



BRANDING AND GROWTH

OUR CHALLENGE is "simple"... to raise the overall awareness of Unitarians and Unitarianism in Canada.

People are not attracted to a congregation, religious denomination, or a social movement that appears murky, ill-defined, or unsure of its own identity. Yet we struggle to paint a clear and concise image of "who we are" to those people who might venture to join us. This is compounded by our freethinker heritage that shuns attempts to *define* as attempts to *confine* - as though to journey together under the same flag would somehow tarnish our individuality. We do not embrace unity easily!

Within our congregations we can continue to celebrate our polity and distinctiveness, but we need a more unified approach when we court the outside world. The reality is that any "message" we might send into the world will be just one of dozens, nay hundreds, of messages people receive throughout any given day. If we have any hope of being heard, we need to play by the rules of the game: we must be Clear, Concise and Consistent.

A key part of a successful communications process is creating a recognizable "brand". Strong brand recognition can increase the awareness and depth of understanding of U*Uism in the general public and make it easier for potential members to find us and try us. It can also make it easier to get media attention. A successful brand identity can make us feel proud and help empower staff and volunteers.

So what is our "brand"? This was the challenge undertaken by the congregations in the Greater Toronto Area. Working with professional designers, they set out to develop a distinct visual identity that was not tied to any geographical area or congregation. The intention was then to create a range of promotional materials that incorporated this brand identity, and make those materials available to member congregations.

The design process incorporated input from a variety of sources from across the country,

including the results from the recent Values & Aspirations workshops conducted as part of the on-going Statement of Principles project.

The design team synthesized this rich and diverse input into a simple and concise iconic representation that can function as a logo.

- ~ The symbol represents the union of Universalist and Unitarian theologies, depicted by the presence of a bold and unique path for each and every individual, within the embrace of an over-arching cosmic unity. Our combined humanist and religious tradition is clear in the human figure, portrayed as the pivotal connection between the cosmos and the living earth.
- ~ The single word "Unitarian" was chosen simply to aid in the promotion and "brand recognition" of our movement, calling to those who do not yet know us. This was a purely pragmatic consideration, since the combined influences of Unitarian, Universalist, Humanist and other religious theologies and philosophies are so rich and varied within our movement that they could never be meaningfully summarized in only one or two words!
- ~ The tagline "ever moving ever still" was chosen as it captures the ever-changing nature of our living tradition while acknowledging that which is timeless and constant.

Infusing our logo with meaning and energy, an illustration was commissioned to be the basis of our new promotional materials. The illustration, rich in colour and movement, combines earth-based and cosmic elements with images of mind and spirit.

Finally, the web address "unitarian.ca" promotes our Unitarian brand to the wired world.

For more information, please visit www.unitarian.ca/gta