

## **Living Our Values, Session #1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Opening Words**

Our internal work as people of faith is to become more inclusive, equitable, and diverse within our congregations, while our external work is to be accountable to those most affected by injustice. For us to be able to be good, accountable partners, we must do both.

Page 69, Living Our Values in the World

#### **Is someone willing to take notes?**

**Check In** (10 mins) How are you thinking about Widening the Circle since we last met? Do you have any feedback on the process notes and/or excel document?

#### **Process Review**

**Four Levels of Oppression: Analysis and Change Model, from VISIONS, Inc.** (with USG instead of UUA) **Andrea**

In thinking about creating change, identifying and addressing the following are needed:

- **Personal Level:** What are the reported attitudes, beliefs, values, and feelings about various aspects of inclusion and equity? Of these, which ones support the desired goals within the organization, and which ones serve as barriers?
- **Interpersonal Level:** How are people behaving toward each other on a variety of dimensions at the USG? How do different members in various roles experience the cultural climate of the organization? Again, what behaviors maintain or enhance an inclusive, open, and supportive environment and which create or reinforce barriers, particularly with regard to personal demographics and other cultural variables?
- **Institutional Level:** What are the ways that the USG conducts its work? How do both formal and informal policies, practices, and organizational structures support the related goals of the organization, or not? What are the similarities and differences across, age, race/ethnicity, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, role, length of service, and other variables?
- **Cultural Level:** What are the currently valued norms, customs, and “ways of being and acting right” endorsed by the USG? How are these working and/ or not working for various members of the organization and its constituent community?

#### **COIC Report Recommended Actions**

##### **Recommendation 2**

**Through its regional structures, the UUA should promote education for those who would accompany and co-journey with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities and their leaders and groups to ensure more competency in this area.**

- **Action:** Identify and spread partnerships that illustrate how to be allied across lines of race and class so that this can become a standard practice in Unitarian Universalist justice work.

**USG:** White Anti Racist Discussion, Ending Racism Committee, Racism Book Study, Standing Solidarity Vigil, New SJ Book Discussion. The Board is working on providing a leadership training, we have proposed requesting that all members to do an anti oppression workshop annually.

### **Recommendation 3**

***Develop more theological resources to center our justice work in our faith and make clear the interconnection between action in the world and spiritual development.***

- **Action:** Articulate the faith basis for our justice work both within our communities and to the larger world. If we can engage our theological schools and other theologians in doing this, it will offset the tendency to approach justice efforts from a paternalistic basis.
- **Action:** Support theological schools that articulate a Unitarian Universalist liberation theology that calls for accountability and reparations, deepening our approaches to inequities.

**USG:** Making the connection in worship services, ASD offerings, Small Group Ministry (Soul Matters) T1.3 service about Anti oppression? Ask WA to make sure there's a service that makes this connection between spirituality and justice work at least quarterly?

### **Recommendation 1**

***A liberatory faith will remember the mandate from our theological legacy: to *privilege those most affected in our justice work*, which should follow the voices of those most at risk.***

- **Action:** Study income inequality and racial history in areas served by Unitarian Universalist communities as well as the impacts of injustice on Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities.
- **Action:** Expand accountable service-learning and action-education trips to allow real-life contact with difference and a hands-on experience of inequalities as this kind of action learning reflects generational learning norms. Screen justice trips to ensure that they are not tourism but rather actual service-learning experiences with an action-reflection model that includes preparation in anti-oppression practices for every trip that will cross cultural barriers and boundaries. Encourage legacy trips such as the Living Legacy [26] tours and border trips.
- **Action:** Develop and apply antiracism and anti-oppression approaches for Unitarian Universalist justice organizations, including state advocacy networks. This will allow for accountable partnerships at the international, national, and state levels.
- **Action:** Consult with identity-based groups on justice issues that affect their demographics disproportionately. This will allow the UUA and other UU communities to be in accountable relationships with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. Ground accountability in organizations rather than individuals.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**As people of faith, our *call to collective justice work, through accountable partnerships*, is our salvific path.**

- **Action:** Amplify models of effective and accountable partnerships with organizations led by people of color as well as other marginalized leaders as part of the Promising Practices Congregation recognition at each General Assembly.
- **Action:** Learn from and take note of the work of organizations led by Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color on the issue of climate change, as these communities have been (and are now) feeling the effects of these issues for generations.
- **Action:** Deepen and strengthen connections with Black, Indigenous, and people of color–led organizations in the area of immigration.
- **Action:** Encourage donations to organizations led by people of color and Indigenous people who are working on justice issues critical to our faith beliefs at the congregational level.

**USG Goals and Actions:** Identify a couple of things POWER/UUJusticePA is working on that we want to get a large body of people behind: Fair funding in education, Raise the wage, Voting Rights? Really try to focus the energy of the congregation through communication, education, motivation?

**For future sessions:**

**Check Out** (10 mins) What do you want to make sure we cover at the next meeting? Are we ready for the next chapter, Religious Professionals?

#### **Closing Words**

The good news is that we are in control of what we do with our daily living. If we, each one of us, represent a missing remnant in the fabric of our collective future—then together we can lean into the possibility that we have yet to fully experience human history. A collective wholeness. An unassailable good. That is the kind of salvation I am here to fight for in the small moments of every single day. --Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, “The Missing Remnant”