

The book cover features a vibrant green background with a subtle, repeating geometric pattern of hexagons and lines. A large, solid brown rectangle is positioned in the upper right corner. Below this, a white rectangular area contains the title and author's name. The title 'Evolving Social Justice' is written in a large, green, sans-serif font. The author's name 'Janet Mulshine' is in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. A thick green horizontal line is located at the bottom of the white area.

# Evolving Social Justice

Janet Mulshine

# MPC is a passionate church

- Committed to working for peace and justice
- Challenging the destructive values of the culture.

*"Treasure" From 2006 Mission Study*

# How do We...?

- ◉ redefine and restructure our social justice work in order to be:
  - ◉ more effective
  - ◉ and more responsive to changes in the culture; and
- ◉ develop a spiritual foundation for our activism.

*"Challenge" From 2006 Mission Study*



# 2009 Global Vision Statement

- Social Justice committees created “The World We Seek” embracing the following:
  - Peacemaking and Nonviolence
  - Energy and the Environment
  - Economy and Economic Well-being
  - Human Rights
  - Spirituality, Religion and Social Change

# MPCers are Active

	MPC (1+ org, com or group)	National Presbyterian Church
Take part in community service, social justice or advocacy activities within their congregation	71%	60%
Participate in social service or advocacy groups not connected to their congregation	87%	46%

## Drawn to MPC by Social Justice – Changes over Time

Original Attraction	%	Keeps us Here	%
Pastor	72	My friends are here	62
Social Activism	50	Filing a spiritual need	60
Filling a spiritual need	48	Pastor	57
Celebration	45	Celebration	57
Inclusivity	44	Inclusivity	56
Location	34	Social Activism	47

# Social Justice Cluster has most Committees/Groups

Social Justice Steering	Community Connections
Peacemakers	SPLASH
Global Concerns	Faith Trio
Spiritual Activists	More Light
Children's Food Basket	External Giving

# Holding Social Justice Issues Before Congregation

	Friends of the Family	All	Difference
High Priority for Next Pastor?	54%	80%	-26



# One-on-One MPC Interview Questions

- What does social activism mean to you?
- Is that [social activist] how you describe yourself, or is there another description that feels more true to you?
- How do you demonstrate activism (click an online petition; take to the streets; boycott something?)
- Is it more local or global for you?

# One-on-One MPC Interview Answers

- If there were a visceral connection with the work and mission of the church...there would be greater tendency to give more to it.
- Activism is something we each do in our own vocation.
- He/she doesn't consider self to be activist, but recognizes it as important part of identity, gives voice to those whose voices are drowned out.

# One-on-One (cont'd)

## MPC Interview Answers

- Myth of MPC's social activism is they're accepting of everyone – not republicans, they'll take independents.
- I'm active in communities of which I'm part.
- I'm politically active as opposed to socially active.

## Evolution of Social Justice

One of the seven Treasures noted in the 2006 Mission Study is that MPC “is a passionate church, committed to working for peace and justice, and challenging the destructive values of the culture.” These were twin elements of “social justice” emanating from an era of anti-war and pro-environmental activity from the 1960’s through the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The Challenge was “How to redefine and restructure our social justice work in order to be more effective and more responsive to changes in the culture; and how to develop a spiritual foundation for our activism.”

In June 2009 the Social Justice committees released a Global Vision Statement called “The World We Seek: including,

- Peacemaking and Nonviolence
- Energy and the Environment
- Economy and Economic Well-being
- Human Rights
- Spirituality, Religion and Social Change

But, whenever social justice was mentioned during these mission study activities, there was little or no mention of the Global Vision Statement. There was relatively little mention of pro-environmental activity. Other than through the SPLASH Committee, which took the place of the previous Eco-Stewards, MPC congregants did not communicate a concern over environmental problems.

The following data show there are complex aspects to the topic of Social Justice.

First, MPC congregants are very active. MPC involvement inside and outside of the congregation surpasses the national Presbyterian Church statistics:

	MPC (belong to one or more org, com or group)	Presbyterian Church
Take part in community service, social justice or advocacy activities within their congregation (in MPC)	71%	60%
Participate in social service or advocacy groups <u>not</u> connected to their congregation (outside MPC)	87%	46%

This tells us that congregants are busy, but not specifically where they are putting their time and talents.

Second, the ranking of social justice as a draw to MPC is high in initial attraction, but drops from #2 to #6 over time, as to what keeps us at MPC.

Original Attraction to MPC		Keep us Here	
Pastor	72%	My friends are here	62%
Social Activism	50%	Filling a spiritual need	60%
Filling a spiritual need	48%	Pastor	57%



Celebration	45%	Celebration	57%
Inclusivity	44%	Inclusivity	56%
Location	34%	Social Activism	47%

This tells us that as congregants grow in the church, other things become more or equally important as the items that initially attracted us.

Of seven Session clusters, as the committees were organized last year for efficiency, the Social Justice cluster has the most committees and groups (for a total of 10), but some of the traditional committees have a core of just a few committed members and are not attracting new ones at the planning and leadership levels.

This tells us that MPC has a large legacy of many interests operating under the umbrella of "Social Justice" but it also creates more competition for fewer volunteers attracted to work in those areas.

In survey responses Friends of the Family give a significantly lower rating to having the next pastor hold social justice issues before the congregation as a high priority:

	FOF	All	Difference
Holding social justice issues before congregation – High priority?	54%	80%	- 26

In other survey responses that ranked various community and social issues for MPC, the results indicate a range of involvement. While the answers all fell in the medium to high priorities, ranked among themselves, they included:

Top 3 highest ranking priorities	Least 3 highest priorities
call attention at Celebration	help to organize or support groups
link members to interest groups	give money to denominational programs
lobby and petition groups	give money to non-denominational programs

This tells us that there are diverse voices about Social Justice and involvement, even as it remains a centerpiece of MPC's self-identification.

Finally, questions asked in the Mission Study One on One interviews with MPCers included the following: What does social activism mean to you? Is that how you describe yourself or is there another description that feels more true to you? How do you demonstrate activism (click an online petition; take to the streets; boycott something?) Is it more local or global for you?

Answers included:

If there were a visceral connection with the work and mission of the church, there would be a greater tendency to give more to it.
Activism is something we each do in our own vocation
He/she doesn't consider self to be activist, but recognizes it as important part of identity, gives voice to those whose voices are drowned out.

40 Slide - The myth of MPC's social activism is that they're accepting of everyone – not republicans; [but] they'll take independents
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I'm active by engaging in communities of which I'm part
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I'm politically active as opposed to socially active
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This tells us that while MPC may have an articulated vision of justice, there is broad difference of opinion on how to accomplish it.

MPC truly does want to create a better world through social justice, but the approach through activism is multi-faceted. Although MPC may have the spiritual foundation through its Global Vision Statement, is the structure of its activism effective and responsive to changes in the culture?