

"Bending Toward Justice"
A session plan for UU Small Group Ministries
Prepared by Peter Freedman Bowden

Opening Ritual

Check-in/Sharing

Topic: "Bending Towards Justice"

Many of us have strong feelings regarding the outcome of the presidential election. The focus of our session today is based on "*The Destiny of Our Democracy*", a statement made on November 3, 2004 by The Rev. William G. Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. This statement offers us a useful framework within which to reflect on the outcome of the election, the role of our faith in America, and how our personal spirituality and beliefs relate to the world today. I will read The Rev. Sinkford's statement in its entirety. We will then have a brief period of silence and then our regular sharing, reflection and discussion.

The Destiny of Our Democracy

Statement from the Rev. William G. Sinkford
President, Unitarian Universalist Association
November 3, 2004 - Boston, MA

The democratic process is an act of faith: not faith that any one point of view will prevail, but faith that the will of the people will point us toward the Beloved Community. And in this national election, "we the people" have spoken, millions more of us than ever before. Unitarian Universalists lived out our faith by registering tens of thousands of new voters. We can rightly be proud of our commitment to this democracy. We stood clearly and proudly on the side of love.

Not only is democracy an act of faith, it is an imperfect process. This national election, like the last, showed us how far we have to go to enfranchise all of our people. But I take great hope from the relationships our congregations developed in this work.

But Unitarian Universalism is liberal religion, not liberal politics.

Today, while so many celebrate and so many grieve, I hope that Unitarian Universalists will hold fast to our calling. Political sound bites cannot contain it. Party designations do not describe it. Few votes were cast yesterday without reservations in the heart. Our congregations need to be religious homes where the reality of both joy and grief, certainty and uncertainty, can be present.

In 1964, the Rev. Jack Mendelsohn wrote a book titled "Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age." Today, Jack reminded me that all ages are illiberal. And, thus, in every age, it is the role of liberal religion to offer a Gospel of openness, of healing and of hope. Our profession of faith is that the arc of the universe is long, but, with our commitment, it bends toward justice.

I extend my personal best wishes to President Bush and pray that his leadership will move this nation toward healing. Unitarian Universalists will do our part. We cannot afford to fuel the stridency and divisiveness of this political campaign. Nor can we afford to withdraw. We are an essential part of this body politic. And we will continue our vigilance and our advocacy for the values we hold dear.

There is only one destiny for this nation and its people. May that destiny be one of growing justice and equity in our policies and growing compassion in our hearts.

Period of silence

Questions:

1. How do you feel about the outcome of the election?
2. What is your personal reaction to The Rev. Sinkford's statement?
3. The Rev. Sinkford says that with our commitment the "arc of the Universe" will bend toward justice. We are called and challenged to play a part in moving the Universe toward justice and to help heal our nation. Do you feel called to take action in this time following the election?
4. Our nation is in need of healing. How can we as a group and a congregation assist in moving our nation toward healing?

Likes & Wishes

Closing Ritual

Session Feedback:

This session was prepared in response to requests for a post election SGM session. Please let us know how this session went. Write to peter@smallgroupministry.net.