

From The Rev. Robert Hill on behalf of Southwest District, UUA

An occasional newsletter about a new/old way of organizing your church read by 735 forward-looking Unitarian Universalists.

WEDNESDAY, September 12, 2001 -- New images have been burned into the consciousness of humankind and no one of them will recur more painfully throughout our lives than the sight of a plane full of people being flown into the World Trade Center tower, tied as it will always be to the subsequent collapse of seemingly invincible structures housing thousands of our fellow human beings.

I am in Southlake, near the strangely calm DFW Airport. It is not yet five o'clock on the second morning of our new era and I am part of the way home to Houston from Little Rock, where the plane I was on yesterday morning was grounded as the horror unfolded and the talk of war and retaliation began. When the television here in the quiet home of my daughter and her family is turned on, there will be, no doubt, new images of devastation to be absorbed and, somehow, integrated.

I bother to write this and to contemplate sending it to you out of my own need to rework my concept of who we are as God's most creative and destructive creatures and to express my belief that, in whatever follows from yesterday's events, the need for Small Group Ministry, for Covenant Groups, will be even greater than before.

We need to gather and draw near to the flickering glow of hope and possibility held out by our faith. As I expect happened in our churches all across the continent, a special service was held last evening in our Dallas 1st Church. The Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman conducted the service and it was well attended.

We will need so much more, though. For the moment, we feel united in shock and sorrow, but that may be temporary. As event follows televised event in the coming days, months, and years, there will be much to consider, to weigh, to debate. We Unitarian Universalists, given as we are to argument and pronouncements, risk being divided both by further assaults on our fragile stores of hope and inner peace and by passionate disagreements among ourselves.

We will need each other at our best. We will need situations of trust in which we may be open about our feelings and our fears in the presence of others and to respectfully hear what they have to say to us. I know of only one way to be sure such a co-ministry happens. We will need to meet each other in small, facilitator-guided groups for which there are covenants reminding us of how we wish to be, within the group and in service to others.

Our Small Group Ministries can open space in which we may begin the great work of getting beyond the images of September 11. Our Covenant Groups can help us call back to our awareness another indelible image living within our human consciousness: the dark photo of a small, blue-green sphere floating in space, Earth as seen from our moon.

The book on which I will continue to work carries a bold sub-title about saving the world ten at a time. For now, we need to be about healing ourselves and the world ten at a time. We need to be considering how we may help to save our democracy in a world of technologically-enhanced evil and, lest we forget, good.

Let us meet regularly in small groups to listen. Let us come together in trust to honor and encourage the shared power that lives within even those who do great harm. Let us sit together and invite back the blue of skies free of mayhem, the green of organic growth, the blue-green image of the home we must all share with the rest of creation.

Keep up the good work. -- Bob