

Spring Message Series: What Would [_____] Do?

What do we think Jesus would do, if he were alive today? Would he be a teacher and healer? A carpenter? An activist? A leader? Would we know his name at all? What about the Buddha, or the Prophet Muhammad? Who would Mahatma Gandhi, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Bayard Rustin, or Ralph Waldo Emerson be, in our time – and how would they be moved to respond, when faced with today's world?

Challenge: Think of a historical figure you admire. What is one simple thing they might do when faced with the issues of today's world? Do that thing. Be the change you want to see in the world.

Spiritual practice: The spiritual practice for this message series is contemplative/imaginative one. Think of someone from the past who has been influential to you. Contemplate what their perspective on the present would be.

Discussion questions: What historical figures have influenced your moral/ethical development? What teachings of theirs really resonate with you? How do you think they would present those teachings in a modern context? How would they respond to today's issues?

Journal/reflection/art prompt: what would they do, what could I do?

Family Resources:

Several great reading lists at this site on history of black, indigenous, AAPI authors/experiences, and more

[The Conscious Kid](#)

Social justice reading for kids and youth: [Books About Social Justice](#)

[Imagine](#) by John Lennon video book

Bayard Rustin [video book](#), & [short animated video](#)

Ralph Waldo Emerson children's book: [A Home for Mr. Emerson](#) by Barbara Kerley

Older article but still makes sensible case for ethics training for kids and youth:

[What Students Gain From Learning Ethics in School](#) by Linda Flanagan

Raising kids with a social conscience:

[Five Ways to Raise Kids With a Social Conscience](#) by Kathleen Zwiener

Video game about making ethical choices: [Quandary](#)

a nonprofit, nonpolitical, nonreligious exploration of critical thinking - what would the kids do?

Books:

[Holy Troublemakers & Unconventional Saints](#) by Daneen Akers

[Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, & Pluralism](#) by Omid Safi

[Time on Two Crosses](#) by Bayard Rustin

[The Sabbath](#) by Abraham Joshua Heschel

[Gandhi Today](#) by Mark Shepard

[Nature & Selected Essays](#) by Ralph Waldo Emerson

[Self-Reliance & Other Essays](#) by Ralph Waldo Emerson

UU History:

[The Cross and the Lynching Tree](#) by James Cone

[The Complete Frances Harper](#) published by Mint Editions

[Frances E. W. Harper: A Call to Conscience](#) by Utz McKnight

[Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880-1930](#) by Cynthia Grant Tucker

[*Darkening the Doorways: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian Universalism*](#) by Mark Morrison-Reed

[*The Rough Side of the Mountain: Black Women's Ministries in Unitarian Universalism*](#) edited by Qiyamah Rahman

[*Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women and Social Reform, 1776-1936*](#) edited by Dorothy May Emerson

Feminist and other Theological traditions:

[*All About Love: New Visions*](#) by bell hooks

[*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer

[*Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*](#) by Ivone Gebara and David Molineaux

[*Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*](#) by Rebecca Parker and Rita Nakashima Brock

[*Black Womanist Ethics*](#) by Katie Cannon

[*Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader*](#) edited by Cannon, Townes, and Sims

[*The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*](#) by Karen King

[*Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*](#) by Resa Aslan

[*God: A Human History*](#) by Reza Aslan

[*A Short History of Myth*](#) by Karen Armstrong

Buddhism:

[*The Wise Heart*](#) by Jack Kornfield

[*Love and Rage: The Path of Liberation through Anger*](#) by Lama Rod Owens

[*Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love and Liberation*](#) by Lama Rod Owens and Rev Angel Kyodo Williams

Any book by [Pema Chodron](#)

[*Trusting the Gold*](#) and [*True Refuge*](#) by Tara Brach

Islam:

[*Women and Gender in Islam*](#) by Leila Ahmed

"Woman and Man: A Quranic Theological Perspective" by Riffat Hassan (in [*Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians*](#))

Interfaith:

[*The Revolutionary Love*](#) and [*See No Stranger*](#) by Valerie Kaur

Articles

"[Progressive Islam in America](#)" from OnBeing.org (podcast and transcript)

"[What Do Buddhists Do?](#)" from Tricycle.com

"[What Did the Buddha Teach?](#)" from Tricycle.com

"[The Upside-Down Way](#)" & "[Clearing Space](#)" from Inward/Outward.org

Songs

[Allison Russel - Nightflyer](#)

[Peter Mayer - Holy Now](#)

[Ma Muse's We Shall Be Known](#) performed by East Bay Choir

[Brandi Carlile and Alicia Keys – Beautiful Noise](#)

[John Legend - Glory](#)

[John Legend - Preach](#)

[MILCK – Quiet](#)

[MILCK – Somebody’s Beloved](#)

Multimedia

Interview about “[Myths and the Modern World](#)” with Karen Armstrong

[The Revolutionary Love Project](#)

[Poet Nikki Giovanni on Children, Jesus and Politics](#)

Sermon on Universalism by Rev Mark Morrison-Reed: “[Dragged Kicking and Screaming Into Heaven](#)”

Documentary [My Name Is Pauli Murray](#) (streaming on Prime) They are one of the most influential figures in American 20th century history. It’s time you learn their name. Both Pauli’s personal path and tireless advocacy foreshadowed some of the most politically consequential issues of our time. Told largely in Pauli’s own words, My Name is Pauli Murray is a candid recounting of that unique and extraordinary journey.

Short video about [Francis Ellen Watkins Harper](#)

“[Where is the Buddha Now?](#)” a dharma talk by Ajahn Sona, Abbot of the Birken Forest Buddhist Monastery, in Canada

“[Series Trailer: Ramy](#)” on Hulu

“[Birthing A New Normal with Hope from Present-Day Mystics](#)” with Matthew Fox & Dorothy Solle

Poetry

[Jesus at the Gay Bar](#) by Jay Hulme

[Jesus Inognito](#) by Alison Luterman

Quotes

“And that’s when things get messy. When people begin moving beyond charity and toward justice and solidarity with the poor and oppressed, as Jesus did, they get in trouble. Once we are actually friends with the folks in struggle, we start to ask why people are poor, which is never as popular as giving to charity. One of my friends has a shirt marked with the words of late Catholic bishop Dom Helder Camara: “When I fed the hungry, they called me a saint. When I asked why people are hungry, they called me a communist.” Charity wins awards and applause but joining the poor gets you killed. People do not get crucified for living out of love that disrupts the social order that calls forth a new world. People are not crucified for helping poor people. People are crucified for joining them.”

— Shane Claiborne, [The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical](#)

Questions? Suggestions? Feedback? Please feel free to contact one of the members of the Spiritual Development Ministry:

Majid Alsayegh malsayegh@altamgmt.com

Deb Soderland deb.soderland@gmail.com