

Untold Story, Part 1
by Rev. Ann Schranz
Monte Vista Unitarian Universalist Congregation
May 16, 2010

Throughout his life, Rev. Paul Sawyer has worked for political change and cultural change. This morning, we heard excerpts from his new book *Untold Story: A Short Narrative History of Our Time*, including some colorful anecdotes from the 1960's.¹ Rev. Ellen and I visited Rev. Paul this past week. He is not well. He is dying of pancreatic cancer. His body looks much thinner than when he served as an interim minister here. However, his voice remains strong. Rev. Paul worked on this book for a dozen years; it will help to ensure that his voice remains strong even after he is no longer with us.

A few years ago, around the time that I was called to serve the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Santa Cruz County, I talked with a ministerial colleague who is close friends with Rev. Paul. "Paul is a law unto himself," she said, conveying both admiration and gentle criticism. As many of you know, as far as I know, I am the first "out" poly-identified minister to complete the Unitarian Universalist ministerial credentialing process. Over the course of 10 years, I estimate that 200 to 300 ministers expressed disapproval of this relationship orientation. I estimate that 20 to 30 expressed disapproval but said they would not stand in the way of my ministry.

Rev. Paul was one of two or three ministers who said, "I support you; I support your ministry." "Experimentation" in the 1960's and 1970's was not all good, but some of it was. Unitarian Universalists do not believe in apostolic succession, and even using the phrase as a metaphor comes across as presumptuous. All I can tell you is this: Rev. Paul's encouragement feels akin to the apostolic laying on of hands. I vow to serve the spirit of life, the spirit of freedom, and the spirit of responsibility to the best of my ability.

¹ Four congregation members had earlier in the service read excerpts from pages 27, 33, 7, 60, 49, 19, 79, 81, 96, 98, 132, 189, 392, 395, and 398. *Untold Story: A Narrative History of Our Time*, Paul Winslow Sawyer, Fidelity Educational Press, 2010. Publisher: Oneil Canon, Sunset Hall, 1745 N. Gramercy Place, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

I cannot quite make out Rev. Paul's handwriting in the inscription he wrote in my copy of *Untold Story*. From one angle, it looks like "For Ann, carrying on the love in Montclair." From another angle, it looks like "For Ann, carrying on the torch in Montclair." Ultimately, the message is the same for love is the torch that lights our way.

May each one of us serve the spirit of life, the spirit of freedom, and responsibility to the best of our ability. May it be so!