

What Breaks our Hearts, What Gives us Hope ~ Vivian P. Sellers

This General Assembly was only my second, and it had been 19 years between them. I went with trepidation as a delegate, not really having wanted to be required to attend all the business sessions, but I found that these General Sessions gave me hope for not only our association of member congregations, but for the country in general.

One of the aspects of current life in the US that breaks my heart is the lack of civil discourse and conversation among folks who disagree. I've lost the ability to talk with those of my family and friends who disagree with me on politics, religion, and the values of living in a society, and I miss those relationships because of their value to me in the past.

But at these 8 General Sessions, I saw folks who forcefully disagreed with one another about proposed bylaws changes and actions of immediate witness defend their positions with grace and energy, without name-calling or belittling those who disagreed. The folks present heard many ideas for amendments to the proposals, pondered them carefully, and ultimately voted yay or nay. I heard youth and young adults powerfully state their reasons for and against proposals, giving me hope for the future of the association and the country.

The three Actions of Immediate Witness, things we as a congregation can choose to support right away, were passed by the body of almost 3,000 delegates, after much debate and the voting first on 6, then on these 3. These AIW's are:

To work to end family separation and detention of asylum seekers, and to abolish ICE;

To work to end prisons for profit and to dismantle predatory medical care practices in prisons'

To work in cooperation with indigenous water protectors to reinforce the 7th principle that we are all related.

I'm hoping you'll be interested enough in these to support efforts to learn more about them and become active participants should UUFA become involved in programs around these issues. That would give me hope!

Meditation: Each morning at GA, a short worship service is offered. I attended all of them, and my favorite was patterned after a Quaker service, which contains much silence, and this meditative period may go longer than you are used to.

This morning, I'd like y'all to settle in to the most comfortable position you can..., close your eyes if you wish..., relax your muscles top to bottom..., slow your breathing.... Be aware of your breathing and the sound it makes... Be aware of the quiet sounds in this room...Be aware of the power of silence to heal us...Be aware of the power of silence to connect us...Let us breathe into silence.

Let it go about 2 minutes