

Preparation for G202 — The Great Turning

This session is based on a workshop, “Change the Story, Change the Future,” presented at the 2007 General Assembly by Bill Scarvie and the Rev. Kurt Kuhwald, a UU minister.

In his book *The Great Turning, From Empire to Earth Community* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2006), David C. Korten argues that corporate consolidation of power is merely one manifestation of what he calls “Empire,” the organization of society through hierarchy and violence that has largely held sway for the past 5,000 years. Empire has always resulted in misery for the many and fortune for the few, but now it threatens the very future of humanity. Korten points to global terrorism, climate change and rising poverty as just a few of the signs that the burdens of Empire now exceed what people and the planet will bear. (For more information, see <http://www.thegreatturning.net> or <http://www.davidkorten.org/Books/greatturning.htm>)

Empire is not inevitable, not the natural order of things—we can turn away from it. Korten makes a case that “Earth Community”—a life-centered, egalitarian, sustainable way of ordering human society based on democratic principles of partnership—is possible. This session explores that possibility.

Empire

- Life is hostile and competitive.
- Humans are flawed and dangerous.
- Maintain order by dominator hierarchy.
- Compete or die.
- Love of power.
- Defend the rights of the self.
- “Masculine dominant.”

Earth Community

- Life is supportive and cooperative.
- Humans have many possibilities.
- Maintain order through partnership.
- Cooperate and live.
- Love of life.
- Defend the rights of all.
- Gender balanced.

1. What areas of your life are more governed by Empire and which are more influenced by Earth Community?
2. Talk about some of the shades of difference you see between the Empire and Earth Community in your own life.
3. List some specific ways you live or try to live in Earth Community. Are there some things on your list that are more idealistic than practical?
4. What is most difficult in dealing with the power and effects of Empire in your daily life? How could Unitarian Universalism help you with this?
5. In what ways has your upbringing affected whether you’re living mostly in Empire or in Earth community?