

Daily Meditation 01/17/2023

Dr. King Criticizes Organized Religion, continued...

Good morning.

In today's meditation we reflect with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. And I am creating this video on his feast day, about the young, in religion or in churches.

And this was a concern for him, a crisis, really, back 60 years ago. Of course a lot of what he was proposing in terms of social change and resistance to segregation and to racism -- all this did enlist a lot of young people, such as John Lewis, who was in his teens when he first went to work with Dr. King. And we know what an extraordinary life John Lewis lived on behalf of social progress and advancement of justice.

So obviously, King had a big effect on young people. At the same time, he was very aware and very concerned. He says, "Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust."

Well, I think that statement, has increased geometrically, since Dr. King's day, especially the disgust part, the exposure of pedophilia among priests, especially, and the cover-up by the hierarchy has driven all kinds of young people out of the church, and young parents afraid to introduce their children into a church establishment.

That's not only the Roman Catholic Church; the Mormons are having their day of reckoning, and the evangelicals are having theirs at this time.

So that alone is a determining factor in young people turning their backs on the church.

But there is much more as well, the dumbing-down of the church that was done by Cardinal Ratzinger and his mentor, if you will, John Paul II is coming home to roost today, where (has been told me by theologians in Europe), theology has been killed by church hierarchy and certainly base community movements of Latin America, that were very appealing to young people and their ideals.

And of course, Dr. King celebrates the ideals of young people in today's meditation, when he talks about how, as he put it, "the sacrificial spirit of the early church," this is hard to find in today's church. He says, "Church can easily become an irrelevant social club with no meaning."

So, all these observations by a man of such depth and courage as Dr. King is a judgment on the state of religion today.

And truth is, look at facts that fewer and fewer young people are being drawn to organized religion. But they are interested in spirituality, they're interested in meditation, they're interested in calming the reptilian brain, because you can see it all about them in the world run by adults: a lot of reptilian brain energy on the loose.

So, young people do seek the authentic, and they do seek to move beyond simply social clubs with no meaning. With an opportunity to devote themselves to something truly worthwhile and meaningful, I certainly found a lot of energy working: forexample, with reinventing liturgy using the art forms of young people today, or the Order of the Sacred Earth, an invitation to take a vow, to commit to saving Mother Earth.

In liberation theology, there is an important phrase about ecclesial genesis, which means "birthing church." The church is not a noun, it's not a thing. It's not a building. It's not even an organization or an institution. It is an invitation to give birth: to give birth to new forms of gathering places and gathering modalities, forms by which we can gather and inspire one another. People of all generations, this is called intergenerational wisdom, are called to come together to praise and to thank, but also to build up and to struggle together, to build a better world and a better expression of healthy religion from the deepest spirituality that we're capable of, on behalf of Mother Earth, and future generations.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.