus Ministries
General Ministries	StillSpeaking & Communications: Values A, B, C, F, G, H: Serving 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10—social networking via facebook, twitter, YouTube, myUCC (2200 members, 600 user blogs, 170	StillSpeaking & Communications: Values A, B, C, F, G, H: Serving 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 25, 27, 28—social networking via facebook, twitter, YouTube, myUCC (2200 members, 600 user blogs, 170 created	StillSpeaking & Communications: Values A, B, C, F, G, H: Serving 2, 12—social networking via facebook, twitter, YouTube, myUCC (2200 members, 600 user blogs, 170

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Recommendations

	created groups); Ecumenical: see extended grid below	groups); Ecumenical: see extended grid below	created groups); Ecumenical: see extended grid below
Justice & Witness Ministries	III. Justice Leadership Engaging and Developing (Justice LED) training of trainers	I. Support for Joshua Generation; scholarships to Ecumenical Advocacy Days and similar events; internship programs; issue-specific young adult groups (e.g. Bread for the World, World Conference on Racism); III. Justice Leadership Engaging and Developing (Justice LED) training of trainers; VI. Identifying young leaders for leadership development	I. College scholarships for students of color; scholarships to Ecumenical Advocacy Days and similar events; internship programs; issue-specific young adult groups (e.g. Bread for the World, World Conference on Racism); VI. Identifying young leaders for leadership development
Local Church Ministries	I. Church House tours and presentations (CVD); hospitality & leadership development workshops (CVD); COREM LinK proposal supporting opportunities for Y/YA in mission service (CVD); NYE, RYEs (CVD); presentations to AUCE (CVD), other events; support to ministers who work with youth (PLL); II. Evangelism developed a youth-focused resource for NYE'08 (CVD); <i>Stewardship in the</i>	I. Webinar "Where are the 20-somethings?" (CVD); support and oversight to CYYAM (mainly YAs, fewer youth) (CVD); regional seminarian events; support to ministers who work with young adults (PLL); II. Praise Song Advisory Team included two members under age 30 (CVD); <i>Stewardship in the Household of God</i> includes resources for youth and young adults (CVD); <i>Faith Practices</i> has young adult component (CVD); <i>Fast that Lasts</i> resource (CVD); discussion	I. StillSpeaking training on college campuses; II. Resources for members in discernment, commissioned ministers, seminarians, leading regional training programs, on UCC history, theology, and polity, search and call resources (PLL); religious studies textbooks (PRD); UCC polity and history titles (PRD); III. support to young adults in the ministry

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	<p><i>Household of God</i> includes resources for youth and young adults (CVD); <i>Faith Practices</i> has youth component (CVD); UCC version of Lutheran handbook being developed (CVD); updating several resources to have UCC “flavor” (CVD); Fast that Lasts resource (CVD); youth curricula: <i>Gather’Round, Seasons of the Spirit, Faith Practices</i> (beginning 2010) (PRD); Youth Ministries Alternatives series (PRD); ecumenical outdoor ministry curriculum <i>Breakthrough</i> (PRD); <i>Sing! Prayer and Praise</i> songbook (PRD); III. Communication about wider church events for youth (CVD); support of Y/YA-relating conference and association staff (CVD); support of Regional Youth Event teams as requested (CVD); staff support to Outdoor Ministries Association (CVD); recruitment of CYYAM candidates (CVD); boundary training and boundary training resources (PLL); IV.</p>	<p>books for young adults (PRD); justice issues books (PRD); UCC polity and history titles (PRD); <i>Sing! Prayer and Praise</i> songbook (PRD); III. Communication about wider church events for young adults (CVD); support of Y/YA-relating conference and association staff (CVD); recruitment of CYYAM candidates (CVD); boundary training and boundary training resources (PLL); support to young adults in the ministry discernment process (PLL); IV. networking online with leaders through facebook and myUCC (CVD); V. collaboration with WCM on mission opportunities; GS27 youth program. VI: Church Vitality presentations address youth culture, youth, and young adult-related considerations.</p>	<p>discernment process (PLL)</p>
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	<p>Presence at NYE as workshop leaders and exhibitors (CVD); networking online with leaders through facebook and myUCC (CVD); V. NYE mission education and service opportunities; collaboration with WCM on mission opportunities; GS27 youth program. VI: Church Vitality presentations address youth culture, youth, and young adult-related considerations.</p>		
Wider Church Ministries	<p>U.S. Mission Trip Opportunities; Mission Trip Leader Training Resources and Events (U.S. Mission Trip focus); People-to-People Pilgrimages, including Ministry & Mission Interpreters Trainings; Be a Global Mission Church Youth Group; NYE workshops and activities resourcing; LGBT resources; service projects and GS and NYE; ideas and resources for engaging in community service events; resource curriculum for outdoor ministries settings;</p>	<p>U.S. Mission Trip Opportunities; Mission Trip Leader Training Resources and Events (U.S. Mission Trip focus); People-to-People Pilgrimages, including Ministry & Mission Interpreters Trainings; LGBT resources; ideas and resources for engaging in community service events; opportunities to connect with a child through Child Sponsorship; greater participation and leadership of young adults highlighted in GM strategic plan adopted by CGMB in 2008; Global Mission Interns; Partners in Service full-time</p>	<p>U.S. Mission Trip Opportunities; Mission Trip Leader Training Resources and Events (U.S. Mission Trip focus); People-to-People Pilgrimages, including Ministry & Mission Interpreters Trainings; LGBT resources; Global Ministries Council of Theological Students (one student from each UCC or Disciples seminary); resources for planning and engaging in “alternative</p>

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	opportunities to connect with a child through Child Sponsorship; coordinate visits of global partners and personnel to serve in camp/outdoor settings; ecumenical mission study materials	volunteers in the US; Young Adult Service Communities; Mission Works event; young adult-focused Ministries and Mission Interpreters training event; recommending and sending participants to WCC meetings and as youth stewards; OGHS Live! Webcast during Lent	breaks” and service-learning in the US and with global partners; Volunteers Exploring Vocation program with Fund for Theological Education
Ecumenical & Interfaith Partners	Youth	Young Adults	Campus Ministries
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)			LCM: I: STEP joint student leadership event summer 2010
Presbyterian Church (USA)			
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America			
Reformed Church in America			
NCCCUSA and WCC	LCM: I: Ecumenical Youth Workers’ Summit (training/support for youth leaders); LCM II: financial support for OMA participation in creating ecumenical camp resource	Ecumenical: Scholarships to support involvement in NCC and WCC opportunities	
Others:		WCM: Recommend and support involvement in the World Student Christian Federation	

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Summary of Consultant Activities

Engagement	Place and Date	Participants
National Youth Event workshops listening to youth and adults who work with youth	University of Tennessee at Knoxville, July 25-26, 2008	4 sessions, 173 participants (52 youth, 121 adults), plus one-on-one contacts with over 100 youth and adults
Sacred Conversations on Race with Youth	Franklinton Center at Bricks, Whitakers, NC August 10-12, 2008	45 youth and adult advisors (about 8)
Pacific Islander and Asian-American Ministries (PAAM) Youth and Young Adult Gathering	Manoa Valley Church, Honolulu, HI August 14-16, 2008	Over 100 youth and adult advisors
Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries	UCC Church House Cleveland, OH August 22-24, 2008	About 12 CYYAM members and UCC staff
Advisory Committee for Youth and Young Adult Ministries	Telephone conference August 23, 2008	10 advisory committee members
Student Ecumenical Partnership (STEP)	Elmhurst College Elmhurst, IL October 17-18, 2008	6 UCC and CC(DoC) college/university students and 2 staff
Advisory Committee for Youth and Young Adult Ministries	Telephone and internet conference November 7, 2008	8 advisory committee members
Outdoor Ministries Association	UCC Church House Cleveland, OH November 19, 2008	24 UCC camp and conference center directors and UCC staff
Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries	UCC Church House Cleveland, OH January 9-10, 2009	

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Mid-Atlantic/ Southern Focus Group	Old First Reformed UCC Philadelphia, PA January 17, 2009	8 youth, 9 young adults, 5 adults, 16 Euro-American, 3 Asian-American (1 South Asian), 3 African-American
Our Whole Lives/ Sexuality and Our Faith Young Adult Facilitator Training	Unity Unitarian Church St. Paul, MN January 30-31, 2009	
All Nations Indian Church and Minnesota Conference Visit	February 1, 2009	Five Indian youth and young adults
Great Lakes Regional Focus Group	Elmhurst College Elmhurst IL February 7, 2009	4 youth, 8 young adults, 9 middle or older adults, three people of color
2030 Clergy Phone /Internet Conference	February 13, 2009	14 2030 clergy in two conference calls
Western Regional Focus Group	First Congregational UCC Berkeley, CA February 28, 2009	27 participants from of 8 of 9 conferences in the region, 12 youth and young adults, 2 Asian-American, 1 African-American
Where are the 20-somethings online webinar	Growtheucc.org March 3, 2009	Over 50 registered, 40+ participants, many clergy, all church leaders
Dakota Association Focus Group	Eagle Butte Learning Center Eagle Butte, SD March 6-7, 2009	20 Lakota/Dakota youth, young adults, and their families of all ages
New England Regional Focus Group	MAUCC Conference Center Framingham, MA March 28, 2009	26 participants from every conference in the region, four African-Americans, one young adult with a stated disability
Pacific Northwest Conference Young Adult Ministry Development	University Congregational UCC Seattle, WA March 29, 2009	8 young adults plus conference minister and conference center director

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Coalition for LGBT Concerns Youth Workers and Young Adults	Telephone/Internet Conference April 3, 2009	3 participants
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About the consultant:

Thom Chu has worked in youth and young adult ministries for the past twenty years, 18 with the churchwide offices of the Episcopal Church. His varied roles have included creating supports for vital youth, young adult, and campus ministries, lifting young people into their proper place and role in the church’s governance, worship, and strategic thinking, and a wider focus on human and faith development through the lifespan with an emphasis on children, youth, and young adults. His publications include *GodWorks: Evangelism at Work with Youth and Young Adults* (Morehouse Publishing, co-author), *Disorganized Religion: The Evangelization of Youth and Young Adults* (Cowley Publications, contributor), and *Push It! Young Adults Engage the Bible* (United Church Press, contributor).

Thom had regular contact throughout his Episcopal Church ministry with the United Church of Christ through his work with the National and World Councils of Churches and the Council for Ecumenical Student Christian Ministry/World Student Christian Federation. Since July 2008, Thom has been serving the UCC as a consultant to assess its work with youth and young adults and to suggest an integrated multi-setting strategy for the next 5-10 years. Over the past year, he has met with over 300 youth, young adults, and ministers with them from nearly every conference of the UCC and is administering an online survey reaching over 1,000 (uccyyasurvey.questionpro.com). He is a graduate of Columbia University in urban studies and elementary education and a student at Hofstra University School of Law focusing on child and youth advocacy and conflict transformation.

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