

Small Group Ministry Focus: Building a Movement

Background

This session engages responses to video excerpts from Rev. Dr. William Barber's keynote presentation at the Marching in the Arc of Justice Living Legacy Project Conference in March 2015. The excerpts are provided on a six-and-a-half minute video clip posted online: <http://smallscreen.uua.org/videos/dr-rev-william-barber-addresses-the-2015-selma-llp-conference>.

You can see Rev. Dr. Barber's entire keynote presentation (39:38 minutes) online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBfZoWHjo2k&list=PLDSCZgUZ8UO-Blw3IP6FGveWF5511BEVI>

Rev. Dr. Barber, a noted social justice advocate, is president of the North Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He serves as pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church Disciples of Christ in Goldsboro, NC, a 120-year-old congregation with over 400 members and 30 active ministries. He is chairperson of the Rebuilding Broken Places Community Development Corporation, a non-profit organization involved with building affordable single-family homes and senior citizen housing and providing job training, affordable child care, and inner city revitalization in Goldsboro. Barber has held adjunct faculty positions at both Duke University and North Carolina Central University- and is the author of *Preaching Through Unexpected Pain*. He graduated cum laude with a B.A. in Public Administration from North Carolina Central University, and earned an M. Div. from the Duke Divinity School a doctoral degree from Drew University in Madison, NJ. Appointed by Governor James B. Hunt, he served as executive director for the North Carolina Human Relations Commission.

How to Use This Material

This guide and the related video clip provide the focus of a small group ministry session. Add any traditional opening, chalice lighting, check-in, check-out, and closing to complete the session.

There are two options for small group ministry use:

- Option 1: Watch the entire video clip and discuss any or all of the questions.
- Option 2: Watch the video in four segments, as indicated below. After each segment, stop, discuss the related questions, and then proceed to the next segment.

I. We Need a Fusion Movement

Play the video clip to 2:12. Stop, and discuss: Barber calls the Forward Together Moral Movement a fusion movement where people with different identities (racial/ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, class), religious beliefs, and political affiliations come together to work toward a common cause. What are the values inherent in such a movement? Does your UU faith include these values?

Have you ever taken part in such a fusion movement? What was it like? What was hard for you personally or what would be hard for you in building a fusion movement with people who may hold different identities, religious beliefs, and political affiliations from you? What will help you participate in such a movement?

II. Moral Dissent

Play the video clip from 2:12 – 3:44. Stop, and discuss: Barber tells a story about Thoreau. Both Thoreau and Emerson are our faith ancestors.

What stories from our faith do you know—from history or today, from a holy text or real life—of someone who took a stand against a government policy they considered immoral? Do you have a justice hero? How did they make a moral argument for their cause?

III. Right and Wrong, Not Democrat and Republican

Play the video clip from 3:44 – 5:07. Stop, and discuss: Barber tells another, personal story about shopping for pants. What does this illustrate about building the fusion movement he calls for? When have you been surprised by finding a connection to someone you thought of as an enemy?

Does looking at our social justice actions as part of a moral movement and not a political one change the way you think, or feel, about doing justice making? How might the idea of a moral movement change your actions in the public sphere? In your daily life? How might it transform your spirituality? Your UU faith?

How do you think your faith is poised to take part in such a movement? What will help you? What will hinder you?

IV. Loosening the Imagination

Play the video clip from 5:07 – 6:34. Stop, and discuss: Barber calls us to let go of what makes us cynical and despairing. What do you need to let go of to restore your hope for the future and empower you to stand up and move forward? What would be different for you in your interaction with the problems of the world if you were filled with hope? What is your prophetic vision of the future?