

REFLECTIONS ON MEN AND OUR CHURCHES

by Rev. Daniel O'Connell

--In some congregations, Sunday morning political statements tend to mention women as victims, never men (domestic violence, rape, imprisonment, breast over testicular cancer), even though as a religious denomination we are known for "saying the other side."

--For example, is it part of the male-unfriendly church culture which frequently mentions breast cancer, and people wearing ribbons, but never discussing testicular cancer which kills as many men as breast cancer kills women? What about the fact that men are raped more than women, when you consider prison statistics? Sometimes when we talk about rape, we "mean" women only. There are plenty of examples of these kind of "hidden" statistics, and to the extent our Sunday morning political statements of candles of joys & concerns reflect the larger culture's prejudices, we may be being "male-unfriendly."

--Sunday morning attendance and membership statistics suggest men are a minority in church: roughly 60/40 female/male for both attendance and membership on average. How are we a "welcoming congregation" to this minority group?

--Informal surveys reveal that UU congregations have 4-10 times as many Mother's Day services as Father's Day services (the Service of the Living Tradition is often on Father's Day). Should this discrimination be ameliorated in some way?

--Our hymnal has a couple of selections some feel unfairly discriminate against men. How could we promote liberal-religious-male-friendly hymnal selections the next time around?

--Our UUA Adult RE curricula has little in the way of men's curricula, but notable examples of "women's curricula." What is the UUA RE Department doing about this?

--UUA Curricula which does look at gender issues, say "Beyond Pink & Blue" tends to only see and provide examples of sex discrimination against girls & women, not against boys & men. This is a glaring oversight. Boys and Men who participate in these curricula get the subtle message.

Comments anyone? Let us know your views - info@uuen.org