

Subud: the Tribe

By Deanna Koontz

Two years ago, after actively participating in Subud for thirty-one years, I left. I did not want to leave. In fact, I was poised at the brink of a significant psycho-spiritual crisis and urgently needed support. It wasn't the time to leave. I had grown up in Subud and it had been my primary community for my whole adult life. Subud was my foundation. But although I desperately tried to get the support I needed, I could not and was forced to seek help elsewhere.[1] In the midst of the crisis, I did not understand what was happening to me. Having passed through it, I now do. It was a complex crisis and I will not air the personal aspects of it. But I can say, generally, that I simply grew out of Subud. Subud could no longer support my individual growth.

"But wait," you might say. "Subud is all about individual growth! The latihan is completely tailored by God to the needs of the individual. It has no limits!"

I agree. The latihan does support individual growth. However, past a certain point, the culture of the Subud organization does not. Rather, in practice, the culture exerts pressure on the individual to line up with a central authority. It does this by providing no mechanism for (and to some degree by suppressing) public questioning and doubting and also through the centrality and authority of testing and the way that it is understood and practiced. If Subud is to thrive, these factors need to be examined and corrected.

Stages of Faith

But before we look at how Subud is not able to support all stages of individual growth, we need some idea of what those stages are. *Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* by James Fowler and *Finding Your Religion* by Scotty McClennan outline six stages of spiritual growth that span from two childhood stages ("magic" and "reality") to three stages that most adults live in ("dependent", "independent" and "interdependent") to a final stage that few fully experience ("unity"). Below, I have paraphrased the three most common adult stages, which are the ones that concern us.

Stage 3: *Dependent/Conformist*

In this stage, individuals' inner lives play out within the context of a tribe. They adopt the tribe's perspective and embrace it as their locus of authority. The tribe is an extension of the family and is structured like it. The mystery of the divine world is made concrete by also structuring it as a family, with a personal, parent-like deity who takes an interest in the lives of individuals. The tribe may have little awareness of the metaphorical nature of its myths and may hold its truths to be absolute. Individuals tend to be conformist in that they are acutely tuned in to the expectations and judgments of others in the tribe. The work of this stage is to begin to develop autonomous judgment and individual identity. To move to the next stage, the ego must be strong enough to withstand independence from the tribe.

Stage 4: *Independent/Individualist*

In this stage, individuals withdraw from the tribe and become focused on self, transferring the locus of authority to the self. The work of this stage is to consolidate the sense of an individual

identity, reflect on tribal beliefs and construct an individual worldview better aligned with personal experience. Often, this work is done through contrast with the tribe—either/or thinking: “The tribe is/believes X, so I am/believe not-X.” Through either/or thinking, the divine world may be rejected altogether, or the deity may be reconceived as an impersonal force. Individuals become aware that worldviews (including their own) are constructed. They also recognize that myth is metaphorical in nature. They are relatively unaware of unconscious aspects of themselves that color their perspective, thereby influencing judgment and behavior. In order to move to the next stage, individuals must trust themselves, their experience and their ability to align their worldview with their experience. That trust must be strong enough for them to be able to re-open themselves to the perspectives of other people.

Stage 5: *Interdependent/Holist*

The work of this stage is to soften the boundaries of the ego self consolidated in the Independent stage, and to develop the courage to both be open to the perspectives of others and also tolerate ambiguity and paradox. The newly emerging higher Self becomes the locus of authority. From a strong sense of Self, individuals are able to be more vulnerable to and interested in the viewpoints of others, including that of their childhood tribe. They become able to see multiple sides of an issue, developing a holistic, interdependent point of view. Those in this stage see truth as relative to experience. They may return to the faith of their childhood, better able to hold an individual viewpoint while simultaneously living within the tribal structure. An increasing ability to tolerate mental uncertainty opens up their perspective to a higher order logic; not only can they tolerate paradox, ambiguity and mystery, some may delight in it. Life itself may become a paradox in that they live their own beliefs fully while simultaneously understanding that they may be incomplete and inaccurate. Myths and religious symbols demythologized in the previous stage take on new spiritual power. For some, the divine is conceived of as both personal and impersonal; others acknowledge the divine but are content to live without a fixed image of it. Awareness grows of previously unconscious factors that color their perspective. As these are worked through and let go, the individual becomes more able to live in the here and now and to accept what is and see it clearly.

My growth in Subud

Looking at my own development, I'd say that at the point that I entered Subud, I was Tribal in some ways (in relation to my family, not to a larger tribe) and Independent in others. It is hard to say. My parents had clear beliefs about having an Independent perspective and strongly encouraged it in their children. But beliefs handed down to children are necessarily dogma, because dogma is belief handed down from a central authority. Children need to test out dogma before it becomes true belief. It is impossible to say when some of my family's beliefs truly became mine. But for most of my early Subud life, I was primarily Independent. Later, I moved toward Interdependence.

The biggest rub for me was the way the divine is modeled in Subud—as a personal God that has a will for individuals. I was an agnostic when I was opened and continued to be for many years. I always felt very out of place in Subud in that way. I felt no sense of a personal God, yet all of the people around me (including my family) seemed certain that one existed and cared about us and even had a will regarding us. Growing up, I had little exposure to other models of the divine. For me, the choice was this God or no divine, and I couldn't make the choice for no divine. I needed to think that the divine was at least possible because (I now know) I felt it on a regular basis (though it didn't feel personal). Although I occasionally acknowledged that I was an agnostic, I generally kept quiet. When everyone around you seems to feel something that

you don't have the capacity to feel, you think something is wrong with you. (This is clearly Tribal thinking, although being true to my own experience was Independent.) In other ways, I was able to be Independent, but in this way, I was not.

About twenty-five years into doing latihan, to my great happiness, I finally sensed the presence of a personal God. It was a tremendous relief to finally be able to take part in discussions about this God. (I had continued to do latihan not to come to this point but because I enjoyed latihan and felt it tuned me up and nurtured my spirit.) But then about six years later, I realized that I no longer felt this presence, but rather, strongly felt the absence of it. This absence was a large part of the crisis that led to my leaving Subud. I hit the point where I just really needed to be completely Independent and needed support in order to align my beliefs about the divine with my experience of it. I knew I couldn't get that in Subud.

Before I left Subud, I was operating in many ways from the Interdependent perspective. One important way was that I was becoming increasingly aware of previously unconscious aspects of myself. This new experience was completely at odds with the notion of a personal God that cared about me. I experienced great psychic tension because my understanding of God was Tribal in nature, while my experience brought me to a stage of development two steps beyond Tribal. As I see it, the cultural insistence on modeling the divine as a personal God with a will for individuals (and my own over-developed ability to doubt myself) held me back from my own individual path. Had there been positive cultural support for different understandings of the divine in Subud, I not only would have been saved a good deal of pain, I would probably still be in Subud. (And I believe it is Subud's loss that I am no longer a member—although I sometimes miss doing latihan regularly.) As it was, my crisis was like a slingshot that propelled me from that held-back state through finishing up the Independent work I needed to do and landing me squarely in the Interdependent perspective. I live in that stage today quite happily and free of terrible psychic tension, embracing its work with alacrity.

I want to emphasize the notion of "psychic tension" here. In my experience, when the concepts the mind has to interpret experience don't line up with experience, and when the culture does not support a free and easy atmosphere for discovering new concepts, it can create terrible psychic tension. In a state of psychic tension, the pain you feel is much worse than it otherwise might be. Now that I am in a place where my concepts and experience align and I have support for working through any misalignments, when I feel pain, the pain is less complex and it is easier to embrace it and just feel it. These days, I actually don't mind feeling pain. At times, I can even appreciate the beauty of it. Not only that, psychic tension really drains your energy. I am sometimes amazed at how much energy I feel these days, now that I am in better alignment. My emotional energy levels are so high that I'm having to learn not to take on more than my physical body can handle. Subud loses an awful lot of energy to psychic tension. Think what more could be accomplished with all of that lost energy.

Where is Subud?

While the latihan itself is not limited to any of these stages, the culture of Subud is primarily Tribal and thus ill-equipped to support the growth of those beyond the Tribal stage. A great deal of support for growth in Subud is done "in the closet" by individual members, out of the sight of the official culture.

What makes Subud a tribe? Tribes conceive of the divine as a personal God that takes an interest in the lives of individuals. God, or a person or group authorized by God, is the central authority. Individuals order their lives according to scripture or myths linked with that central authority, and also according to group expectations; they are conformist in nature. Independent thought is discouraged, often through promoting the fear of terrible consequences for leaving the group. Sometimes, the group believes that something about them sets them above or apart from other groups—a correct way of living or a special relationship to God.

The name Subud, Susila Budhi Dharma—“right living according to the will of God”—suggests that the Subud tribe has a special relationship with the divine, in part, because it has direct access to the divine. For some, Bapak and Ibu Rahayu are central authority figures and their writings have become scriptural resources for finding out what “right living” is. For others, only God is the central authority. Testing is seen as a direct line to God, so the fact that helpers in the hierarchical structure are tested in makes it seem that they have God-given authority. This is especially true because those testing them are in a higher position than they are. If they were tested in from below, things might be different. The authority of individual members might be validated more.

As a direct line to central authority, testing has become Subud’s central procedure. (In terms of the organization itself, because almost all positions are tested in, testing has supplanted the latihan as central.) What checks and balances are in place in regard to testing? There are none within the organization. How do you audit a test result? The only one I know of is trying out the results of testing in the world. But by the time you try out the results and they fail, you may have wasted a lot of time and energy. The checks and balances in place in regard to testing are all about “mental interference”. In order to mitigate against it, it is held that one should test with a group of people. In that way, the different answers may add up to something closer to the actual will of God. This process lends itself well to tribal “group think”. Whatever you do to get around “the mind’s interference”, it is still felt that testing reveals the will of God, with all the authority that that has. Once, when I showed doubt about the results of testing, a helper who had on other occasions acknowledged the mental interference factor told me that if I weren’t willing to follow the results of testing, I shouldn’t test in the first place. In other words, there was no room for questioning the results of testing, because it would be questioning the will of God.

There really is little official room for questioning anything in Subud. Not only that, questioning is suppressed by Subud’s cultural bias against critical thinking. “The mind” is Subud’s bogeyman. Unlike many tribal groups, Subud does not inhibit the questioning that might lead to Independence through creating fear of terrible consequences. Instead, it demonizes one of the faculties through which a growing spirit can seek the space and nurturance it needs. My sense of it is that officially, no one intends to use this anti-mind bias to keep people in Subud through suppressing questioning. It is an unintended consequence of a bias based in the mind’s interference with receiving and in misunderstandings of the mind’s role in spiritual growth. But whatever the intention, the anti-mind bias has the effect of supporting people in the group still solidly in the Tribal stage and silencing those who are beyond it. Those who feel the impulse to accuse feel little cultural pressure not to say, “You’re in your mind!” Those so accused feel little support for countering the accusation. To do so makes you sound like you are more “in your mind” than ever, so you tend to just shut up. It is nearly impossible to defend against this allegation.

Subud can also exert tremendous tribal pressure to conform to group expectations. Two stories illustrate. I generally avoided large gatherings, where I encountered the Subud tribe in its most oppressive form. A few years before I left Subud, after another helper in my group convinced me that things had changed, I went to a helper retreat. There, I witnessed a frightening scene—an act of violence, as I now see it. An international helper was leading some testing. During the testing she made it clear that, in order to function effectively as a helper, we had to feel a personal connection with Bapak. (Already frightening—sounds exactly like fundamentalist Christianity.) I was shocked and did not feel that I could speak out against this idea. No cultural support exists for speaking out against an international helper (quite the opposite). A young woman, new to being a helper, became very upset because she didn't feel this connection. (I didn't feel it either, but having been an effective helper for many years without it, I knew the idea to be hogwash.) The international helper proceeded to form a small group to do special testing with the woman. I joined the group, in horror, thinking that I might be able to talk to her later in private and do some damage control. At the end of the session, she was calmer. The next morning I did manage to talk with her. When I brought up the subject, it became clear that she had had a "conversion" experience. She now felt the personal connection with Bapak, so my reassurances were not needed. A born-again Subud member! She declared adamantly that this was all literally true and became upset when I suggested it might not be. I let it go. It was clear it would do no good to press the matter. She wanted to be where she was.

When the young woman's experience had told her one thing, the international helper told her not to trust her own experience and then, through testing, produced for her a different experience. Under cultural pressure, the young woman accepted the new experience as necessarily more valid than her own. It was clearly important to her to be in Subud and so she changed her own reality in order to fit in. What this international helper did was an act of violence against the young woman's own process of growth and development. It was, in my understanding, abusive. It was accomplished in a very caring, kind, calm manner. But it was violent and abusive nonetheless—even more because it was done under the guise of love than it would have been had it been done baldly and honestly. At least then the violence would have been more obvious. I wish I had had the courage to speak up, but I did not. I would be able to today.

The other experience happened later, on the final evening of the retreat. People sat around in a large circle sharing. A national helper described a receiving in which she was a part of a large chorus of harmonious voices. The conductor? Bapak. She did not preface this description by acknowledging that this receiving was specific to her. Instead, after telling us her story, she looked around at everyone, smiling, as if we were all singing together in her chorus. A man on the regional committee spoke up and said, "Well, I think of it more like jazz—we're all improvising on a chord progression." I felt grateful to him for speaking for the authority of the individual and against the pressure to conform to Bapak as a central authority. The next morning, as we were all preparing to leave, I found him and thanked him for what he had said. I don't remember his exact response, but I do remember clearly that he backed off from what he had said. I also remember being very upset that I hadn't found the ally he had appeared to be. After my experience with the born-again Subud member, I badly wanted an ally. Although he had shown courage the night before, for some reason he could not accept my offer to be his ally against this pressure to conform. Instead, he gave into it himself.

I never went to another retreat or congress.

Because Subud is a Tribal culture that offers the promise of sure knowledge of God's will, it attracts people in the Tribal stage who need the security of certainty. And because they are more in the ego stage of development, they have a greater need to prove their worthiness through attaining high office and may end up running the organization. In their hands, all of the ideas and practices that would support a more Independent faith become a new kind of dogma (despite the claim that Subud has no dogma). And a dogma that purports to be all about Independent faith, a stage of faith in which dogma is left behind, can be very confusing (especially to those like myself who grew up in Subud and had less exposure to other faith systems). What people in that stage of faith (and beyond) require is a process that supports individual growth, not a new dogma about individual growth.

At the same time that Subud's Tribal aspects attract Tribal members, it also claims to have no dogma and touts the latihan as completely individual in nature. Since it appears to be at the Independent stage, it attracts people in that stage and beyond. They are in for a big surprise. Upon returning from her first and only congress, one woman in my group exclaimed, "My God! I didn't know Subud had a Pope!" These people may stay for a time, but more often than not, they leave. Those who stay may feel the need to keep their spiritual individuality in the closet.

Where should Subud be?

In order to serve the needs of most adults, Subud should be in the Interdependent stage. What would that look like? Most importantly, the Interdependent culture would create the conditions in which individuals with diverse points of view could be safe in being who they are, wherever they are on their spiritual journey. They should not be exposed to the psychic violence required by conformity, but rather, to a culture that nurtures spiritual individuality. It should create many opportunities for safely and appreciatively sharing understandings based in personal experience and bring in ideas about the life of the spirit from a variety of different sources. Above all, there should be lots of public space and encouragement for questioning and experimentation, which bring fresh air and dynamic energy into stagnancy.

Where I am now

As it happens, I am now an active part of a spiritual community that, broadly speaking, is making the transition from the Independent to the Interdependent stage. After my crisis forced me out of Subud, I found an excellent, spiritually oriented therapist to help me during my difficult passage and joined the Unitarian Universalist (UU) church, where I found supportive companions for the journey. I have been very active there and was recently elected to the board of trustees. I say this not to tout my "success", but to say that, as a board member, I am in an excellent position to see the whole church, warts and all. (And we do have warts.) Although in the U.S., we are united by the UU Association of Congregations, UU congregations are autonomous (Independent stage). From my perspective, the programming of my particular church does a solid job of supporting through the Interdependent stage within the church, but it has not been able to effectively move out into the community at large to support the process of faith development in society at large. (I suspect that moving out effectively into the world at large is a stage 6 activity. According to Fowler, activists like Gandhi and Martin Luther King were stage 6.) But perhaps some of my experiences in the UU church might be instructive.

In UU, we cultivate an ethos in which questioning and doubting are recognized as playing a significant role in the process of spiritual development, and thus encouraged. We also do the “no dogma” thing better than Subud does. We do have seven principles that we “covenant to affirm and promote” (see the appendix). But these principles do not guide our beliefs. Rather they attempt to set safe and nurturing conditions in which members at all stages of faith development may thrive. Through joining the covenant to affirm and promote the seven principles, we support one another on our individual (and collective) spiritual journeys. We describe ourselves as a “covenantal” religion, not a creedal one. But we eagerly welcome ideas and beliefs from any religion as possibly helpful or valid.

A big part of the UU ethos is that we all have a right to believe and think what our conscience tells us to be true, but that the search for truth is continual in nature. To continue that search, we come together in small groups of various sorts and talk about our spiritual journeys and how we understand them at the moment (which I’ve taken to calling “sacred conversation”). But we don’t argue or try to convince one another that we are right or someone else is wrong. Questions about whether ideas are “right” or “wrong” are almost always seen as off the point. Nor do we offer unasked-for advice. Like Twelve Step programs, we tend not to engage in cross talk. Like Twelve Step programs, we tend to focus on ourselves and our responsibilities and understanding. The conversations tend to focus on the bigger questions of life rather than discussing the intimate details of our life problems. (And endless conversations about life problems were a constant irritation for members of my Subud group who wanted something more. UUs who need to discuss personal problems do so in private conversations.)

Another important aspect of the UU ethos is that we must listen attentively with open minds and hearts to one another. We listen in order to support one another. We listen to one another in order to learn from and about one another. We may not always agree, but we believe that “we need not think alike to love alike”. (Ferenc David, 1910-79—founder of Unitarianism in Transylvania) And love is the absolute center of the ethos and belief system. We try to listen and speak in love. We question and we doubt in love. There is a reason why affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person is our first principle.

In this open and supportive atmosphere, I was able to question, doubt and explore new ideas safely. After a time, I restructured my belief system in a way that better aligns with my experience and supports my spiritual health. My experience is that something that feels Divine to me exists in all living things around me. But I see no reason to posit this Divine as in any way separate and above all that is around me, or to think that it cares about me or has wishes regarding me. I also would never insist that this Divine that I sense is real. It may be that my felt connection with the Divine is a particular state that my brain gets into that is good for my health. It doesn’t matter if it is “real” or not. (And questions about the “real” are relative to what kind of reality you are thinking about, anyway.) What matters is how the experience that I think of as feeling the Divine around me supports me in living fully. My experience says it is good and satisfying to be alive to this Divine in all—to be here, now. My experience says that it is wonderful and satisfying to embrace everything that life offers—the “good” and “bad” equally—and live it vibrantly, but not be attached to it, to let it go when the time comes. When I was in Subud, I pursued the “good” and tried to avoid the “bad”. Testing was used for those purposes all the time.

Oddly, now that I don’t test, and now that I really am open to and accepting of most of life’s experiences (I still resist the most difficult), guidance does come to me at times, in a way that I never felt when I was in Subud. (At odd times and places, and never when I am seeking it.) And guidance always comes in a way that challenges me to move further on the journey, not in a

way that tells me it is okay to limit myself. I don't know where my guidance comes from. I don't feel a need to interpret it through the lens of a particular belief system. (It may be coming from my subconscious mind or from a disembodied spirit guide.... Who knows? Why would it matter?) I do know that it always leads me to greater levels of aliveness, although that may mean giving up an attachment. But the thing is it always comes at just the moment when I am ready to give up that attachment. And by giving up the attachment, I gain something even greater.

From the perspective of doing latihan (which is, after all, what Subud is supposed to be about), I don't see any reason why someone like myself should not be able to do latihan and not only fit comfortably in, but be supported by, the culture of Subud. I don't see why an atheist should not be able to do latihan and not only fit comfortably in, but be supported by, the culture of Subud. I see latihan as an altered state that is good to be in and that supports the journey of the spirit (and you don't need to believe in any sort of God to know that we have a spirit that can develop). Once you let go of the need to securely know "the will of God", you don't really need to interpret the experience of the latihan in any particular way. Just do it and experience its benefits.

Besides that, I was told that Subud brings the underlying reality of all religions back to the practice of the religion—that the belief system of the religion was a blueprint and that adding the experience of the latihan could make those beliefs into a three dimensional structure. If this is so, it makes a lot of sense to try to understand the spiritual journey fostered by the latihan in terms of various religious beliefs. While none of these viewpoints is in and of itself absolutely correct, when you add them together, you might begin to approach something closer to the real truth of the matter. Whatever it is, it is certainly more useful to individuals to be able to sit and hash out understandings themselves than to be fed understandings from some authority figure.

In my UU community, I revel in an atmosphere that promotes healthy questioning and in which conflict is seen as a healthy and necessary part of growth. I love being in a community in which I can easily speak up and point out to the minister that he made an error in judgment, watch him realize the truth of my observation, receive an immediate and sincere apology, and then thank him for the beauty of his apology. I also love receiving clear and honest feedback and offering beautiful apologies of my own. Conflict is seen as a way for the community to progress, as well. Recently, in a small group situation, someone made a comment that hurt my feelings. Comfortable with my open and supportive group, I began to cry. I could see from her response to my tears that she hadn't wanted to hurt me and had only overstated her wishes. The group responded in a way that supported me, yet did not punish the woman for her mistake. My hurt quickly faded. I could see that it pained her to have hurt me and was able to reconcile with her immediately and tell her how much I valued her. I feel that our group made real progress together through this simple, pure and beautiful, if somewhat painful, event. In my experience, such events rarely happened in Subud.

In sharing all of this, I am not trying to gain converts to UUism, only to offer ideas for solutions to Subud's problems. I would love to be able to rejoin group latihan, but will not do so while Subud's culture is unhealthy and stagnant.

How can Subud get there?

Question everything, with particular emphasis on "why", which gets at the meaningful heart of the matter and "how", which can lead to different, higher-order ways of being. Ask: "Why do we do it this way," "Might this way harm or limit someone's growth," and "Is there a different, less

limiting way of doing it?"

- Question the uses and functions of testing. Why do we test about the things we test about? Why do we test so much? What would it feel like not to test? How could we accomplish the same ends without testing?
- Question the organizational structure and the meanings of the positions. Do we really need helpers? How would it be if we just had "timers"? How would it be if we allowed members to gravitate naturally toward their own mentors? How would it be if we allowed leadership to arise from the membership through demonstrated ability rather than being tested in from above?
- Question the organization's name. What if, rather than "right living according the will of God", the foundational phrase were "living vibrantly and well, in balance with the web of all life"? Have fun brainstorming new central phrases to describe the organization's goal.
- Question the need for an official version of God. Why do we promote only one version of God and suppress others? Find out more about other ways to conceptualize the Divine.
- Question what testing and the latihan would look like in a belief system that did not attach them to "the will of God". What might be lost? What might be gained?

You don't always need to find specific answers to questions. Sometimes just asking the question creates needed movement.

Experiment.

- Try a moratorium on testing for at least several months. See what testing withdrawal feels like. See if you can find other means for the same ends.
- Brainstorm a set of principles that creates safe conditions for people of all stages to latihan and grow spiritually. Try it on for a while. Tweak it when the need arises. If it doesn't work, try something else.
- Try coming together for sacred conversation. For a time, gently ban Subud dogma. Start by noticing when it is used. As you become more aware of it, try to find more inclusive ways of speaking. Doing so will help you become aware of it and its prevalence and power. Read and discuss texts from various faiths. How do they relate to your journey individually and collectively?

Remember that in doing the above, you are promoting the growth of Subud's collective life force. Do it all in a spirit of play and fun. It is serious work, but when you approach it in play and fun, you detach from outcome and open up wonderful possibilities.

Above all, embrace one another tenderly, fully and vibrantly, warts and all.[2]

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Notes

1. In fairness, I want to state that I am positive that the individuals involved did not understand what was happening to me, nor did they understand the depth of my vulnerability. I am certain that they did the best they could and do not hold them individually responsible for the fact that I left Subud.
2. I'd like to figuratively thus embrace the editors of this publication and add a hearty thanks to them for opening up the space Subud so badly needs for questioning and experimenting.

Appendix: The Unitarian Universalist Principles

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

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.