

Regional Operations and Threshold Congregations

Many of you know that the UUA has established 19 Districts – akin to our Metro New York – across the country, but far fewer of us know that there has been longstanding discussion about the benefit of more inter-district cooperation and exchange. In fact, Metro New York has worked for the past three years with three neighboring districts – Joseph Priestley (South Jersey, Eastern PA, DE, MD, DC, and Northern VA), St. Lawrence (upstate NY), and Ohio Meadville (Western PA, WV, and much of OH) – in a variety of regional activities such as UULTI, our UU Leadership Training Institute, and other programs.

Starting next year, the 2010-11 year, more of our district operations will be regionalized among these four districts. All four Districts and the UUA have approved a broad new operational approach, which is a shared services model. The Program Consultant staff of these districts will operate on a regional, four-district basis in their work such as leadership development, lifespan faith development, growth strategies, and other programs. Specialization among the Program Consultants will support both more effective and more efficient services to congregations.

Also, the Program Consultants will tend to put greater attention to a selected group of congregations where there is a great opportunity to grow and expand their own programs. These “threshold congregations” will be flagships for our whole district, indeed for our whole region, now called the CentralEast Regional Group, or CERG. We are very interested in working with all congregational leaders to outline what we envision as threshold congregations, and we are excited about the potential of this new category of service to our congregations. The threshold congregations will get some extra support, but they in turn will share their learning with other congregations so that all can develop and grow.

– Ted Fetter, District President