

A Unified Unity Image

Taking Unity forward in public awareness!
Plus: A name change for Unity Center of Walnut Creek?

There is a concerted effort to help Unity to move from the best kept secret to a spiritual movement that people can easily find, understand and identify.

Branding thoughts from Rev. David

I wanted to take some time to share my reflections on the branding possibilities before us. I've been deeply involved in several of the ways that this activity touches us and have looked at it for some time seeking to understand in my own mind what will serve our Center best in the future.

HISTORY

It might help with just a little history to put some elements in perspective.



The original logo for Unity was the winged circle. It was taken from the Egyptian pyramids and was an ancient symbol of the freed soul. Whether or not the image appealed to individuals, the meaning was inspiring. Many years ago the Association looked at the symbol and asked for a study of the symbol it was using. This was not so much a branding study as a logo study. That was all we could afford at the time. The information came back with what we had already come to realize – the symbol was no longer one of inspiration. It has been used by the Nazi SS, by Harley Davidson motorcycles, by Southwest Airlines and other organizations that had changed the public response to it.



Bird in Circle - The design of the bird ascending in flight within the circle was an adoption of the original concept that the Association adopted. When I came to Walnut Creek we were not using a symbol so I introduced the standard one of the bird in the circle into our representations.

There have been a number of challenges with that symbol that we have come to recognize throughout the years. They are:

- It is not unique to Unity
- It is similar to lots of other symbols used in seacoast areas. The fact that we think our bird is a dove and theirs are usually a seagull is not noticeable.
- Other churches use the bird as a representation of the holy spirit.
- It cannot be trademarked.

United Voice for Unity

In recent years the two organizations that administer Unity, Unity School of Christianity and the Association of Unity Churches have been responding to extensive feedback that their separation, separate images and different identities is inconsistent with Unity as a movement being effectively recognized in today's society. The two organizations have many different expressions of themselves that instead of being reinforcing often create confusion. Such as Daily Word, Silent Unity, Unity Magazine, Unity Churches/ Centers/ Temples/ alternative ministries/ etc. They all have different logos, images and identities plus many of the churches do not begin with the name Unity and some don't include the name unity.

Recognizing the barrier that this problem creates in our contemporary world where people are constantly bombarded by information, the two organizations commissioned an extensive branding study. The study embraced much more than the logo - it went into the identity messages of the organization and how they are perceived. The result was presented at the International Conference in San Diego this year and enthusiastically endorsed.

The goal as we embrace the branding results is to create a united image for Unity. The concept is that everything Unity does reinforces the recognizable image (how we are identified and the qualities we stand for) that will be associated with all our products and thus make our churches more identifiable and attractive.

While we do not have the control over the word 'unity' and it can be used in many types of organizations, the more we use it in the spiritual and religious worlds we will gain more control over the use of the name so far as it approaches our image. With a strong image Unity becomes recognizable from other religious organizations and more identified with its core messages and services.

For example: John Rexroat pointed out one of the challenges we have now. The term Unity is an identifier for the gay rights groups in San Francisco. It takes a strong image to set itself apart from different uses of the word by groups such as this. In the religious world, we have some control through our trademark of its usage. The unifying distinctness of the logo with the national naming conventions help to strengthen that distinctness.



Recommendations of the Branding Survey:

- Logo identifier for all churches
 - Everyone uses the same logo and in the same way.
- Naming conventions
 - Everyone uses Unity as the first word in their name
 - Everyone uses place as the identifier that completes the name
 - That 'church', 'center', 'temple,' 'Christ church' etc. all be dropped as a part of the name.
 - Following this we would become, 'Unity of Walnut Creek'
- Websites
 - Similar online look and feel with similar pages that describe unity
 - Local info (events people activities) remain distinct
- Advertising
 - Similar look to images (the study tested for the most effective type of images)
 - Use of logo the same in advertising
- Identity messages
 - Use of the positive nature of our work and spiritual social actions – making a difference - are some of the many message clarifications that came from the survey.
 - Our marketing team is already making good use of the language suggestions in their promotions.



Symbol in the new Unity logo is not symbolically defined by Unity. As a contemporary image it is up to those who see it to bring their understanding to it. As one who likes it I find a lot in it. The lotus – ancient symbol of the unfolding soul
The light and dark in balance yet all are one – One power, one presence. The many paths that go out from the center (one God, many paths). The bands that surround the world (circle) is to me the healing grid of Spiritual energy that we are committed to and as a Unity center contribute to expanding. Note: the glass artist did a great job of capturing the symbol above our new entry.



The flame (directly above the I becomes the candle) and symbolizes the light of an individual (the I) in the world (the blue field that surrounds the flame. The 'I' is at the center of the word, the individual at the center of creating their world and the one upon whom 'unity' as a concept is dependent.

Naming convention – the convention would have us changing our name to **Unity of Walnut Creek**. The change would not be mandatory; however, it is helpful to align to the whole program as the different names create confusion rather than identity. The Board is making a recommendation to the congregation to change the name we use to the DBA 'Unity of Walnut Creek'

Website: The Association and Unity school have a joint project of a web template and service to the churches. They are developing levels of service for different type churches and ours gives them a chance to work with good, knowledgeable people and to see what it takes to meet a church as diverse in its services as ours. They anticipate the new website program to be available after February 2011.

Advertising: Unity School will soon begin a national internet marketing campaign to promote Unity as a movement using this messaging.

NEXT STEPS

- We have begun using 'Unity of Walnut Creek' and Unity Center of Walnut Creek' interchangeably. This gives us a chance to experience it a little before the congregation makes its decision.

- At the Annual Membership meeting the members can affirm or reject the change of the name we use. [Note: this is a DBA so it does not require a legal name change.]
- Once the name is finalized, we can sign on to the Association program and they will produce the logo and its related products for us.

**Divine Love goes before us making easy joyous and successful
our way!**