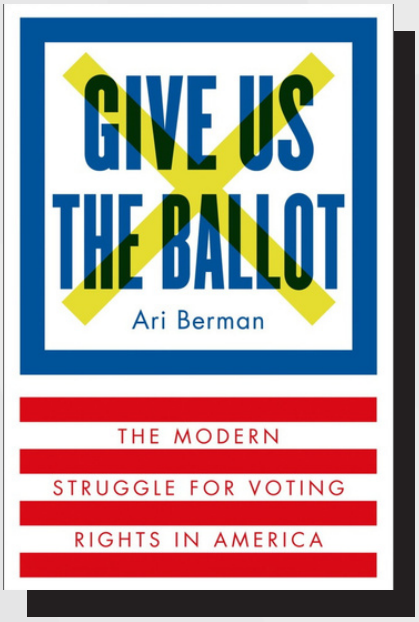
PAGES FOR PROGRESS

Study Guide:

"Give us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America"

Ari Berman



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Preface

The sixth cohort of Pages for Progress gathered on Zoom in the fall of 2026, as the U.S. midterm elections approached. In this moment, questions about voting rights, election laws, and civic participation take on renewed significance. Elections are not only about choosing our representatives; they are also about ensuring that everyone has a meaningful opportunity to participate in shaping our communities and our shared future. As people of faith, we are called to consider how our commitments to justice, dignity, and the common good shape the ways we engage in civic life.

This study guide grew out of the thoughtful conversations, reflection, and engagement of the sixth Pages for Progress cohort. It invites participants to explore the connections between faith, voting rights, and civic participation, considering how our theological commitments can inform our understanding of democracy and our responsibility to one another.

The guide is designed for flexible use by individuals or small groups in local churches, districts, and annual conferences as they explore the connections between faith, voting rights, and civic participation. We hope it will encourage deeper reflection, meaningful dialogue, and faithful action toward a more just and inclusive democracy.

Our heartfelt thanks to the sixth Pages for Progress cohort for the wisdom, care, and commitment they brought to our meetings.

If you have any feedback or questions about this study guide, please email seminars@umcjustice.org. We'd love to hear from you!

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Structure

This study is organized into three approximately 90-minute sessions: Session One covers the preface through Chapter 3; Session Two covers Chapters 4–6; and Session Three covers Chapters 7–10. Each session includes a welcome, communication guidelines, theological grounding, book discussion questions, and a closing.

Session Overview

WELCOME (10 minutes)

Begin with prayer.

This is also an opportunity to get to know the group and establish communication guidelines. We recommend the Communication Guidelines created by The Kaleidoscope Institute.

Respectful Communication Guidelines

(Source: The Kleidoscope Institute's "Respectful Communication Guidelines")

R take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others

E use EMPATHETIC listening

S be SENSITIVE to differences in communication/ cultural styles

P PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak

E EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

C keep CONFIDENTIALITY

T TOLERATE ambiguity because we are not here to debate. There are no "winners" or "losers"

S STEP UP/STEP BACK If you notice that you are speaking a lot, step back to create space for others to speak. If you notice that you have much to share but not, take courage and speak up so that others can learn from you. (*Not from Kaleidoscope Institute, but from previous study groups.)

THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING (30 minutes)

Each theological grounding session aligns with that week's assigned chapters. This alignment has two purposes: to help participants integrate faith with the realities of the world rather than separating the two, and to encourage them to put faith into practice through meaningful action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (45 minutes)

Each question is designed to deepen engagement with the assigned readings, exploring the chapter's themes and the social, historical, and political analysis through a faith lens. It is recommended to share the questions in advance, allowing participants time to reflect and develop their responses.

For larger gatherings, divide participants into small groups or breakout rooms for the book discussion.

CLOSING (10 minutes)

Close each session by inviting participants to share insights from their small-group discussions with the full group, if small groups were used. Alternatively, provide time for individual reflection through journaling.

End each session with a reminder of the assigned chapters for the following gathering and a benediction.

The cohort ended each session with the benediction given by Bishop Woodie White at the 1996 General Conference in Denver, Colorado. Feel free to close with the benediction by Bishop Woodie White or with another prayer.

Benediction

And now,
May the Lord torment you.

May the Lord keep before you the faces of the hungry, the lonely, the rejected and the despised.

May the Lord afflict you with pain for the hurt, the wounded, the oppressed, the abused, the victims of violence.

May God grace you with agony, a burning thirst for justice and righteousness.

May the Lord give you courage and strength and compassion to make ours a better world, to make your community a better community, to make your church a better church.

And may you do your best to make it so, and after you have done your best, may the Lord grant you peace. Amen.

Sessions

Session One: Preface to Chapter 3

WELCOME (10 minutes)

Say: Welcome to the first session of Pages for Progress as we read and study, “Give us the Ballot” by Ari Berman. Since this is our first gathering, let’s go around and get to know each other. Please share your name and why you decided to join this study.

Pause for sharing.

Opening Prayer: God of justice and mercy, speak to us through your prophet Amos. Open our eyes to what we have overlooked, soften our hearts where they have grown hard, and make us doers of your word and not hearers only. Amen.

Say: Since this is our first meeting. We will spend a few minutes on communication guidelines to create a safe space for everyone to share and discuss.

Create communication guidelines for the group or introduce Kaleidoscope Institute’s Respectful Communication Guidelines.

THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING (30 minutes)

Say: Today, we reflect on Amos 5:10-15 and 21-24. Through the prophet Amos, God challenges a community that

continues to worship while tolerating injustice. As we listen, notice the connection between how the people worship God and how they treat their neighbors. Pay attention to what God condemns and what God calls the people to do.

Read Amos 5:10-15 and 21-24.

Say: Amos delivers a difficult message. The people continue to gather for worship, offer sacrifices, and sing songs of praise, yet the poor are exploited, justice is denied, and those who speak the truth face opposition. God makes clear that religious observance cannot substitute for justice. The passage ends with a powerful image: “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” This image invites us to understand justice not as an occasional response to a crisis, but as a continual practice that sustains community life. Before exploring this message further, let us consider the world in which Amos first spoke.

Say: Amos was a shepherd and fig grower from Tekoah in Judah, the southern kingdom. Around 760 BCE, during the reign of King Jeroboam II, God called him to prophesy in the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos came from outside Israel’s political and religious establishment. He was not part of the system he challenged, and he had no obvious stake in protecting its powerful leaders.

Israel was experiencing economic growth, political stability, and expanding trade. However, prosperity was unevenly distributed. Wealthy landowners accumulated riches while many ordinary people faced debt, poverty, and exploitation. Corruption in the courts allowed powerful people to manipulate legal decisions and deny the poor a fair hearing.

The city gate was an important civic space in this society. Called sha’ar in Hebrew, it was where elders and officials heard disputes, conducted business, and made decisions affecting the community. It was one of the places where ordinary people could seek justice and defend their rights.

When Amos calls the people to establish justice in the gate, he is challenging them to make their public institutions places where truth is heard and the vulnerable are protected.

Three Hebrew expressions help us understand his message:

- Justice - (mishpat מִשְׁפָּט): Fair treatment, legal protection, and action to correct injustice.
- Righteousness - (tzedakah צְדָקָה): Right relationship, covenant faithfulness, and recognition of the sacred worth of our neighbors.
- Ever-flowing stream - (nachal eitan נַחַל אֵיתָן): A stream that continues to flow, even during the dry season.

Say: Together these images remind us that God desires a community where justice is practiced consistently, where relationships reflect God's righteousness, and where vulnerable people are not abandoned.

John Wesley wrote in Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount that "the gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness." For Wesley, faith was never meant to be confined to personal devotion. Prayer, worship, and spiritual growth should shape how we treat our neighbors and respond to the conditions in which they live.

This understanding connects with Book of Resolutions #4103, "Voting Rights Protections in the United States," which supports expanding civic participation and protecting the right to vote in order to sustain a robust and inclusive democracy. For United Methodists, protecting people's ability to participate in civic life can be one expression of loving our neighbors and seeking the common good. With this context in mind, let us reflect on what Amos's message asks of us today.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why might a prophet from outside the system be the one to name what insiders could not or would not see?
    - Optional Follow-Up: What can make it difficult for people who benefit from a system to recognize the ways that system harms others?
2. How does Amos's call to "establish justice in the gate" challenge us as United Methodists to ensure that today's civic institutions, like the ballot box, protect the voices and rights of the vulnerable rather than push them aside?
    - Optional follow-up: What responsibilities do churches and people of faith have when civic systems prevent some people from participating fully or having their voices heard?
3. Amos asks for justice that flows all year, not just in a crisis. What helps you stay committed to a cause when the initial enthusiasm fades, and how can our group support one another in that?
    - Optional follow-up: What practices, relationships, or shared commitments help us continue the work when progress feels slow or discouraging?

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS {45 minutes)

If you have a large group, break into smaller discussion groups.

Prologue

1. Berman argues that voting rights in America have never moved in a straight line. Before reading, how would you have described the history of voting rights since 1965?

2. "The United States is the only advanced democracy that has ever enfranchised, disenfranchised, and then reenfranchised an entire segment of the population." Voting rights have been repeatedly expanded and then rolled back throughout U.S. history, what does that suggest about whether democratic progress is permanent or must be continually defended?

3. "For a country that is famous for exporting democracy across the globe and has branded itself as the shining city on the hill, the United States has a shameful history when it comes to embracing one of its most basic rights at home." Berman suggests that the United States promotes itself as a global champion of democracy while having a “shameful history” of protecting the right to vote at home. How do you reconcile the gap between America’s democratic ideals and its actual record on voting rights?

Chapter 1

1. Lyndon Johnson is shown as a complicated figure, a Southern politician who becomes the VRA's champion. What motivated him, according to Berman? What does it suggest about how people change?

2. How does Berman portray the events in Selma, including Bloody Sunday? What role did local organizers and ordinary citizens play versus national leaders like Dr. King?

3. John Lewis credited Rev. James Lawson, a United Methodist elder, with shaping his understanding of nonviolence and his role in the movement. Yet during those same years, the Methodist Church was divided. Some Methodists marched, while many others remained silent. As United Methodists today, what can we learn from both groups to discern where our congregations are being called to speak, take action, and stand for justice?

Chapter 2

1. What changed in the South once the Act was enforced? Which results surprised you, and which were predictable?

2. Berman shows that officials adapted quickly to find new ways to limit the Black vote's impact. What does this

suggest about the difference between the right to vote and meaningful political power?

3. Scripture often describes justice as something that must be sustained, not just announced. Amos 5:24 speaks of justice rolling down "like waters." What does it mean for justice to keep flowing after a landmark victory, and what happens when people stop tending it?

Chapter 3

1. How does this chapter challenge us to consider the church's responsibility when political strategies exploit racial fears? How does this help us to better understand and live out the Wesleyan theme of social holiness?

2. How can political appeals to "law and order" or "states' rights" obscure questions of racial exclusion? Drawing on the chapter, how might we evaluate whose rights and security these messages protect?

3. How does Berman's account of the Southern Strategy help us understand resistance to expanding Black political participation? Which example from the chapter stood out to you, and why?

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Say: As we conclude our gathering today, here is a reflection/journal prompt for you to consider before our next gathering.

If divided into smaller groups, bring groups back to the main group.

Reflection/ Journal prompt: What did I inherit that someone else paid for?

Close the meeting with the Benediction by Bishop Woodie White (located in "Structure") or a prayer of your choosing.

Session Two: Chapters 4 - 6

WELCOME (10 minutes)

Say: Welcome to our second session! Before we begin, would anyone like to share a reflection on last week's journal prompt?

Pause for sharing.

Opening Prayer: God of liberation and compassion, open our hearts as we listen to the story of the Israelites in Egypt. Help us recognize the ways fear can distort our understanding of our neighbors and how forgetting the contributions of others can lead to exclusion and oppression. Give us courage to remember stories that have been overlooked, listen to voices that have been silenced, and challenge the systems that prevent people from shaping their own futures. Guide us toward a faith that makes freedom, justice, and belonging tangible for all. Amen.

Say: Let's remind ourselves of our communication guidelines from last week.

Share the communication guidelines created during the first session or the Respectful Communication Guidelines from the Kaleidoscope Institute.)

THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING (30 minutes)

Say: Our scripture today is Exodus 1:8-14. This passage introduces a new Pharaoh who no longer remembers Joseph and the relationship between Joseph's family and Egypt. Joseph's people had once been welcomed in Egypt. But under a new king, their growing population becomes a source of fear. Pharaoh portrays the Israelites as a threat to national security and uses that fear to justify forced labor and oppression. Notice the progression in this passage. First, Joseph is forgotten. Then, the Israelites are portrayed as dangerous. Finally, their labor is exploited to strengthen

the very empire that fears them. As we listen, consider how forgetting, fear, and the desire to preserve power can change how a community treats its neighbors.

Read Exodus 1:8-14

Say: The passage describes a painful contradiction: Egypt benefits from the labor of the Israelites while denying them freedom and control over their lives. Today, we will reflect on what this passage teaches us about memory, power, participation, and our responsibility as people of faith.

Let us look more closely at three movements in this passage.

First, oppression begins with forgetting. Exodus tells us that a new king arose who did not know Joseph. Joseph had played a significant role in helping Egypt survive a devastating famine. Yet that history no longer shapes Pharaoh's treatment of Joseph's people. This is more than a failure to remember a historical figure. The forgetting changes how the Israelites are understood. A community that had once been a blessing is now treated as a problem.

Theologian Willie James Jennings challenges Christians to examine how communities imagine who belongs and who is considered an outsider. His work invites us to notice how boundaries can obscure our shared life and make exclusion appear natural. When we forget the contributions and experiences of certain people, we can begin to tell a story in which they appear less deserving of belonging or participation.

Second, fear becomes a justification for oppression. Pharaoh describes the Israelites' growth as a threat. He imagines a future in which they might join Egypt's enemies and turn against the kingdom. Before imposing forced labor, Pharaoh creates a story that makes oppression seem necessary for collective security.

The problem is not simply that Pharaoh is afraid. It is that he uses fear to justify controlling another community. This invites us to ask whose security is being protected, whose power is being preserved, and whose participation is being restricted.

Third, prosperity can depend on exploitation. The Israelites are forced to build Pharaoh's supply cities. Egypt benefits from their labor, yet they have little control over the conditions of their lives. Theologian Walter Brueggemann's work on Exodus helps us consider the relationship between concentrated power, exploitation, and God's vision of a community shaped by freedom. Theologian James Cone also reminds us that Christian theology must take seriously the experiences and liberation struggles of oppressed people. We cannot speak faithfully about God's justice while treating the suffering of others as an acceptable price for social stability.

For the church, this means not only whether a community is prosperous, but also who bears the burden, who receives the benefits, and who has voice in making decisions.

Within our Wesleyan tradition, this is a matter of social holiness. Our love of neighbor must extend beyond personal kindness to include confronting exploitation, resisting exclusion, and helping create conditions in which people can participate fully in community life. With this context in mind, let us turn to three reflection questions.

Reflection Questions

1. Pharaoh's forgetting of Joseph prepares the way for oppression. Whose struggles and contributions are missing from our shared history, and how does recovering those stories help us understand who has a voice in shaping our communities?

- Optional follow-up: What changes when we listen to the experiences of people whose contributions have been overlooked or whose stories have been left out of our histories?

2. Pharaoh portrays the Israelites' growing population as a threat. When have efforts to gain greater participation or influence been met with fear, and how can faith help us discern whose power is being protected and whose voice is being restricted?
   - Optional follow-up: How can we distinguish between a genuine concern for the common good and the use of fear to preserve existing power?

3. The Israelites' labor sustains Egypt, yet they have little control over the conditions of their lives. What does meaningful participation in community decisions require, and how might we help remove barriers that prevent our neighbors from shaping their own futures?
   - Optional follow-up: What is the difference between making decisions for people and creating opportunities for people to shape decisions themselves.

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (45 minutes)

If you have a large group, break into smaller discussion groups.

Chapter 4

1. John Lewis, the night that Carter was elected said, "Those tears weren't about me, they were about the fact that the hands that picked cotton had now picked a president." What does it symbolize, and how does Berman use it to frame the chapter?

2. In Chapter 4, Ari Berman describes how the 1975 extension of the Voting Rights Act expanded protections to language minorities, requiring bilingual ballots in places like Texas and the Southwest for Mexican Americans. What tensions or opportunities arose when

the movement for voting rights expanded to include more communities? How can we honor the historic struggle for Black voting rights while acknowledging the broader movement for equal access to the ballot for all? What does it reveal about the challenges of building a movement that represents the needs and experiences of different marginalized communities?

Chapter 5

1. In Chapter 5, Berman describes how opponents of the Voting Rights Act developed new strategies to weaken its protections. What do these strategies reveal about the ways people in power respond to efforts to expand voting rights, and how can we understand the relationship between political power and access to the ballot?

2. In Mobile v. Bolden (1980), the Supreme Court held that voting rights plaintiffs had to prove that officials intended to discriminate, even when an at-large system had consistently kept Black candidates from winning office. How do the arguments in this chapter echo in current voting rights debates and court rulings?

3. Isaiah 10:1-2 condemns those who write unjust laws and deprive the poor of their rights. This book describes rules and legal arguments that can be 'technically' defensible and still have unjust effects. How should people of faith weigh the letter of the law against its fruits?

Chapter 6

1. Berman recounts the 1983 trip to Mississippi by Rev. Jesse Jackson and Justice Department official Brad Reynolds, only eighteen years after the Voting Rights Act became law. How does that short span of time shape your understanding of the fragility of voting rights protections and enforcement?

2. Chapter 6 examines in part how the Reagan administration's strategy of reshaping the federal courts influenced civil rights protections for decades. How does our faith call us to evaluate the lasting impact of judicial appointments, especially on communities whose rights and dignity depend on those protections?

3. Berman highlights the achievements of Julius Chambers, the noted civil rights leader from North Carolina, alongside the obstacles and acts of violence he endured. At a time of significant rollbacks in civil rights, how do you understand your role as well as the role of the faith community in restoring and protecting these hard-won rights?

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Say: As we conclude our second gathering. Here is another reflection/journal prompt for you to consider for our next gathering.

Bring everyone back to the large group.

Reflection/Journal Prompt: Where have I grown tired of caring about something that matters?

Close the meeting with the Benediction by Bishop Woodie White (located in "Structure") or a prayer of your choosing.

Session Three: Chapter 7 to Chapter 10

WELCOME (10 minutes)

Say: Welcome to the final session of our cohort. Would anyone like to share a reflection on last week's journal prompt?

Pause for sharing.

Say: Let's remind ourselves of our communication guidelines from last week.

Share the communication guidelines created during the first session or the Respectful Communication Guidelines from the Kaleidoscope Institute.)

Opening Prayer: Sovereign God, you place us in particular times, nations, and communities not as passive observers, but as agents of your love. For the times that we stayed silent, forgive us for our comfortable silence. Give us the courage to risk our comfort, use our civic influence, and speak out. In the name of the One who broke down every dividing wall. Amen.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (30 minutes)

Say: Today we are going to reflect on two passages of Scripture: Esther 4:12–16 and 1 Corinthians 12:21–26. Before we read the first passage, here is some background on the story. Esther is a Jewish woman living in exile in the Persian Empire. She has become queen, but she has kept her Jewish identity hidden. She was raised by her cousin Mordecai. A powerful official named Haman persuaded the king to sign a decree authorizing the destruction of all the Jews in the empire—a law issued through proper channels that targets an entire group of people. Mordecai sends word to Esther, urging her to use her access to the king to plead for her people. Esther's first response is that it is not that

simple: no one may approach the king uninvited, and she has not been summoned for thirty days. Our passage for today begins with Mordecai's reply.

Read: Esther 4:12-16

Discussion Questions:

1. Mordecai says, "Don't think to yourself that you will escape in the king's house." What is he challenging in Esther? Where do we hear a version of that temptation today or in our past, to believe that we are safe because we are comfortable?

2. Esther does not act alone. She asks the community to fast with her for three days before she goes. What does it mean that her courage is bound up with the prayer and solidarity of others?

Say: Esther's story is not primarily about a queen being brave. It is about a person who has access to a decision-making table, remembering that her access is connected to the survival of people who do not have it. Her position is not just a privilege, but a responsibility.

Say: Our second passage from 1 Corinthians is a letter Paul writes to a church in Corinth that is divided. There are disputes over status, wealth, spiritual gifts, and who counts as important. Some members believe they matter more than others. Paul answers them with an image: the church is a body. A body is not one part. It has many members, each with a different function and none of them can say to the others, "I do not need you."

Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

Discussion Questions:

1. "The eye can't tell the hand, 'I have no need for you.'" Where do you see a version of that, groups of people treated as if their participation is optional or inconvenient?

2. Paul writes, "When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." What would it mean for a community to actually live this way when some of its members are blocked from participating in public life?

Say: Esther asks the question, what do I do with the access I have?' and Paul asks 'What do we owe the members who have been pushed to the margins of the body? Both passages reject the idea that my well-being can be separated from yours. Esther cannot hide in the palace. The eye cannot tell the hand they are unnecessary. We are bound together. Lilla Watson, an Indigenous Australian activist said, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Our humanity unites us in our struggles and in our achievements. We are connected.

Say: A few more connections between our two passages as it relates to the work of protecting the vote.

Access is a form of responsibility. Esther had access to the king, and Mordecai reminded her that this was connected to the fate of others. Many of us have access to the ballot with relative ease: we know where our polling place is, we can take time off, we have the right documents. For us, voting is not only a right. It is a way of using access on behalf of neighbors who may not have the same ease.

Silence is a choice with consequences. Mordecai tells Esther that if she stays silent, others will suffer and she will not be spared. Not voting, not speaking up when others are excluded, is not neutral. It shapes outcomes.

The body suffers when any member is shut out. Paul says all the members suffer when one suffers. When a group of citizens is systematically made to wait longer, travel farther,

or jump through more hoops to participate, the body is wounded, even if some of its members don't feel the pain.

The “parts of the body that seem to be weaker” are necessary. Paul says those who seem weaker are essential and deserve special honor. In civic life, this invites us to ask not only, "Does the system work for most people?" but "Does it work for the elderly voter without a car, the young first-time voter, the person with a disability, the shift worker, the rural voter hours from a polling place, the person returning from incarceration?"

Courage is communal. Esther did not go alone. She asked her people to fast and pray with her. Protecting the vote is not heroic individual action. It is shared work: poll workers, ride volunteers, registration drives, people who show up to testify, people who check on their neighbors.

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (45 minutes)

If you have a large group, break into smaller discussion groups.

Chapter 7

1. In Chapter 7, Berman examines how demographic and political changes in the South and across the country reshaped support for and opposition to the VRA. How did these changes influence who supported or resisted the VRA, and what do they reveal about the relationship between shifting political power, changing demographics, and the ongoing struggle over voting rights?

2. Berman describes the political and legal developments that weakened support for federal voting rights protections. How do the strategies used by opponents of the VRA during this period connect to the Supreme Court’s decisions in Mobile v. Bolden (1980), Shelby County v. Holder (2013), and the more recent Louisiana v. Callais (2026)? What do these cases suggest about how the struggle over voting rights has evolved over time, and how might decisions made by the Supreme

Court continue to shape whose voices are represented in American democracy? What do these cases reveal about how challenges to voting rights have evolved from questioning how discrimination must be proven to limit federal oversight and protection against racial vote dilution?

3. Berman discusses Shaw v. Reno and the legal challenges that followed efforts to expand minority representation through redistricting. How does this pattern compare to the debates over gerrymandering and congressional redistricting today?

Chapter 8

1. Berman describes two waves of backlash against the VRA (Chapter 5: Counterrevolution and Chapter 8: Counterrevolution II.) Looking at the two "Counterrevolution" chapters, what struck you as different and similar of how the opponents tried to weaken the VRA?

2. Berman describes how in the weeks of recounts of the 2000 presidential election, the political conversation focused more on preventing fraud than on fixing voter disenfranchisement. When thousands of eligible voters lose their vote through errors and bad systems, why does fraud so often become the story that drives reform?

Chapter 9

1. Berman describes how Barack Obama's election became an argument that voting protections were no longer necessary. When might celebrating progress keep us from seeing injustice that remains, and how can our faith communities practice gratitude while remaining accountable to neighbors whose experiences differ from our own?

2. The chapter, through highlighting the influence of ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), illustrates how coordinated efforts can shape public policy over many years. What might this teach the Church about moving from occasional expressions of concern to sustained, collective work for justice as a practice of social holiness?

3. In seeking to emphasize the great impact of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, Berman shares that between 2011 and 2012, there were more challenges to constitutionality of the provision than in the previous four decades combined. What does this coordinated effort to dismantle voting protections reveal about the persistence of resistance to racial justice, and how might the Wesleyan call to social holiness challenge faith communities to be equally persistent in protecting our neighbors' rights?

Chapter 10

1. In "After Shelby," Berman describes the spirit, motivations, and messaging of North Carolina's Moral Mondays movement more than a decade ago. How important is moral language in civic engagement, civic empowerment, and civic education? How do we balance faithfulness and effectiveness?

2. Consider the history of poll taxes in many, if not all, Southern states before the Voting Rights Act. In what ways can voter-identification requirements be considered a modern version of that former practice? How can your faith community help voters overcome these barriers?

3. When you consider the ebb and flow, or struggle, of maintaining, expanding, and securing the right to vote by all people (particularly marginalized communities), where do you see yourself and your church in creating an infrastructure of stability and long-term protections for voters?

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Say: Today is our last meeting. The purpose of *Pages for Progress* is to put into action what we learned from our reading. Consider looking at the "Sacred Voting Activation: Resources for the 2026 U.S. Midterm Elections" website for resources on how you can engage in elections with faith and purpose.

Close the meeting with the Benediction by Bishop Woodie White (located in "Structure") or a prayer of your choosing.

If divided into smaller groups, bring groups back to the main group.

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