

**Subgroup 7: BUILDING DIVERSE COMMUNITY**

*Subgroup Members: Dale Hill, Rita Parks, Carl Schmitt, and Kristina Heinemann*

**a.) Definition of your theme area:**

	REACH OUT	BRING IN
<b>DIVERSITY IN PEOPLE AND IDEAS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build bridges</li> <li>- Be inclusive</li> <li>- Live our values</li> <li>- Seek feedback</li> <li>- Engage in <i>the spirit of inquiry, not advocacy!</i></li> <li>- Participate in ecumenical dialog</li> <li>- Advocate for individual rights for all</li> <li>- Reach out to those who are unaffiliated and secularly oriented -- those who are potential UU's (avoid those who will likely never be UU's)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enrich ourselves</li> <li>- Gain humility</li> <li>- Increase our understanding</li> </ul>

- Diversity among individuals - ethnic, economic, social outlook/values, political views, physical ability
- Goal to be inclusive and to enrich ourselves
- Establish civil dialog between diverse existing/established communities possessing a diversity of ideas (useful reference, Jim Wallis, *God's Politics, Why the Right Got It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, [www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net) for convening study/discussion groups engaged in ecumenical dialog)
- Mitigate polarization that has developed in our society today
- Avoid focus on converting others to "our" views
- Avoid "group think" and assumption that we all think alike
- Social Justice at RRUC sometimes paints issues in too simplistically
- Useful model, AIC - Appreciate, Influence, Control - often too little effort and acknowledgement of the need to appreciate and then influence others
- Allow for more reflection and inquiry

**b.) Provocative Proposition/Ideal Vision statement for our group:**

(1) In the spirit of inquiry and welcome RRUC sponsors programs several times a year which are provocative and which attract numerous people outside the Congregation with diverse ideas and viewpoints. These programs are planned jointly by RRUC members and outside participants.

(2) RRUC is engaged with multiple community organizations including religious institutions of other faiths, in working for community change. RRUC "ambassadors" participating in these activities provide frequent reports back to the RRUC Congregation.

**c.) Key actions & activities to make this happen:**

**Actions:**

- Meet others on their turf
- Distinguish between exchange of ideas and "action/advocacy"
- Seek out others who do not agree with us and who are different
- Broader inclusion of all "groups" within RRUC
- More aggressive use of diverse and new technologies that might especially appeal/engage youth and young adults
- Bring to the fore/highlight when we do make good connections outside RRUC (Capture and Communicate)
- Break down barriers that cause us to be insular/smug/paternalistic in our attitudes

**Activities:**

- CC&C format - create regular opportunity for extended follow-up conversations based on that day's speaker or previous week's speaker (perhaps one Sunday a month at 12:45) - emphasis on learning
- Create Summer Series - Forum for Interdenominational Speakers and interdenominational dialog - theological diversity
- Stage other events at RRUC with ecumenical appeal with the intent of increasing understanding
- Greater ministerial involvement in ecumenical activities - ask RRUC Ministers to bring this involvement back to the Congregation
- Greater Congregational involvement and activities with those from other religious institutions, e.g., cross-church exchange programs (be sure to report back to the Congregation)
- Create an opportunity to provide feedback on the RRUC website.
- Offer AE courses designed to bring in others outside the current RRUC community - make it a joint effort and trade locations for events/meetings
- Revive/establish relationship with Action in Montgomery (AIM) interfaith group
- "Experiencing Poverty in Montgomery County" simulation
- Encourage more RRUC members to participate in volunteer activities that are offered through Community Ministries in Montgomery County (CMMC)
- Exchange Newsletters with other Churches

**d.) How we will know/demonstrate that this provocative proposition has become a reality:**

(1) Programs offered and occur three or more times during a church year. There is frequent exchange between local religious institutions and RRUC. There is ample opportunity for CC&C participants to delve deeply into issues raised during regular CC&C presentations. Some significant percent of participants in RRUC programs come from outside the Church community.

(2) RRUC joins AIM or similar multi-faith/interfaith organization. RRUC recognizes and awards Ambassadors (who venture outside the RRUC community) on a regular basis, e.g., Annual Award. Quarterly report to the RRUC Board on links/connections to outside organizations and activities.

**e.) Plans/thoughts for integration with other themes:**

Excellence/Worship/Programs	
Membership	
Social commitment/action	Integrate interfaith activities and take advantage of common ground between faiths
Fun and enjoyment	

Religious values made manifest	
Communication	Support for communication about events and connections to groups outside of RRUC
Building diverse community	
Young adults involvement	
Intergenerational	
Financial stability/Stewardship	Some interfaith activities will require a financial commitment from RRUC, e.g., AIM requires that individual member organizations contribute 1% of revenues - RRUC budget priorities would need to reflect this