

THE TIME I RAISED MY VOICE

Amos and Fundamentalism

*“Let me have no more of your noisy hymns
My ears are closed to the music of your harps.
Instead, let justice flow down like a might river
and integrity flow like a never-failing stream.”*

(Amos 5:23, 24, JB Phillips Translation from the Hebrew)

I was speaking to the Unitarians one Sunday. One doesn't “preach” to Unitarians. I was filling in for the “*other Corvallis Liberal Art*,” Art Wilmot. It was back in the last century — 1990.

There was a question and answer time. A lady stood and asked me **“Why did you raise your voice when you said ‘Fundamentalist religion will kill us?’”**

Why did I raise my voice? I didn't remember raising my voice, but maybe so. I tried to tell whether she was disturbed by what I said about fundamentalism or the fact that I raised my voice in a Unitarian Church.

I don't think of myself as the raise-my-voice type.

What did I really say, I wondered? I actually found that old sermon the other day.

The sermon was called the “*UNI in Unitarianism*.” I was commending that Church for its growth and its importance that was much needed in our community and our time.

**“How necessary a liberal religious view is to the future of the world.
Religious fundamentalism is killing us.
In Iran...in the Middle-eastern countries...in Ireland...in S. Africa...
even in America. [This was in 1990, remember]
It is racist, sexist, militaristic and evil.”**

Yes, I actually did say **“religious fundamentalism is killing us!”** Good for me.

I've been thinking and writing about Amos for the past few weeks. He was speaking in Jerusalem 750 years before Jesus. I said that Amos should be read out loud in an angry voice. He did not mince words. He didn't try to be nice. He swore. The Unitarian lady probably would ask Amos why he raised his voice.

Palm Sunday says that Jesus also went into Jerusalem. He had issues with money-changers in the Temple, with the High Priest, with the governor. Did Jesus ever raise his voice? Was Jesus ever angry? We know for sure that what he said and did got him crucified.

I was thinking maybe my view of Amos was confused. Then I discovered these words from Marcus Borg:

**“I wish all Christians knew Amos ...Amos is a case study on the Bible and politics...
I have become more and more convinced that what we see and hear in Amos is central
to the Bible and Jesus.”** (p. 169, 170 “Convictions,” Marcus Borg)

Marcus connects the dots between the world of Amos and Jesus and our own. I don't need to do that. Connect your own dots.

I'm afraid I might raise my voice.

Art Morgan, Easter Week and Passover, 2017