

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network

Faith In Action

Rev. Helen Zidowecki

Opening Words: Adapted from Matthew 25:35-40

And Jesus said to them, "I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me."

And they said to him, "When did we see you in need and tend to you?"

And Jesus said, "Whenever you do it to anyone, you do it to me."

And others answered, "When did we see you hungry or thirsty, or a stranger or naked, or sick or in prison and did not tend to you?"

And Jesus answered, "Just as you did not do it to those in need, you did not do it to me."

Check-in: How are things with you today?

Topic/Activity:

We learn by doing, we do by learning. Praxis is a constant process of doing and reflecting. In the Koran we read, "One hour of justice is worth 70 years of prayer." In the Talmudic tradition we learn that an "Ish Terumot" (a person of many gifts) may destroy the world when he/she responds, "I am occupied with my studies. I have no time." About such a person says the Lord, "I consider him/her as if he/she had destroyed the world." Abraham Joshua Heschel knew that well when he commented that in marching with Martin Luther King, Jr., "My feet were praying."

Education is not living off the capital of yesterday, *giving* tradition to the young (as if it could be "given,") but is a means of social reconstruction. "We live ourselves into religious thinking more than we think ourselves into religious living." (Henry Munroe)

Horace Bushnell, the 19th Century religious education pioneer, said, "Examples are the only sufficient commentaries." Heroes and heroines, great and small, in our human history are the for- instances of religious belief.

Martin Niemoeller, "The Pastor," a leader of the Confessing Church which resisted Hitler, spent six years in Dachau for this trouble but lived to tell the tale. He was the one who wrote that "In Germany they came first for the Communists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."

Richard Gilbert, "The "Compleat" Church: Lining, *Religious Education & Social Action: Branches of the same tree*, UUA, 1984, p6-7.

1. Unitarian Universalists describe the activities to address problems and inequities in human relations and human situations in various ways.

social action

social justice

faith in action

ethics

What is the perspective and approach of each? How do you relate with these concepts?

2. Suggestion: Take a walk around the church space – all of it!
Where is Social Justice evident in your congregation?

In the things that are on bulletin boards? In things spoken from the pulpit or in the worship service? In the hymns and music? In how people talk with one another? Other ways?

3. With so many causes and concerns that come to our attention, how do you make a choice of what to support? What are your guidelines?
4. Where do you find spiritual grounding for the service that you do?

Check-Out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session go for you?

Closing:

May the light we now kindle inspire us to use our powers to heal and not harm, to help and not hinder, to bless and not to curse, and to serve you, Spirit of freedom.

Passover Haggadah, #453 in *Singing the Living Tradition*