



COVENANT GROUPS
All Souls Church, Unitarian
April 2013 - Interdependence

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:...

*#7 Respect for the **interdependent** web of all existence
of which we are a part*

Perhaps for most UUs, the term *interdependent* immediately brings to mind the Seventh Principle provided above.

This month's theme, *interdependence*, asks us to reflect on the relationships we each have, not only with other people, but with all life or existence on earth. Questions for your reflection are provided for three levels of interdependence: personal, congregational, and global. The covenant group facilitator may choose one level for more in-depth sharing, or all three levels to widen our understanding of the concept.

A definition of interdependence is people, animals, organizations or things depending on each another. (noun)

Questions for Reflection and Sharing

Personal – Identify a relationship in your life, past or present, when you and another person were interdependent. Share with the group what you and the other person contributed to create the feeling of interdependence. Or, do you recall an interdependent relationship with one of another species?

Congregational – As members of All Souls Church, Unitarian, and participants in small groups of the church (e.g. a committee or a covenant group) do we express or acknowledge how we are related to, or dependent upon each other? Would the phrase “we are in this together” feel accurate?

Global – What does the interdependent web mean to you? Is it a concept or a lived experience? Share with the group what you have done or witnessed which showed “respect of the interdependent web of all existence”

Reading Selections

Hymn #323 Break Not the Circle (verses 1 and 2)

Break not the circle of enabling love
Where people grow, forgiving and forgiving,
Break not that circle, make it wider still,
Till it includes, embraces all the living.

Come wonder at this love that comes to life,
Where words of freedom are with humor spoken
And people keep no score of wrong and guilt
but will that human bonds remain unbroken.

Orangutan to the Rescue

National Geographic, April 2013, page 8 by Agustin Fuentes

This kind of getting lost doesn't happen anymore. I would have a GPS with me now. But two decades ago at Camp Leakey, an orangutan research camp on Borneo inside Tanjung Putting, the rain forest was an unknowable place. I was trying to find the maroon leaf monkey. One day, after four hours of following marked trails, I thought I saw one. I risked it and went off the trail. Forty-five minutes later, I was still wandering, no maroon leaf monkey in sight. I assumed the trail had to pick up somewhere near where I was, so I used my compass to make a guess. Another 30 minutes later, I wasn't panicked, but I was definitely a little nervous. I had a headlamp, so I was somewhat prepared, but darkness was coming on quickly and finding my way back was only going to get more difficult.

There was much to admire off trail – passing humans hadn't disturbed these parts of the rain forest yet. At one point I saw a shimmering metallic blue pool in an opening. I moved closer, and it vibrated, and hundreds of butterflies took wing. What I saw in their place was the sea of pig feces that had so interested them moments before.

I picked south on the compass. I figured I'd eventually hit the river, if not a trail first. It paid off. After about 20 minutes I saw an unmarked trail. Seconds later, I heard a rustling. I was thinking it was feral pigs or a small wildcat. I shone my headlamp where I thought the sound was coming from. It was an orangutan. The face was familiar, one of the tribe being rehabilitated at camp. The orangutan and I looked at each other, and she held out her hand to me. Then she led me, hand clasped in hand, to camp. Just like me, she was heading back for the evening.

Reading # 658 **To Risk** by Anonymous

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

To weep is to risk appearing sentimental

To reach out for another is to risk exposing our true self.

To place our ideas – our dreams- before the crowd is to risk loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To hope is to risk despair

To try is to risk failure.

To live is to risk dying.

Reading # 576 **A Litany of Restoration**

by Rev Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, who was ordained at All Souls Church

If, recognizing the interdependence of all life, we strive to build community, the strength we gather will be our salvations. If you are black and I am while,

It will not matter

If you are female and I am male,

It will not matter

If you are older and I am younger,

It will not matter

If you are progressive and I am conservative

It will not matter

If you are gay and I am straight

It will not matter

If you are Christian, and I am Jewish,

It will not matter

If we join spirits as brothers and sisters, the pain of our aloneness will be lessened , and that does matter.

In this spirit, we build community and move toward restoration.

Reading # 580 **The Task of the Religious Community**

By Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.

Hymn # 298 – **Wake Now My Senses**

1. Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth call;
Feel the deep power of being in all;
Keep, with the web of creation your vow,
Giving, receiving as love shows us how.

2. Wake, now my reason, reach out to the new;
Join with each pilgrim who quests for the true
Honor the beauty and wisdom of time;
Suffer thy limit, and praise the sublime.

3. Wake, now, compassion, give heed to the cry;
Voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
Take as your neighbor both stranger and friend,
Praying and striving their hardship to end.

4. Wake, now, my conscience, with justice thy guide
Join with all people whose rights are denied;
Take not for granted a privileged place;
God's love embraces the whole human race.

5. Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;
Brighten my pathway with radiance here;
Mingle my calling with all who will share;
Work toward a planet transformed by our care.

<http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/3643.shtml> - How the UUA's Principles and Purposes were shaped and how they've shaped Unitarian Universalism.

By Warren R. Ross

UU World November/December 2000