

# **A CELEBRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**A Service Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary  
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
10<sup>th</sup> December, 1948**



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## **Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

One of the first tasks the United Nations set itself on its foundation in 1945 was the formulation of the principles upon which it would operate: a Universal Declaration of Human Rights - rights to be understood and guaranteed as

*universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.*

None of these precious rights was ever to take second place to any other, however important in itself, or to political expediency.

This must have been an enormous task, yet no greater than the scope of the resulting document. The Universal Declaration was formally adopted on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948. Sadly, six decades later, the quality of human life it undertook to make possible is still not a universal reality. Yet the Declaration offers humanity an abiding vision and a goal to strive for.

December 10<sup>th</sup> each year is Human Rights Day. December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 is the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, now affirmed by 171 signatory nations. All people of faith, following conscience over custom and convenience, have cause to celebrate this occasion, especially we Unitarians with our early history of persecution in the cause of free religion and our long heritage of espousing civil and religious liberty.

Those who originated the Universal Declaration intended it to be read and studied in schools throughout the world, so that people everywhere would grow up "owning" it as their birthright. This has not yet happened. Indeed, Amnesty International has called the Declaration "the world's best kept secret". This anniversary offers an opportunity to begin letting the secret out - by learning what the Rights are, exploring their implications and acknowledging the responsibilities we all have to keep them alive.

I prepared this service in 1998 for our then Department of Social Responsibility to help Unitarians mark the fiftieth anniversary. It is now re-edited for distribution by the Worship Panel. It is designed as an "anthology" service of music and readings without a sermon. You may prefer to select - especially from Section 3, "Dimensions of Freedom" - material to fit a chosen theme. In particular, remembering its original educative intention, you may like to have the Declaration read aloud during the service, perhaps by two or more voices.

*Joy Croft*

# THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

## Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind.

## Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

## Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

## Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

## Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

## Article 7

All are equal before the law  
and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

## Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted by the constitution or by law.

## Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

## Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.

## Article 11

Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty.

## Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon honour and reputation.

## Article 13

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement.

## Article 14

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

## Article 15

Everyone has the right to a nationality.

Article 16

Men and women have the right to marry and to found a family.

Article 17

Everyone has the right to own property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 20

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 21

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.

Article 23

Everyone has the right to work.  
Everyone has the right to form and join trade unions.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.

Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being.

Article 26

Everyone has the right to education.

Article 27

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration can be fully realised.

Article 29

Everyone has duties to the community.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth.

# SERVICE OF CELEBRATION

## OPENING WORDS

In a world free of greed and hatred  
I see the peace of which I dream  
Hands once filled with weapons  
Now held out in faith in trust.

In a world free of fear and prejudice  
I see the love of which I dream  
Minds once closed and blinded  
Now open, full of light and joy.

In a world free of hunger and pain  
I see the hope of which I dream  
Hearts once broken, hard and bitter  
Now are mended, whole and free.

Evelyn Ryder in *Voices Speaking Peace*, Unitarian Peace Fellowship

**HYMN** "To Worship Rightly" *Hymns for Living* 191, *Hymns of Faith and Freedom* 190  
"What Purpose Burns within Our Hearts" *HL* 194, *HFF* 216

## 1. INGATHERING

## WELCOME, NOTICES AND OFFERTORY

## **INGATHERING PRAYER**

As the quiet of this hour deepens around us, let us take a few moments to call to mind the sacred purposes which bring us here: purposes central to our being, yet so familiar that they may elude our notice. Let us reflect a while, and let us pray as we gather once more for worship, for prayer and for fellowship.

Our worship is to the Holy Spirit of Life, called by many names, sensed in many ways, sustaining us in love, making us and all things new in each moment of time. Let us open our hearts to the Spirit of Life, and as we do, feel its presence enfolding and infilling us ...

Our prayer is for light to see the way, truth to teach us how to walk in it, faith to give us courage to keep on through all discouragements. Let us open our minds and hearts in prayer, seeking what we most need at this time ...

Our fellowship is with one another, as fellow seekers after the good life, as fellow workers in the service of the Spirit. Let us be aware for a moment of those around us now and also of absent friends. Let us think also of those dear to us and those, known and unknown, who are in need. Let us hold them in our thoughts and wish them well ...

May our worship, our prayer and our fellowship be fully blessed in this hour. And may we go out stronger and wiser to work in a world which so profoundly needs strength and wisdom and love. Amen

Based on a prayer by Verona Conway  
in the Worship Subcommittee's *Reflections*

**SUNG RESPONSE** "Spirit of Life" *Let Us Sing* 11 (*sung seated, prayerfully*)  
"God Be in My Head" *HL* 307, *HFF* 473  
The Prayer of Jesus

## **VOLUNTARY**

### **FOR THE CHILDREN**

"Let My People Go" from *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*,  
James Weldon Johnson, Penguin story (needs abridging)

### **BY UNITARIANS**

Derek Smith's story of Margaret Haughery and Roger Campbell's "The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig" can be found at the end of this booklet.

**HYMN** "Black and White" *HL* 215  
"I Learned it in the Meadow Path" *HL* 184, *HFF* 322

## 2. AFFIRMATION

### THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

*The 30 articles could be read out in turn by several voices.*

### A THANKSGIVING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

*(To be said responsively)*

We are human beings, whatever our beliefs, whatever our gender or our politics, whatever our faith or race or nation. We are human beings -- this at least we have in common. Each in accordance with their own understanding, let us give thanks together.

We give thanks for all who, through the centuries, have striven for human freedom and human dignity.

Response WE GIVE THANKS.

We give thanks for those who named and pioneered the rights of conscience and self-determination;

WE GIVE THANKS.

For those who asserted the freedom of mind and intellect, who challenged ignorance and strove to bring education to everyone,

WE GIVE THANKS.

For those who championed universal healthcare, who opposed exploitation in the workplace,

WE GIVE THANKS.

For those who struggled, suffered and died to win us democracy, free speech and equality before the law,

WE GIVE THANKS.

For those who fought against slavery, tyranny and oppressions of every kind,

WE GIVE THANKS.

We give thanks for those who penned the testaments of liberty: their speeches and their sermons, their books and declarations, which set forth the equal rights of all human beings. And we give thanks for those who claimed those rights.

WE GIVE THANKS.

In particular, we give thanks today for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Composed in the aftermath of war, informed by the experience of monstrous inhumanity, its words encompass the hopes of humankind.

FOR THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, WE GIVE THANKS.

But we cannot leave it there. As we celebrate those rights, let us also accept our responsibilities. Our responsibility to enshrine them in our hearts and make them real in our lives, our responsibility to respect them in all our dealings with others, our responsibility as citizens to see that our own countries abide by them, our responsibility to establish them in the many places where they are ignored, violated or suppressed, our responsibility to live truly as members of the human family.

AS WE GIVE THANKS, SO WE ACCEPT THESE RESPONSIBILITIES.

Let it be so.

Composed by Cliff Reed for the Declaration's fiftieth anniversary

**HYMN** "For the Healing of the Nations" *HL 198, HFF 230*

### **3. DIMENSIONS OF FREEDOM**

#### **THE LIBERATED SPIRIT**

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;  
And I was filled with such delight  
As prisoned birds must find in freedom  
Winging wildly across the white  
Orchards and dark green fields; on- on-  
and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;  
And beauty came like the setting sun;  
My heart was shaken with tears and horror  
Drifted away ... O but Everyone  
Was a bird; and the song was wordless;  
the singing will never be done.

Siegfried Sassoon  
(*composed at the close of World War 1*)

## **FREEDOM AND JUSTICE DENIED**

### **In His Cage**

The lion stalked up and down his cage, turning his huge body with difficulty in the narrow confines. Now and then he paused in his endless routine to stare through the bars. His eyes, great orbs, were flaming coals. They burned into my eyes until I could no longer return the gaze. The long body resumed its pacing. The great muscles stood out, rippling along the tawny hide with every step, like wide waves upon a sea of gold. I could not leave the beast. My eyes fixed upon him as he paced up and down, up and down. Everything was caught and dragged into the dull, rhythmic thump of padded paws. With closed eyes I saw this lithe body roaming the jungle, the fierce eyes mellowed by peace, the long limbs free to stretch luxuriously. The thing before me was a ghost, a tawny skin encasing only a dying heart and an impassioned longing.

Marguerite Campbell Davis  
from *Been in the Storm So Long*, UNITARIAN Universalist Association

## **PRISONED BIRDS AND FREE**

### **Caged Bird**

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to climb the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see  
through his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped  
and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks  
of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft  
through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting  
on a dawn bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands  
on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts  
on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped  
and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou

**HYMN** "There is a place I call my own" *SL* 31  
"The World Stands Out" *HL* 141  
"Immortal Love, forever full, forever flowing free" *HFF* 84, *HL* 30

## **BORN FREE**

### ***from Mandela's Autobiography***

I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free: free in every way that I could know: free to run in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of the slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man nor God. It was only when I began to learn that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I discovered, as a young man, that my freedom had already been taken from me, that I began to hunger for it.

Then I slowly saw that, not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free. I saw that it was not only my freedom that was curtailed but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did. That is when I joined the African National Congress, and that is when the hunger for my own freedom became the greater hunger for the freedom of my people. The chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them. The chains on all of my people were the chains on me.

It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew, as well as I knew anything, that the oppressor must be liberated as surely as the oppressed. When I walked out of prison, that was my mission: to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both.

Nelson Mandela  
*from Long Walk to Freedom*

**MUSIC** African Freedom Song (*sung or played*)  
"Inkanyezi Nezazi" Ladysmith Black Mambazo *or*  
Spirituals from Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*

**HYMN** "How Can I Keep from Singing?" *HL* 133  
"The Moment to Decide" *HL* 168, *HFF* 218

## **WHEN A DEED IS DONE FOR FREEDOM**

### ***from "The Captive Conscience"* A Sermon for Prisoner of Conscience Year, 1977**

Prisoners of conscience - those whose convictions about anything under the sun have set them on collision course with Authority-are not necessarily right. For one thing, the human race will always number a statutory proportion of nonconformists who, mistaking masochism for martyrdom, stalk the earth seeking crosses on which to impale themselves. For another, individual conscience is a dangerously vulnerable guide to truth. Yet, whilst all prisoners of conscience are not right, all are justified. It is doubtful whether one ought to go to the stake for beliefs which could prove mistaken. It is beyond doubt that one is justified in going to the stake *for the right to hold* those beliefs. Wrong-headed ideas may not add to this world's store of wisdom, but the willingness of those who cherish them to pay any price for the privilege does in some strange way dignify [humanity] and also keeps the levers of social change lubricated with the oil of personal sacrifice.

Every prisoner of conscience's story is a parable whose moral is that all human power-systems are to a greater or lesser extent oppressive. This is not to cast a slur on power itself, which the Bible affirms to be of God who, possibly in a fit of absentmindedness, gave [humanity] dominion over every earthly manifestation of it. Lord Acton's famous and usually misquoted dictum about power tending to corrupt has always seemed to me to be exactly wrong. Power does not corrupt [us]; it is [we] who corrupt power, and as long as [we] do so through egotism and self-assertion, [people] will suffer.

It is not only the naked tyranny of the Police State which spawns prisoners of conscience, so too does the bumbling incompetence of the liberal democracy. Both the goose-step of totalitarianism and the stately gavotte of due bureaucratic process trample victims underfoot. Indeed, it is arguable that the Pending File is a more effective if less dramatic instrument of injustice than the executioner's axe. These days it is fashionable to describe, for instance, the Government's economic policies, as 'rough' justice. What other kind of justice is there? No laws can be tailored to fit all the permutations of the human condition. Justice is always a matter of more-or-less. And it is through the gap between 'more' and 'less' that some victims slip into the whirling machinery of the State and get hurt.

Colin Morris  
Amnesty International, 1977

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***from* THE WRITINGS OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

The true source of right is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed, we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them, the further will they fly.

*Young India, 1925*

Rights accrue automatically to [those] who duly perform [their] duties. In fact, the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights. All the rest is garb under one guise or another and contains in it the seeds of violence.

*Harijan, 1939*

All rights to be deserved and preserved come from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this very fundamental statement perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of man and woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed. Every other right can be shown to be a usurpation hardly worth fighting for.

*Harijan, 1947*

**HYMN** "True Freedom" *HL 167, HFF 419*

# **FREEDOM TO DREAM**

**by Martin Luther King Jr.**

I say to you, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hill-tops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of that old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

Excerpt from King's speech at the March on Washington, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1963

**HYMN** "O Freedom!" Singing the Living Tradition 155  
"Liberation" HL 218,  
"O help the prophet to be bold" HL 138, HFF 317

## **THE UNITARIAN HERITAGE OF FREEDOM**

### **The Free Mind**

I call that mind free which masters the senses, and which recognises its own reality and greatness.

*Which passes life not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering and thirsting and seeking after righteousness.*

I call that mind free which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith;

*Which opens itself to light whence-soever it may come; which receives new truth as an angel from heaven.*

I call that mind free which is not passively formed by outward circumstance, and is not the creature of accidental impulse;

*Which discovers everywhere the radiant signatures of the Infinite Spirit, and in them finds helps to its own spiritual enlargement.*

I call that mind free which protects itself against the usurpations of society, and which does not cower to human opinion;

*Which refuses to be the slave or tool of the many or of the few, and guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.*

I call that mind free which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically copy the past or live on its old virtues;

*But which listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.*

I call that mind free which sets no bonds to its love, which, wherever they are seen, delights in virtue and sympathises with suffering;

*Which recognises in all human beings the image of God and the rights of God's children, and offers itself up a willing sacrifice to the cause of humankind.*

I call that mind free which has cast off all fear but that of wrongdoing, and which no menace or peril can enthrall;

*Which is calm in the midst of tumults and possesses itself though all else be lost.*

William Ellery Channing (arranged for responsive reading),  
*Hymns for the Celebration of Life* no. 420, UUA, 1964

**HYMN** "Honourable Saints" HL 78  
"Life of Ages, richly poured" HL 120, HFF 80

## 4. CONCLUSION

### MEDITATION

This precious life that is in you and me is the same in all. Rich and poor, wise and simple, strong and feeble, we are joined together by a mystic oneness whose source we may never know but whose reality we can never doubt.

When one suffers, we all suffer.

When one hungers for bread, we all hunger.

When one tramps the street in search of work, we all tramp the streets.

When one defrauds a fellow, we are all implicated.

When one destroys a human life, we all share the guilt.

When one attains a heart's desire, we are all partners of the joy.

This mystic identity of the one with the many was divined by Hosea, Buddha, Jesus, and St. Francis, and has been glimpsed by nearly all the great seers and prophets of humankind. We are our brother's keeper, because that brother or sister is but our larger self.

Then let a sense of our vital unity with all people everywhere possess our minds and hearts. Behold, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, because thy neighbour is thyself.

*Let us reflect a moment on our world-wide human kinship: on the blessed freedom we share with one another and the responsibility we share for one another* SILENCE

Behold, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, because thy neighbour is thyself. Amen

Adapted from David Rhys Williams  
in *We Speak of Life*, UUA, 1955

**HYMN** "One World This" HL 229, HFF 422  
"Sunrise to Freedom" HL 144, HFF 225

### BENEDICTION

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action –

Into that heaven of freedom, dear God, let our world awake. Amen

Rabindranath Tagore (adapted)  
*Hymns for the Celebration of Life* no. 391, UUA, 1964

# STORIES FOR CHILDREN BY UNITARIANS

## Margaret Haughery

Margaret Haughery lived in New Orleans in America many years ago. She grew up poor, and never learnt to read or write. She found happiness when she married a good man, and they had a lovely baby. Unfortunately, life dealt Margaret a cruel blow - her husband and their baby died. She was left on her own, and she was so poor that she had to go out to work to earn a living.

She obtained a job in a laundry where she ironed clothes. Opposite where she worked there was a window through which she could see the children of an orphanage playing and laughing and shouting. She enjoyed watching the children playing in the grounds of the orphanage. Each week, when she received her wages, she called in at the orphanage and gave a little money to help to keep it going.

She was very careful with her money, and even managed to save some every week. In time she had enough money to buy two cows, a cart, and one or two milk churns, so she gave up her job in the laundry and went round the streets selling milk. When she delivered milk to the hotels and big houses she begged food for the children in the orphanage. Each day she took the children free milk. The milk-round prospered, and she bought more cows and extended the area in which she delivered milk. She did so well that she sold the milk-round and bought herself a small bakery. Now she began delivering bread and cakes, and always there were some for the children in the orphanage. The business prospered, and she built a larger and more modern bakery.

Soon everyone in New Orleans knew Margaret Haughery, the bread woman who supported the orphanage. When she died it was no surprise to learn that she had left all her money to the orphanage, on the understanding that they helped all boys and girls who had no parents whether the children were black or white, American or of some other nationality. It is perhaps then, of no surprise to learn that the people of New Orleans put up a statue to remind them of Margaret Haughery. There she still sits in a quiet square of New Orleans, dressed in a simple gingham dress, with a shawl over her shoulders, big heavy boots on her feet, and with an arm around a child. It was the first statue to a woman ever put up in America.

Derek Smith  
from *50 Tales to Ponder*

## **The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig**

### **A Tale of Liberation**

Once upon a time, there were three Little Wolves. They grew bigger every day. One day, they felt they were big enough to go out and live on their own. So they said their fond farewells to their mother and went out to seek a nice place to live.

After a while, they came upon a beautiful valley. It had forests, glades, and a sparkling river which ran through it. This would be the perfect place for young wolves to live.

Just as they were unpacking their things, the Big Bad Pig came riding over the hill towards the Three Little Wolves. He was very angry. "Get out of my valley! I'll not have wolves in my valley," he bellowed.

"Is this your valley then?" said the first Little Wolf. "Did you get the mountain in a mountain shop? And where can you buy rivers?" "These are my lands," said the Big Bad Pig. "I got them from my father."

"And where did your father get them from?" "He got them from his father before him, who got them from his father before him, who got them from his father before him, who got them from the King-over-the-Hill. He fought for them." "All right," said the first Little Wolf, who was a bad little wolf and never did what he was told. "If you get off your horse, I'll fight you for them."

Well, the Big Bad Pig did not get off his horse, but instead rode straight at the three Little Wolves. "Now, get out of my valley!" he shouted.

"Er ... excuse me," said the second Little Wolf, who was a good little wolf and always did what he was told. "Is there any way we can possibly stay in your nice valley?" "Hmm ... " said the Big Bad Pig more softly. "If you're really good, and work really hard, and dig me up a lot of gold in my gold mine, which is just outside the valley – the perhaps I just might one day let you in."

The second Little Wolf really did try. He worked hard. But the mine was cold and dark and dirty – no place for a wolf at all, who really belongs running free in the grasses. And whatever he did, it was never enough to please the Big Bad Pig, who constantly grumbled and moaned at him for all his efforts. It was not long before the second Little Wolf gave up in despair.

The third Little Wolf, who was a wise little wolf and always did what she wanted, had looked on patiently while all this was going on. She took a deep breath. She turned to face the Big Bad Pig, who sat proudly astride his horse, resplendent in his long shiny boots. "I think," said the third Little Wolf slowly, "that you are only a pig. Just a pig, like any other pig. And that only you believe that you own the valley."

Was it possible that the Big Bad Pig was starting to look a little thinner, a little less solid?

"If nobody else believes that you own the valley, then it is as if we can come and go as we please. I also do not believe in the King-over-the-Hill. And if nobody believes that he is a king, then he is just another person."

The Big Bad Pig's boots had by now withered and dropped off. His horse looked as though it wanted to sidle from under him and nose about in that interesting patch of yellow grass on the other side of the glade.

"And as for gold – well, I believe it is just another shiny metal like brass, or steel, and has no special value. And if everybody believed that, then I think we'd all get along a whole lot easier."

By now, the pig was no longer big or bad, but was just another forest animal, rooting about for herbs. The three Little Wolves came to live in the beautiful valley and, to this day, are running about happily ever after.

Roger Campbell,  
written for the children at the Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich