

Doing Good is Not Good Enough

There is no question UBA congregations are doing some really wonderful things, but doing good is not good enough if we continue to lose ground in the city. Continuing to do what we've been doing will only get us further behind. The changing context and our current results suggest it may be time to re-task the association to help churches re-think their Great Commission assignment in light of current realities.

Re-tasking the Association -- "mobilizing churches to take on lostness"

What would it mean for the association to be re-tasked *to mobilize churches to take on lostness*?

1. Refocus on the Great Commission making it our priority, letting our primary criteria for success be penetrating lostness and making disciples in our city and around the world, with special attention given to the unreached people groups in our city
2. Research -- we need to know who lives in our city -- every people group needs to be identified and the level of engagement determined
3. Train church leaders to think more and more like missionaries in their own context; to support missionaries to our city
3. Support and encourage the starting of non-traditional churches to serve alongside traditional congregations to reach the unreached in our city (much like home schooling exists alongside more traditional public and private schools) -- our focus should be incarnational v. attractional, simple v. complex, rapidly reproducing v. incremental growth
4. Identify and teach better, more effective models for evangelism and disciple-making
5. Continue our support for training and reaching the ever-increasing Hispanic (Spanish-language) population in our city

Metrics

How do we measure success? Here are some *possible* ways:

1. Every people group *identified* -- ethnolinguistic people groups first, then sociological people group segments
2. Every people group *engaged* -- every people group will be adopted by a UBA church toward the end that the gospel is shared, disciples are made and churches are established among that people group
3. Disciples will be made. Baptisms will increase. Simple, incarnational, rapidly reproducing churches will be started.
4. Existing churches will become more missionally active and more spiritually vital.

Rev. 12/16/10



Re-tasking the Association "mobilizing churches to take on lostness"

It's been said the future isn't what it use to be ... perhaps nowhere is that more true than in Houston.

In recent years Houston has changed from a bi-racial southern city to one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse cities in the United States.

Through the years the association has changed to keep pace with the changing ministry context. When UBA began in 1840, the primary focus of the association was on starting churches, protecting Baptist doctrine and identity and to provide fellowship for the churches.

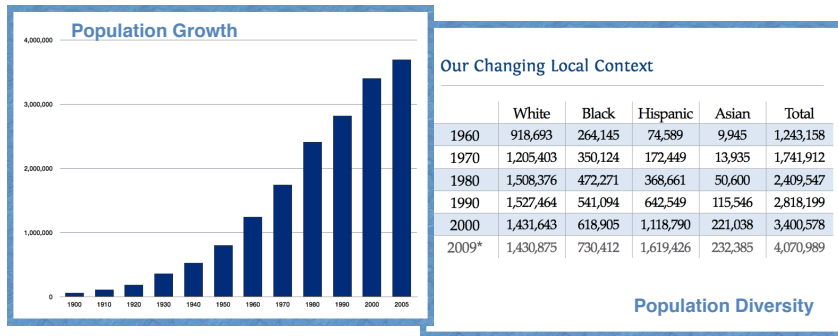
"... Houston has become one of the nation's most ethnically and culturally diverse metropolitan areas. It is now at the forefront of the new diversity that is radically reconstructing the social and political landscape of urban America."
-- Dr. Stephen Klineberg
Rice University

As denominations and conventions formed, associations became the primary promoter of denominational programs at the local level. The association helped churches develop strong programs and produce good Baptists.

The last half of the twentieth century saw dramatic changes in our country: secularism, postmodernity, immigration. The population grew faster than our churches. Baptisms declined. The association adjusted and became consultants to promote church health, to develop leaders, to transform communities and to increase the rate at which we started new churches.

While the changes made in the 90s proved effective for a while, it's time to look again at what's happening in our city and consider re-tasking the association.

Diverse-city -- Houston is growing and diversifying daily.



- Houston is the sixth most populated metropolitan area in the US
- Houston's MSA population **increased by more than 140,000 in 2009**
- The **Anglo** population has **declined** from its 1990 level
- The **Hispanic** population in Harris County today is greater than the **Anglo** population *has ever been* with more **Hispanics** in Harris County today than the **total population** of the county in 1960

Summary

- Population estimates (census.gov): County - 4,070,989; Metro - 5,865,086
- 41% speak a language other than English at home
- 350 different identified ethnolinguistic people groups so far
- 142 nationalities identified
- Approximately 220 total languages spoken in our city
- Approximately 1 million residents are foreign born
- The Hispanic population for Houston is now at 42.4%; for Harris County it is 40%.

Church Growth

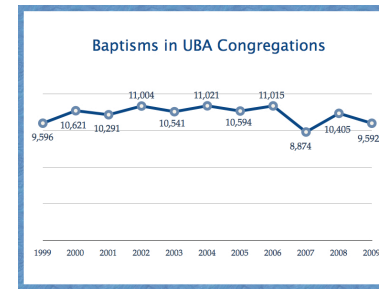
Our city is growing and diversifying. The question is, how effective are we in making disciples and fulfilling the Great Commission among the people that live in our city?

At first glance, the answer appears to be good. From 1999 to 2009, the number of churches in UBA increased from 489 to 599, a 22% increase, while the population in the city increased by 17%.

But that doesn't tell the whole story.



Unchurched Population



While the population has increased by almost 600,000 people since 2000, we are baptizing about the same number of people year after year ... and this with 110 *more* churches in UBA than we had ten years ago.

When you understand a significant percentage of those baptized are children of folks already church members, it becomes more apparent

that our churches are not effectively penetrating lostness in our city.

The table below shows research data on religious affiliation within the Houston metro area. You'll notice that from 1990 to 2000 the percentage of the population *unaffiliated with any religion* increased from 43% to 50%.

According to the Association of Religious Data Archives (thearda.com), 80% of the 2000 Houston metro population did not affiliate with any evangelical church -- that's 3,706,475 people or *the equivalent of the total population of the metro area in 1990!*

	1990	2000
Population	3,731,131	4,669,571
Affiliates All Religions	2,122,295	2,330,089
Unaffiliated with Any Religion	1,608,836 (43%)	2,339,482 (50%)
Unaffiliated with Evangelicals		3,706,475

Doing the Math

How many churches do we need in order to reach the unchurched population of Houston? Let's do the math:

- The population of the Houston metro area today is about 5.99 million.
- If 80% are not affiliated with an evangelical congregation, that would mean 4,792,000 people need to be reached.
- A medium-sized church in the Houston metro area has about 300 members. With this as a basis, it would require 15,973 new churches to reach the 4.79 million unreached people in our city.
- It takes about \$3 million to fund a traditional church -- buy land, build the first unit buildings, pay a staff, fund programming over the time it takes to become a 300 member congregation.
- From 1999 to 2009, UBA added 110 member congregations.
- **At that rate of growth, it would take 1,450+ years and cost \$47.9 billion to reach our current population.**