



One of my favorite God stories comes from the late Rev. Howard Thurman, who founded and pastored the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, perhaps the first intentionally interracial church in the country.

A young boy is afraid of the dark and is having trouble going to sleep. His mother tells him that it is safe because God will be with him in the dark. All he needs to do when he is afraid is to pray and God will be by his side. But the boy remains fearful. At length he says to his mother, "Mommy, will you please ask God to put some skin on and then I will be alright."

Now, my understanding of God may be more poetic than many, but I love this little story. There are times, not only in childhood, when we want, even need, our comfort to have shape and texture. We want the source of our solace to be embodied, in other words. Abstractions will just not do.

When I have been asked to offer what is often called Extending the Hand of Fellowship at ordination and installation ceremonies, I take the hand of the person being ordained or installed in mine and mention what I find there.

Each person's hand has many stories to tell. Our hands have reached out for food. Reached out to protect us when we've fallen. Become fists when we've been angry. Held a door open for a stranger and reached out to someone we loved.

I've never noticed a hand of someone beyond early youth that did not have at least one scar or other blemish.

Rev. Eric Meter - Links

Written by Rev. Eric Meter
Thursday, 01 June 2017 00:00

So while reaching out to take someone's hand in our own may seem like such a simple thing, I see it as an act with profound meaning. Each of us extends our selves in a way a manner that demonstrates both our strength and our vulnerability. Both humility and honesty are manifest.

It can be said that Unitarian Universalism is a "heady" religion. Yes, we love ideas and often delight in adventures of the imagination. But our faith is also an embodied one. Where we meet is a place where skin is present: scars, warts and all.

in peace,

Rev. Eric