

In the movie “The Sixth Sense” a young boy is visited and terrorized by ghosts. Nobody understands or sees his plight.

At one point in the movie he tries to explain the ghosts that terrorize him to the child psychologist played by Bruce Willis. The boy says “you ever feel the prickly things on the back of your neck? And the tiny hairs on your arm, you know when they stand up?....That's them.”

Now, prior to me becoming a minister, many would jokingly say I had a “real job.” I was an engineer for several years. I then moved into a sales role for that same engineering company. Real job!

I worked for a good company - a company that, generally speaking, treated their employees well.

One hundred percent of my immediate co-workers, the salesforce, were straight white males. Probably 90% of my customers were also straight white males and the two taken together represented my corporate world. In my interactions with this corporate world; there seemed to be this feeling – this unnamed thing – this sixth sense that I had.

I could feel a line, a wall marking a division between what one could do – and what one couldn't do. I'm not talking about an ethical line. I'm pretty sure that most of my corporate world, again, straight white males, couldn't see the line, the wall, the divider. All they could see was what one could do. They couldn't see past the other side of the line.

I believe I saw the line because I happened to be married to an African American woman and my four children are viewed by this culture as African Americans. Because of this, the line became visible to me. Most minorities, non-straight white males, have seen this line their entire lives and must be truly frustrated that others don't see it; and exhausted at having to point it out to the rest of us.

But anyway, in my corporate world, on one side of the line, the side upon which one could see, was the realm of acceptable behavior which included put downs, off color jokes, misogyny, callousness towards the LGBT community and even racial slurs.

On the other side of the line was true diversity, multiculturalism, equality, beloved community. But bringing this region into view was unacceptable. Why? Well, first of all to the corporate world it was completely inconsistent with its mission which was, generally speaking, to make money. It was also unacceptable however because this corporate world couldn't see the line and therefore couldn't possibly see beyond it or

understand it. Showing them that there is something beyond which they can see was, in a way, insulting to them.

It can take great courage to show people, sometimes people you love and respect, their failure to see things as they are.

The idea, really the fact, that such a line even exists needs to be unacceptable to all humanity, unacceptable to all US citizens, unacceptable to all people of faith, unacceptable to all Unitarian Universalists, unacceptable to all of us, unacceptable to me; unacceptable to you.

Something I've been thinking a lot about especially this week and I mentioned on Thursday to those who attended a joint social justice meeting with Emerson congregation.... I probably don't need to tell you that this feels like a pivotal point in our nation's history. The craziness since January 20 and the abomination that was Charlottesville...and now DACA. The bottom line is this: Is that line of discrimination, intolerance and yes, white supremacy going to be maintained, or torn down?

You may be comfortable in your particular situation but the future of our descendants, your children and grandchildren; my children and grandchildren our great grandchildren; depends on what we – you and me - begin to do right now. Regarding racism you may say, "I'm all right on the issue," but I'm sorry, that is not enough. You and I being "all right on this issue" is not enough to erase that line, that scourge, from America and its future.

Hitler came to power in 1933. Many of us, including myself, look back now and say easily from the comfort of our living room sofas, "What were they thinking? How could they let that happen? Why didn't they do something?"... and 80 million people lost their lives. Your descendants, (some of whom are sitting in this very room), WILL ask the same question to us – to me and to you, it's not a matter of if, they WILL ask, "What were you thinking? What did you do? How could you let that happen?" To me, it is the most important question of our time and it is the guiding force of my and should be the guiding force of our shared ministry together. Our descendants, mine and yours, call upon us to do something...now.

I know the issue of racism is paralyzingly fearful for many, but again I'm sorry, not being willing to answer our descendant's call for any reason is deeply troubling. Please, have the courage to answer this call – a call to at least begin to understand the issue and choose, or choose not to, Live the Pledge.

Our mission and our descendants, mine and yours, are calling upon us, me and you, to do good work, for the common good, and you can start by registering for Living the Pledge Workshops today.

