

Kopke, One Pager, Future of Universalism f 2006 Greenfield Group

It is singularly important that Unitarians and Universalists continually clip quotes. For instance, Emerson did say that he liked the silence before the service begins, and that has often been the quote I have seen in print and found in sermons. The real quote is, I like the silence of the church before the service begins better than any sermon.

The question is, Why do we clip quotes. Or perhaps it is not why - but what is it that is clipped and why would that be clipped? There in lies some form of truth - we will know it when we see it and not before- sort of mystical . . .eh?

The clipping happens again when we quote John MURRAY:

*"Go out into the highways and byways. Give the people something of your new vision. You may possess a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not hell, but hope and courage; preach the kindness and everlasting love of God."*

I HAVE HEARD THIS QUOTE A THOUSAND TIMES - BUT IT IS ALWAYS, "Give them hope, not hell. There is a crucial element left out . . .courage. Murray said give them hope and courage.

By cutting out courage we are pretending that hope is easy. It is not. Hope does not even exist unless there is a threat, something missing, a longing for something, reason to believe that what you want is attainable. Sometimes no courage is required to get what we want and I would guess that, for me, that under these circumstances hope is not even a second thought - not needed - not required. I just do what it takes when I expect something to be the result.

For me, hope comes into play when I need to believe that there is a pathway into the unknown which will be helpful, could be helpful. Sometimes it is only a logical challenge and hope, there too, does not enter the picture. I just work it out.

On March 6, 2006, Ethan Zuckerman wrote an article wondering about why hope was so high amongst Africans (More hope and higher levels in Nigeria than any place in the world) and came to the conclusion that it was not because things couldn't get any worse, it was because there was a belief that things were getting better - against all odds - the hope acted as faith (Evidence of things hoped for, proof of things unseen. Paul;)

Hope is most real and powerful in the face of the unknown and where the pathway forward, out of a terrible zone, engulfs you.

Perhaps this is why Murray used hope and courage together. Look at his life story. Perhaps it is no wonder that we drop the word courage. When was the last time you really had to be courageous? On a historic standard, I will bet there are few of us who have heard such a call to hope.

Can Universalism ever have a future, a glorious one, if we fail to understand why we drop the word courage? Perhaps not.