

## November 21, 2009 UUSJ Workshop Is Your Congregation Public or Private?

Jacomina de Regt and Terrie Barr, Workshop Leaders, reviewed highlights from Michael Durall's article, in the Fall UU World, "Reach out to become a 'public' church", adapted from his book *The Almost Church Revitalized* and the work at the UU Church of Arlington. All leaders at Arlington are invited to read the book, chapter by chapter each month.

<http://uuworld.org/ideas/articles/145381.shtml>

Over 30 of us discussed reactions to Durall's test:

"You can perform a simple test to determine the extent to which your congregation takes a public or private stance. Just look for the outreach or social action line item in the church's budget. ...Mainline Protestant congregations, churchgoers most like UUs in socioeconomic terms, maintain a budget line item for outreach between 10 – 29% with the national average being 16 percent. If the line item in your congregation's budget is appreciably less, or nonexistent, this indicates an inwardly focused congregation. Likewise, if your congregation does not give away the Sunday offering to community needs, the emphasis is most likely on maintenance and a principal concern for members who are already there."

Results from Brainstorming other measures to guide the inward vs outward focus of a congregation:

1. Is the congregation involved in determining outlays that create a more just and humane world and is the giving strategic, based on a survey of which community needs are being met and which are not ?
2. What are the number and monetary value of social justice volunteer hours, not including regular committee meetings?
3. What percentage of members and friends participate in congregational social justice work?
4. What is the monetary value of expenditures for social justice staff and the social justice portion of the minister's time?
5. What is the number of social justice events and programs held and /or communicated to the congregation including applicable sermons, articles and guest speakers?
6. Does the congregation participate in the prioritization of social justice efforts?
7. What is the number of partnerships the congregation has with those working for the greater good?

8. Are new members expected to be involved with social justice efforts when they join as they are given the expectation that they will financially support the congregation?
9. How many outreach efforts occur with respect to interfaith worship and music?
10. Describe non-quantifiable actions both personal and congregational that are transformational?
11. Are church monies invested in socially responsible/ethical investments, i.e., in companies that do well and do good?