

Remember that Mission Statement thingy we did?

Not really? Well, me either, at least not word for word. Participating in UUMAN's mission-statement-writing workshops, getting everyone involved was fun and a community-building experience and all (We love our community-building, don't we?). We're good, we think, at building community within our walls, but how about beyond our walls? How about truth and justice out there? Do you think we're really gonna do all that hopey-changey, save-the-world stuff?

I have to confess, when I came to UUMAN, I was very skeptical of church, and all things church-y. When Patti and I moved to Georgia sixteen years ago this month, I'd been religion-free and lovin' it for about 30 years. McP told me something I've, since, heard that other wives and mothers concluded, soon after moving to Atlanta: "we have to get a church." I wanted to tell her that she needed to get new husband, one who'd go to church with her. But I knew better than to sass a woman on a mission. ;-)

So, to cut to the chase – on this part of the story, anyway – UUMAN was the fifth or sixth – or sixteenth – church Patti visited before deciding she'd found one I might like. Actually, she knew me well enough then, after only four years, to know she'd found a church for me, her and Dillon, too. He was barely two years old. You can figure out how long ago that was. And you know what? I did like it. I like how I felt here: safe... safe to think and say what I wanted. Show up every Sunday and maybe one or two other days during the month, nice and comfy.

In all these years of membership at UUMAN, I've never aspired to much more for our relationship than a place where *I* find community, where *I* can go on Sunday morning and either sit in on the service, which I've been doing for the last year or so, or teach Sunday School, which I've done off and on over the years, too. I've been on one committee and the other and spent an exciting year of my own on the board. But really, facilitating the Coming of Age year for the junior youth, including Dillon, three years ago and washing the dishes on the odd Sunday morning after coffee hour or a potluck are the things I've done or do at UUMAN that really make me feel my best.

My point is that I didn't think my church needed to have a mission other than a place for *me* to feel comfortable being me. That's been good for almost 15 years.

But a funny thing happened at the Program Council meeting Tuesday night: we got excited about UUMAN's mission. We decided we wanted to do more than focus inward, worry about how we're going to pay the mortgage, Paul, Toniann, Huu and the rest of the staff. We decided to really try to take our love of community, of standing on the side of love, out into the larger world, to make UUMAN's mission *our* mission. We believe in the hope that, if we reach out to the greater community, the world, that we might be rewarded with riches greater than the money we need to keep the lights on.

That's what happened at the Program Council meeting on February 15, 2011. We decided to start a journey and take each of you with us, to carry you and ask you to be ready to carry us, when we need it, to carry each other, as Bono said in [One](#).

"Where are we going?" you might be wondering. Let's find out together... starting right now.

— *Bruce*

Ref: [Our Mission](#) and [Cornel West on optimism vs. hope](#)