



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Is protecting voting rights a sacred value?

Adam Taylor

#### In This Episode...

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor is president of the Christian social justice organization Sojourners and the author of “A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for the Beloved Community.” He and Eboo discuss how Sojourners’ voting rights work and Interfaith America’s Vote is Sacred campaign are inspiring faith communities to protect participatory democracy. “If we’re serious about following Jesus,” Taylor says, “we have to recognize that following Jesus has profound social, political and economic implications.”

#### Episode Guest: Adam Taylor

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor is the president of Sojourners, a Christian nonprofit organization focused on the biblical call to social justice. Taylor previously led the Faith Initiative at the World Bank Group and served as the executive director of Global Justice. He was selected for the 2009/2010 White House Fellows to serve in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs and Public Engagement, and currently serves as a member of the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute Civil Society Fellowship. Taylor is ordained in the American Baptist Church and the Progressive National Baptist Convention and serves in ministry at the Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va.

#### Suggested Discussion Questions

- Adam says that he likes to think of American democracy as beginning in 1965, when all citizens were finally allowed to vote as a result of the Voting Rights Act. As a thought experiment, think of the United States and its promises as being a little over 50 years old instead of almost 250 years old. How does that change your perspective? What does this perspective bring into focus? What does it leave out?
- Adam and Eboo both articulate their reasoning for why voting rights are sacred within their religious tradition. Adam says that in Christian theology, every human bears the “image of God”, and so human agency is sacred. Eboo says that there is a similar concept in Islam called the “breath of God”, and that he sees voting rights as central to the creation of an “American Medina”. What does your ethical or religious tradition have to say about human agency, or about voting rights or civic participation in particular? Do you agree that voting rights are sacred in some way? If not, why do you think they are important?
- Eboo and Adam assert that participation is essential to democracy, and that democracies without participation are essentially null. How have you participated in democratic processes? What was one time you felt especially compelled to participate? What do you think made that occasion feel important to you?
- Adam says that a values-centered agenda could help the United States break through its crippling partisanship. What is one value that you’ve seen folks agree on, despite their partisan differences? If you can’t think of one, what is one value that you think most Americans across party lines could agree on?
- Eboo says that his favorite conversations are ones in which people share their religious or philosophical inspirations with him. What is one thing that inspires you to work toward a better America?