

UU Sniffing Salts

Gould Lecture by Sheila Schuh

April 13, 2018

Thank you so much, dear colleagues, for inviting me here to the city of my birth, and the very birth of my ministry within these walls some 20 years ago. I'm honored to be with you in the land of Fahs (!), a game-changer religious educator, to participate in the spiritual ancestry that continues on from the Odyssey of Jo Gould. I have carried my own children on this land, nurtured many Unitarian Universalists on these grounds, and both our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors joined their hopes here in this city in '61.

Would you please take a quiet moment with me to give witness to all these connections to the very earth beneath us, and long before us, the people of the Onondaga Indian Nation who still struggle to heal it?

Let us begin with the children.

In worship with our 5-10 yr. olds on MLK weekend, during the Moment of Inquiry, I showed them a picture of Dr. King lecturing. "What do you think he said that we should be learning about right here in religious education back when he was speaking to UUs in 1966?" (You can imagine the answers: to treat all people fairly, to make sure black and brown skinned people have equal rights, to do something for a better world.) "Yes, I said, all those things." And then I read them King's actual words, "There is another thing that the church must do to *remain awake*. We must get rid of the notion once and for all that there are superior and inferior races. It is out of this notion that the whole doctrine of white supremacy came into being, and the church must take a stand through **religious education** and other channels to direct the popular mind at this point, for there are some people who still believe this strange doctrine."

The children easily summarized his meaning, and when I asked them if they felt like white supremacy was all healed, they said no, of course not! Following our worship, I took them on a rainbow time travel... We grabbed hold of the handles of a colored parachute, and got running as fast as I could allow them to and then, mushroomed the center up, and huddled underneath together sitting on top of the edges. In the center each time after we ran, huddled, and "landed," I placed a map showing the land of the United States at a different time in history. The first trip- a map with only the names of hundreds of native tribes. The second trip- a map at the time of the confederacy. The third trip- a map showing the locations of Japanese internment camps... After each landing, we wondered together and had conversations around what was happening at that time in our country. The idea of white supremacy is old- this, they understood. In conversation as plain as their location, they understood about not sleeping,

about not forgetting, not ignoring, not pretending, not imagining it had all gone away and gotten all better just because the map had changed.

What I really want to know from you, I asked them earnestly, is, “Now that you know these things, and can understand why Dr. King said not to fall asleep because surely not everyone has gotten rid of white supremacy, what do you think of this idea: A UU minister by the name of Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed who is a black man and once ministered right here in Rochester, shared his hope with me of having a national day so that our country could begin to heal from all these hurts of race—a day unlike any other that UUs would start, to give witness to this pain and help us all to move forward together.”

The kids absolutely loved the idea! And now, I will share with you the voices from of this small mixed race group of UUs and how they imagined such a day to be:

~If it’s a holiday, then all the adults in the country go to work, except they don’t work. Instead, at work they learn all the things we just learned and talk with each other, then learn how not to keep repeating them.

~Everyone rests and goes outside to play together in the parks and in nature.

~We spend time meditating on peace.

~People who have money give it to those who don’t so things are equal. We give gifts so everyone feels cared about.

~We come to church. In groups of four, families share the stories of each of their histories and share their family foods together.

~We have each person take the name of someone who was harmed by racism and carry it on their heart the whole day and tell others about the story.

~We call it the Open Door Day so all you do all day is visit your neighbors of any color and play with them.

~We come to church and act out the stories of things that happened to people for everybody to see and to remember them.

~We call it the Day For Listening. (Ok, white siblings among us, I think that means we take a day of silence!)

~If there were to be such a day, Sheila, there would need to probably be three, no four days like this a year if we hope for things to be better for us by the time we are older.

Some of my colleagues here were in fact at that training in April, 2014, on ritual and the need specifically for a ritual of atonement offered by Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed. Taken from his lecture, he states... I suggest that America needs some ritual of atonement/ remorse/ contrition/ purification. We need a time when we, as a people, say we are sorry for the injustice heaped upon the many who laboured and suffered in the process of the United States becoming the great nation it is; a symbolic gesture to send an honest, heartfelt message from government to its constituency, from American to American, from ethnic group to ethnic group, and from the U.S. to the rest of the world. Placed in juxtaposition to Independence Day or Thanksgiving it would make either celebration more meaningful by placing it in its proper context: We are not just a free people but a people who wrought democracy from a white male oligarchy, but still struggle to create equity from privilege, and fairness from discrimination. We are not just a nation that tolerates multiculturalism, but rather a nation that embraces it as a virtue. America is not just great; it has also fallen painfully short of living out its principles. A ritual of atonement or contrition or purification is a way of dealing positively with guilt and shame.... In many ways we have been asking the historically oppressed in America to make do with a lie. It reveals that the Revolution was not a onetime event and is not over but continues still.

This day of atonement, reconciliation, fasting, or whatever it may be, is what constitutes an example of the first kind of UU sniffing salt I hope to offer up under our noses for the future—a ritual of transformation, holding, and witness.

By UU sniffing salt, otherwise known as smelling salt, I mean some tangible, physical, sensorial outward action of spiritual power, *a religious mechanism to keep people from sliding into the sleepiness and unconscious stupor* that is characteristic of years of insidious racial injustice in our society. Like a small tube of spiritual alchemical warfare, some spiritual ammonium carbonate, the purpose of a sniffing salt is to counteract and alter the tendencies of ingrained habituated white supremacy norms and their anesthetizing hold on our congregational environments.

Every time I have mentioned such a (holy) day to the ministerial teams I've worked with when we plan the upcoming liturgical year, here is how it goes, "We love the idea, but can't possibly do it. We're not ready. It's impossible to do well. We could take this piece of it, or that." But, here is the response of our UU kids: "When can we plan it? We will help you do it, Sheila!" So this year at our kids' annual meeting, it will be on the kids' agenda and I will let them decide.

We're a year after the events of last April exposing white supremacy norms active in the UUA, and the White Supremacy Teach-In initiated by my colleagues of color in response. The eyes of our hearts are sore from witnessing the glaring trauma in our denomination and in our nation(s), experiencing ourselves or seeing colleagues of color and so many groups beaten down in their identities. It is an obligation I have to Jo Gould, and before her, Sophia Fahs- to not just go along with what's been the norm for our children and youth. We, all of us, are called to the ministry of our times, and not privileged to be able to do whatever we'd like.

I would have loved to have come here to share with you the cool innovations in my program that I have dreamed about for many years now... the Soul Adventures program that is an experiential based version of Soul Matters for young adults and adults that involves adventures once a month in the community and beyond for immersive spiritual experiences. Or our Parenting As Spiritual Practice program expansion that teaches parents mindfulness and non-violence in their communication that matches the developmental needs of their children at every stage, or the UU Family Studio program in between service times so that families have a theater-based option for learning about applying UU values to in home, family scenarios. But those are MY dreams. I haven't been called to do whatever feels good, takes less internal work, is less depressing, less uncomfortable, to do ministry that makes me feel "progress", things that I am good at, things I can sleep easier with.

So...Let me repeat that: We are called to the ministry of our times, and not privileged to be able to do whatever we'd like! What most humans will choose, will never be the most uncomfortable difficult thing, and yet, it is required of us as a people of faith. Watch as the shiny things start to distract us from the work of anti-racism! Watch the roll out of the next Great Idea of Prophetic Consultants!

Practically speaking, sniffing salts are essential when you are about to faint from discomfort, shock, or trauma. Think of the junior high youth in my congregation who actually passed out both times he viewed the OWL slides!! Think of a boxer, sitting in the dentist's chair, war, surgery. We are at a time when the level of physical experience of trauma and discomfort is so high in our society and denomination, that I'm concerned about the more porous skins of our young UUs--- They are absorbing more of their share of the intensity of white supremacy cultural affects, children and youth of all colors. To stay awake at all and not faint at the reality of racial cruelty we live in, is a spiritual skill we can't wait to develop.

It is not the work I wanted to be doing for the rest of my career especially because of my own family history regarding my ethnicity (you can insert your reason, your own justification for the aversion of dealing with it long term) and I think I speak plainly that it is not "fun", neither internally, nor externally. Have the whites among us looked to see who hasn't been having fun

for a very, very, long time? Seriously! I see nothing more powerful for me than to do as King suggested: keep the church awake through religious education.

In every meeting I go to, the board, social justice, and in every way I can with our kids, I speak of racism as an experience of the whole body. No person of color has to be told this. I do it publicly because I find UU culture comes to it through the head. Racism is not just in the head. Not an opinion someone can change by a thought- not an informational judgment that comes like a fact or a mental truth. Neither given nor received in the head. Racism is a visceral, embodied, *relational* experience. Mixing power and prejudice doesn't happen brain to brain. A pre-judgment can exist in the head. But power happens in the context of whole personhood- just like deportation, generational poverty, enslavement, internment, mass incarceration, confinement, and genocide. And if it IS a micro-aggression, invalidation, or assault via the spoken word, a slur, a silence, these are given and received in the felt sense.

A meditation by Kathleen McTigue expresses this felt sense as "learning by heart." I share it as an example of how lovely things as well as ugly things are experientially learned:

To learn something by heart is not the same as memorization. Back in elementary school, I memorized the multiplication tables up through twelve. I also committed to memory the correct spelling for words like atrocious, which I still retain, and the capitals of all fifty states, which I do not.

There were other things I learned, not through memorization but by heart. One of these was how to bake bread, following the same unwritten recipe my mother had learned from her own mother. Working next to her in the fragrant kitchen, I absorbed this knowledge not only by listening to her instructions, but through touch, scent, and taste. I learned by heart the look and smell of yeast as it came to life, the stretch and pull of a good solid dough under the heel of the hand, the enveloping welcome of a home scented with fresh-baked bread, and the rough kiss of a warm crust on the lips. What we learn by heart enters us so deeply that it is incorporated, embodied, not just remembered. It becomes part of who we are.

So the antidote to racism is not a book club or a lesson on inequity or even a lecture you attend, although these can be helpful in "turning the mind" from pre-judgment. And it is not about just the adults in a community, but the whole relational quality of a space. In the broadest sense, as we say in RE, the whole church is the curriculum. I would love a sign on the door of our congregations that doesn't say, "Don't check your brain at the door" (we UUs used to be so proud of this!), but an updated sign, "Don't check your beautiful body at the door." The body does contain the brain, yes? The Unitarian mind describes the kind of Universalist hearts we have!

I need your help in educating the next generation of UUs differently, physically and relationally, that is, as co-creators of beloved community.

What about the other oppressions? People quickly ask, “But what about the #metoo movement?” Or they will say to me in so many words, “Woman, why do you care so much about race as a white female cis hetero DRE?” Because any kind of liberation of our skin oppression will liberate all of us, including our young people. Whites seem to simply have a hard time wrapping their brains around the fact that when Black Lives Matter, then all lives will in fact, matter. That’s me, my life. I had once thought it was going to be the total destruction of the planet that would be the entry into Beloved Community, and maybe that WILL come first (omg), but for right now the characteristics of white supremacy culture and the historical spiritual effects we have inherited, in my mind provide the opening to healing of all the other isms quite readily. Not much stretching needed. In racism, is the intersection of trans rights, women’s rights, land rights, immigration rights, children’s rights, educational rights, economic rights, mental health rights, and yes, environmental justice... the foundation of the church sits on this land and there is no escaping it. If we have reverence for the interdependent web and we are at all awake to the beauty of it, we will discover we are sufficiently caught in inextricable ways to the harm done to all of these identities. How can we walk onto the ground outside our places of worship and not be in right relation with our racial histories- yours and mine and ours?

Wake now my senses and hear the earth call! Wake now my vision of ministry clear! So the hymn goes... Yet, if a significant enough shift didn’t happen with the Black Empowerment Movement, and it still didn’t happen with the Racial Justice Imperative of 1981, with the formation of DRUUM in 1997, Journey Toward Wholeness, how about now with Black Lives of Unitarian Universalists and our Commission on Institutional Change? I may be the last of those among us who are rugged institutionalists- but you all are here- so hey! Maybe you understand that I am not willing to lose the thirty young UUs of color and their families of color in my community, over this white body in this role! Are you whiffing my drift?

We talk about race in the context of politics largely, preach about it, and not sufficiently embody it in the context of our spiritual lives. From my view as a nurturer of UU identity, here is where we have missed the mark. We have not taken race into account in the essential power and essential aspects of our religious lives together. So, here are ten sniffing salts I am hoping to offer our noses so we will have a better chance at racial liberation.

Rather than ask another religious professional to offer a discourse in response to this lecture, which goes against the heady nature of Lecturing I am not a fan of to begin with (!), I’ve included some ways for us to engage and dialogue *with each other*. Are you up for some dialogue and mutuality?

Salt 1) Create Spiritual Practices

The failure for us to create holds in the mind and heart through ritual and other spiritual practices is in my mind, starving us spiritually- including our children who especially need them. As I said, I hear a lot of talk ABOUT race, not a lot of spiritual discernment in the felt sense. My guess is that we are all, if not collectively, quietly, and some of us more outwardly, suffering from a lack of spiritual support. I experience this physically in a lack of ritual, common spiritual practice as a community, of literally physically being shaken and having no obvious, easily-usable spiritual containers to help me hold hope and transform grief and pain, to address evil and come to terms with the endless bombardment of interpersonal racial violence. Are any of you feeling such a lack?

Some of us are rattling in our skins with discomfort and trauma, guilt, fear, or pain, and have little ritual to ease and ground us collectively. Is it that we really believe that UUs are too advanced and “have evolved” so much as not to need ritual and practice?

We can promote Rev. Morrison-Reed’s Day of fasting and atonement, for one. We can look at how to decenter whiteness in worship experience... and not just insert people of color into the structure but to really examine the relational dynamics, body to body, we create in worship. In his essay *Othering and Belonging*, Rev. Derrick Jackson describes adult worship like this: *The intellectualism of Unitarian Universalism comes with a culture of stillness. We are expected to sit quietly in our seats, listen intently with no emotion on our faces, and no movement in our bodies. We are supposed to wait until after the service to express ourselves. I grew up in a culture of engagement.* (This is not the worship of children and youth, by the way—which may be why we cannot keep them as young adults!!) There are so many rituals and ways of doing things that could simply shift our way of relating. Here’s a super simple greeting my K-5 kids came up with this way to show that the web of love connects us all in interdependence (demonstrate)... We could have a moment of inquiry about race each week. We could offer retreats on spiritual inheritance related to race.

*What spiritual practice or ritual, would you be open to in Beloved Community?

Salt 2) Assess for Racism

I remember last year talking with my colleagues here at our retreat about what to do in response to everything happening at the UUA. I had one thing to say in that circle of clergy and religious educators: Honor the voices of our religious leaders of color! Weight them. They literally have “the most skin in the game,” investing their lives in a system that has oppressed them and serving despite that sacrifice. The first response from ministers of color was for the

UUA to do an audit-- assess where the issues are and be accountable. Our religious educators of color asked us to educate and reveal the truth of the white supremacy among us. I had that call to audit and need for truth telling in my ear- who is the UUA? Aren't we all?!!

Over the summer, I searched for an organization that actually tailored their attention to religious education as a promoter of institutional racism and found absolutely NONE! So my colleagues Leah Purcell, Anne Kadlecek, and I requested an assessment tool from the UUA Office of Faith Development and LREDA. The UUA responded with funding and support! The Accountability Creation Tool Team I have served on since November has just submitted a comprehensive Lifespan Faith Development Assessment Tool! This will help RE programs and our congregations assess what is going well, and make strategic plans for what is not. We need to stop piece-mealing our religious response, what largely whites think will help, "good ideas" and what feels awesome. Let us honor wisdom from our humanistic trust in data gathering and observable goals! We need to get the "responsible search for truth and meaning" out of the context of beliefs. Spiritual accountability means addressing the failure to embody our Principles and draw from our Sources, however it truly reveals itself.

*Would you like to try a question from the tool? Fingers up 1-5.

I/we have discussed how our own ethnic/cultural heritage has influenced the way we think, feel, or interact in community. Rate for: Myself, RE, Congregation

5 being "strongly evident," and 1 being "least evident"

Salt 3) Build A Restorative System

For being a covenantal faith community, we surely are not experts in relational repair! In order to move through a period of racial tension, we need to have practices that help us keep everyone at the table. I cannot bear to hear one more story of someone being pushed out, resigning under stress, leaving in fear! We cannot continue to mimic the wider societal practices of criminalization, punitive justice, and pushing people of color to the margins when there is conflict. We can expect more tensions over power differences and unless we have other ways as a people of faith to hold them, we will defer to the norms of white supremacy—someone will be protected, someone will have someone's back, someone's truth will be seen as more valid... what color do you think these someones are? White supremacy culture has embedded norms that support white, male, cisgender, heteronormative domination systems of justice.

As Rumi says, "In the field of right and wrong doing, I will meet you there." And that field is where everyone, every body, is accountable for maintaining relationships of non-

violence, compassion, and power equity. Restorative practices are the only way I have discovered to be hypervigilant in dismantling our ingrained system of right and wrong that is based in punishment and retribution. The focus is on relationship repair of harm done and broken connection, not who deserves what. These are derived from indigenous wisdom and they can be learned from a very young age. Our Chalice Circles or Soul Matters Circles, listening circles are examples of how we already embrace circle process.

*Self-Compassion- empathy inward as the most basic form or restoration

Salt 4) Break Religious Education and Social Justice Silos

We have a long tradition of “acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.” And yet, much of our social justice work that is so powerful has obviously failed to transform us into richly multicultural communities. Go figure! One way we can avoid this disconnect is to reconnect (*religio*) the sacred bind of serving the world and growing the spirit. Our social justice executive team just recently made it a REQUIREMENT of any social justice task force working with community partners, to also have an internal plan for spiritual growth of all ages. So you can’t simply have a Black Lives Matter group advocating against high bail rates and lengthy stays in prison of innocent people of color, without also deepening awareness of the historical dynamics of poverty, the role of police, the legal aspects of privilege, and complicit voting. Active partnership and learning with more diverse groups creates different relationship and can prevent toxic charity and “do gooding.”

*Partnering- one of you decide a SJ initiative, the other then think of how RE could help people grow also.

Salt 5) Open Sacred Spaces

When I asked a young adult Thrive alumni about important first steps in our congregation, she said to create points of entry for people of color. We have to stop pretending that inclusion means being able to fit in adequately enough to what is offered, instead of inclusion being in the felt sense of a person’s own experience of belonging. If racial identity development is a persistent ongoing factor in interpersonal relationships, the spaces for people of color to connect to more true mirrors of identity need to be explicit and accessible in a membership that is more predominantly white. Our Families of Color Group and Soul Matters for People of Color, provide these spaces. If you somehow are still mystified that these are necessary for safety, identity development, and trauma recovery, have a conversations with

parents of children of color and staff! I had an African- American staff member who was asked for a few *years* if she was a visitor, and worse still, once if she needed help finding the *homeless families* who we were hosting in the church...

*Imagine a space of belonging

Salt 6) Redefine COA and Membership

I was hit over my HEAD while working on the Assessment tool... I had a revelation: A Coming of Age process in a liberal church has to be about gaining skills of liberation! "We call that mind free," is not just about being able to define what is in your head, that you can speak your credo and even how it drives your conscience. But also, that we, as a faith community, have given young adolescents the skills and tools to participate as an equitable member in affirming and promoting right relationship. Building multicultural competency has to be a main component of faith formation and in my mind, a required commitment of membership for any age. I did just say required (a dirty UU word!). How do we expect racism to stop showing up in our institutions if we do not educate our young people in how to keep it out? Just like OWL or Welcoming Congregation, I would love to grow a COA defined component on anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism.. so that you don't get to say you're ready for membership, without having some basic tools. If the church adopted a Jubilee Congregation designation, all the better!

(Needless to say, OWL is so much sexier, literally, everybody shows up for OWL! I find it disturbing actually and a reflection of how painfully divorced from healthy intimacy and sexuality the wider culture is. I also find it disturbing that lots of parents even in junior high now will demand their kids go to OWL but not sessions about inclusion, for example. I sort of wonder, that our more privileged, overscheduled, hyper-AP-focused, exhausted, specialized high achievers will make room in their lives for such a commitment. I'm sort of feeling, between you all and I, that the population I am serving is largely so entrenched in the demands put on them in the wider white supremacy culture of do do do more, that they don't feel the ache for the kind of liberal religious education we are offering... Are we really too privileged for the necessity of faith development? *This may be the most frightening thought I am sharing today.* I have to repeat it again: Are we really too privileged for the necessity of faith development? I have not ruled out the possibility that a more multicultural membership is where relevance and necessity will take RE naturally for the real Death of Sunday School. I digress...)

*What multicultural competency would you like to embody more fully?

Salt 7) Adopt Salvific Language

Our task is to make our sanctuaries salvific in language usage, that the way we use words and speak to one another has itself the power of healing. It is a healthy sign that people and identity groups are defining their own experiences literally on their own terms. As in the queer community, I see our denomination aiming to embrace and keep up. And the best advice from historically marginalized groups: listen. And I would add: listen with holy curiosity. That means when our Black Lives of Unitarian Universalists ask our communities to adopt the 8th Principle, we respond with holy curiosity. Why? And I find there a simple answer: the current seven didn't sustain deep enough attention and funding to counteract the insidiousness of racism! Period.

The Commission on Institutional Change just released this week, in regards to the hiring of the white male regional lead last spring, that: "These events took place in an environment in which no shared goal for becoming transformatively multicultural existed." Do you believe that? When we adopt empowering language, we frame experience and action. Language matters in our missions, in our Principles, in our hiring practices, in our programming for spiritual development for all ages.

What is your experience of these words coming through your body (say together)? *We affirm and promote journeying toward spiritual wholeness, by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community, by our actions that accountably dismantle racism, and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.*

*An empowering word or phrase in the 8th Principle (popcorn into the collective space)

Salt 8) Share Power

If racism is about mixing power and prejudice, then those who have the most power in the systems of governance we are using, are most at risk for being complicit in institutional racism. Hence, my own anxiety leading a large program as a white person! And the incredible pressure on our systems of governance- our boards, and especially ministers right now. Power sharing 501 is not in the current preparation for ministries in our denomination! Well-- accept maybe in RE with youth- which we have struggled long and hard with! The fact of me even being asked to speak as a DRE is one way of sharing power.

I have deep reverence for the authority of ministry which comes from having an aunt and uncle both called to religious life. And, I have had too much experience in religious life myself to know that systems can be high jacked by bias, blind spots, anxiety, greed, and power hunger of all kinds including those expressive of white supremacy culture. Who makes the decisions? Who makes the recommendations on who makes the decisions? Who makes the most money? Who listens to who gives the most money? Whose voice is most valued? Read any essay in the book, Centering, and you will witness first hand, how power at the highest

levels is not being shared with ministers and religious professionals of color, and by model, at other levels of leadership. I can do my best at interrupting the patterns I witness in my location in the system, and that is ongoing work. AND I can physically take on sharing as consciously as I can as a spiritual practice. Sharing, I know right! Remember All I Ever Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten?

We don't get to apply the interdependent web when we want. It is not something spiritually we can manipulate. The children and youth in my program who are people of color, are intricately woven to the top positions of the UUA. They are intricately woven to the Board of my church, to the red lines in the city we live in, and their own family histories. What kind of sniffing salt changes racism? Structural integrity- physical ways of engagement that sustain power balancing, and express interdependency. There will need to be hundreds to stay awake against the inherited white supremacy norms that move among us! Curricular material across all ages. Annual meetings with my parents of children of color. Meetings with all the children and youth I serve. Budget allocation for anti-racism, anti-oppression ends. Personnel policy manual changes and practices. Nomination procedures.

*Beautiful power sharing sculpture (acted out with 2 volunteers). Then, everyone pick a way to institutionalize it that doesn't yet exist.

Salt 9) Ministering to One Another

To minister, the verb, comes from the same root word of minus – meaning lesser than, and is defined as “acting upon the authority of another.” In other words, ministering is attending to one another as servants. One answer to racism is this kind of everyday bowing in serving the other's needs, especially to be seen and heard. Bending our authority (“I know better than you”) in humility to the voices of each other is to me, a sacred duty. We have the hymn, “When we hear our voices in each other's words, then our heart is in a holy place.” First we bend our ears, then we arrive. That holy place is where I want to live.

One related aspect of building a beloved religious community of largely non-UU native adults that I have not heard spoken of is embedded childhood theology and its relationship to a person's capacities for covenantal engagement. It is no coincidence that over the last year, I have had to examine spiritually what I have inherited about race and the dignity of the body in relation my religious orientation as a former devout Catholic. Whatever our spiritual histories, these matter in the journey toward wholeness. When the spirit is stressed, it both offers old strengths and presents opportunities for healing. So if there was any aspect of oppression in our inherited histories, be it UU or non-UU, doing the work of racial justice internally can transform us and sustain us for more mutuality.

Modern pastoral care education also includes being present to moments of shock, when our spiritual grounding is shaken. If held with care and witness, these moments can support our religious growth.

We all must see ourselves as ministering to one another- body and experience, ancient and present. To bear witness to another person's story is a way of humanizing, from a system that dehumanizes, backwards and forwards in time, and across continents. As a people of covenant, the minister cannot be the center of this kind of pastoral care if we are to survive the dehumanizing racism in our institutions. Our principles of compassion, encouragement to growth, inherent worth are ours to embody daily.

*Consider the wisdom grounded in your childhood "theology"

Salt 10) Celebrate Beloved Community!

One of our parents of color posted this on her fb page: "If you are passionate about race, you probably aren't white!" What?! She was so right! In our denomination I hear little from white people about how completely excited we are by the contributions and leadership of people of color, about how joyful and awesome it is to have experiences of beloved community already! The spiritual blessing for all of us is in my view, that we experience a truer Unitarian Universalism, that our faith actually feels more whole, that we are more deeply human. Joy that is hard won.

Personally, I feel more whole and cared for. I have had moments I have been released and redeemed. Take any trauma the body has known, and in racial justice, it is eased by the wider body of humanity being made right. I have had the experience of a "siblinghood" that was so much spiritually larger than my huge family. I have regained hope for my own life and those of my children. I have felt connection that transcends what is normally possible in our wider America. What more could we want for all of our children?

*Witness a moment of joy in Beloved Community you have experienced!

Closing:

I want to wake up in another future, another turn of that rainbow parachute,

and there in that year, find us in a different location

and find that we have landed

in a space of more right relationship,

a deeper embrace of race. Thank You.