

April 2007

Dear leaders of Unitarian Universalist congregations,

Open Space, a process we'll be using at *General Assembly* in Portland, is a strategic planning tool of extraordinary usefulness, since it provides a way to discover what people feel passionate about. Once an overarching question is framed, Open Space allows people who feel strongly about an issue or topic to find out who else shares their passion, and to provide input to the larger group. This is very different from leaders telling others what's going to happen - it's an open-ended, bottom-up process through which leaders can be informed of what various constituencies care about.

In the March packet, resources were provided that gave you an overview of Open Space and how it works. In this packet, we wanted to let you know where you can find additional information about Open Space using the Internet. Here are some web site addresses you could check out:

http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm

This is a guide to Open Space written by Harrison Owen, author of the Open Space Technology process and of several books about Open Space. If you have questions about "how it works," this is the resource for you.

<http://www.openspaceworld.org/cgi/wiki.cgi?AboutOpenSpace>

This is a shorter description of how Open Space works, including links to quotes, examples, articles, photos, and other resources of Open Space in action. The author is Michael Herman, who lives in Chicago and describes himself as a facilitator, consultant, teacher and coach.

Of course, we're using Open Space at *General Assembly* in Portland for a reason. Members of the UUA Board of Trustees want input from member congregations and delegates in relation to the question, "What difference should Unitarian Universalism make in the world?" Everyone attending *General Assembly* is invited into the Open Space with passions, experiences, and concerns. In how many ways could we answer this question? What priorities might we send back to our Board of Trustees at the end of *GA*? Come to the Open Space sessions at *GA* and be a part of the answers.

Yours in faith,
Helen Bishop
Chair, Open Space Planning Group