



New Garden Community Church (Unitarian Universalist) - a labor-peace church

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meeting at 6pm, UE (United Electrical workers), 37 S. Ashland, Chicago

January 11, 2007

"Love for the Earth, Justice for the People"

Calendar:

- **Sunday, January 7, 6pm – "This year: Peace"** – Join us for potluck dinner, and fellowship after the service.
- **Sunday, January 14, 6pm** – Celebrate **Martin Luther King, Jr Day** with readings and music, and Marilyn's story. This is the first of a monthly time for sharing each other's stories. Followed by potluck dinner.
- **Sunday, January 21, 6pm** – service TBA.
- **Sunday, January 28, 5pm** – for Film Night, we start off the **peace/nonviolence** series with the powerful biography "**Gandhi**" – bring food, we'll eat and watch together. It's a 3 hour film, so we're starting early, **5pm**.

Spirituality Book Discussion Group

Tuesday, February 6, 6-8pm – look for the wisdom in *The Tao of Pooh*, by Benjamin Hoff. Meet at the back table, Westgate Coffeehouse, 924 W. Madison. The public is welcome.

More Ain't Less

I thought the meaning of the Democratic win in November was that Americans wanted to get our soldiers out of Iraq – so what is the meaning of Bush's decision to put even more of them in?

Tonight groups all over the country are organizing protests – in Chicago, World Can't Wait hosts one in Federal Plaza at 4pm tonight, and another demonstration (unaffiliated?) takes place at 6:30pm at the Harlem/Irving Plaza Mall. Please join them – please call or send letters to your Congressman and Senators letting them know how you feel about Pres. Bush's plan.

I was thinking how – perhaps akin to the husband-wife relationship between Yahweh and Israel – the relationship between Pres. Bush and the American people is like a marriage.

In one dysfunctional relationship I read about, the wife was the one who expressed all the emotion in the family. Her husband was stoic; he didn't involve himself in any of the brouhaha that went on. She even got indignant on his behalf when his parents treated him badly.

In counseling, she began to learn to back off when things happened, and allow him to respond himself to emotional situations. He began to learn not to depend on her to respond for him.

They were able to improve their relationship: she learned to separate her own needs from his, and he became more able to express his feelings and assert his needs, as well. Of course, they wanted to have a better relationship.

So how could we improve our relationship with the Commander in Chief? [Egads, if he really thought it was an equal relationship that would improve things immensely right off the bat.]

We could start, I imagine, by not expressing his emotions for him. Bush doesn't express his emotions at all – he doesn't feel sad for troops dying or their families grieving, he doesn't feel compassion for the troops who are wounded and whose health care is inadequate, he doesn't feel alarmed at the idea of Israel using nuclear weapons against Iranian nuclear sites, he doesn't feel horrified at the idea of endless, bloody war in the Middle East, with the threat of spreading around the world. If he does feel any of those things, they are trumped by his determination not to give in to those feelings.

But how did the wife in the story get her husband to feel the insult directed at him? Dispassionately asking him how it felt? Telling him how it felt to her when he was silent and stoic? How she appreciated it when he expressed his emotions? It's a slow process.

So instead of getting indignant on his behalf, it behooves us to state our needs boldly and simply. "You must have been incensed over 9/11!" is replaced with, "We need respect for our opinions. We need to have peace in the world to feel secure. We need to have people talking with one another."

It is very hard for me to imagine George Bush responding as I'd like him to, becoming vulnerable with us, becoming human on a global scale. I'd like us all – think of it as a group prayer, if you will – to be thinking about how we could reach him, connecting to him with compassion, instead of raging helplessly in opposition. And then... because I don't feel very optimistic about being able to make that connection...

During the height of the women's movement some women brought things home to their

oblivious husbands by going on strike. Perhaps its time to take this kind of action. All the things taken for granted – cooking, cleaning, being cheerfully present – disappeared when Mom went on strike.

For us that could be – showing up for work, paying taxes, seeming to care. You can't keep pretending to love someone when every day you feel more taken advantage of, more ignored. It's time to really care – for him and for ourselves.

The wife becomes liberated not when she leaves her husband, but when she asks of him normal respect for another human being, when she respects herself equally with him. Patriotism has been that game where Uncle Sam asks us to care, when he is still out drinking and gambling and fighting every night, and we just know he's sleeping around – we've seen the Big Oil stains on his collar. It's time to put our collective foot down, and get the country's putative husband to act like a real partner, act like a decent neighbor, in this household of the good old U.S. of A.

peace, Jean

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