

Daily Meditation 08-19-24

Leonardo Boff: Hope from Brazil re Kamala Harris for President

Good morning.

I'm sharing with you today, in this morning's meditation, an article written by Leonardo Boff, a very renowned theologian from Brazil.

I first met Leonardo the year I was silenced, which was the same year he was silenced as well. He was silenced earlier in the year, and I was silenced toward the end of the year. So I went to visit him the following spring, and we spent several hours together, a very rich and worthwhile exchange. I also met with Bishop Casaldàliga, another prophetic proponent of liberation theology, very close to Leonardo. He, too was Franciscan. Many prophetic figures in Latin America at that time, fighting not just the militaries and political fights, but also some ecclesiastical fights, obviously, from Rome.

Then a few years ago, Leonardo and I were together at a large conference in Monterey, Mexico, and we led it off, each with a talk: he on the suffering of Mother Earth, and how that compares to the suffering of the poor in the world today — that we're treating Mother Earth like we're treating the poor. And then I spoke, they asked me to speak on Yellaw, my program for inner city youth, to reinvent education using the 10 C's. So I spoke about that.

And then, following our individual talks, we were put on stage together, and we drew from a bowl pieces of paper with questions on them, and they were very scintillating questions. We each had three minutes to answer the same question, and I learned later there were 6,500 people in the auditorium live, and there were 92,000 watching online, and 75 were in the Vatican. So I learned about after that, after our exchange, not before.

But in this wonderful essay by Boff about our upcoming election — now I had to cut it by about a third, because it was too long to fit into our format, but still, it's a lot longer than our usual daily format. But I'm going to share with you the part that was edited, not out of content reasons, but out of space reasons.

But first I want to just share a few thoughts about the essay, as it is written in my daily meditation. His emphasis on, of course, the divine feminine, that's especially what draws him, as he says at the beginning, the great possibility that America might elect a woman president for the first time. He talks about patriarchy, the predominance of the male machismo — and of course, that word “machismo” has more impact in the Latin countries, probably than it does in ours. “It was one of the greatest mistakes in human history,” he says. “The type of state we have

is attributed to patriarchy, including war and violence as a way of solving problems.” Remember, just a few days ago, I gave the example of the Inuit. I was commenting on the Olympic Games. The Inuit practice of holding a poetry contest, instead of going to war.

“Private appropriation of land and the generation of inequalities and all types of discrimination.” And then he points out that “capitalism itself, in its varied forms, gained its most expressive configuration —“ that is to say, patriarchy gained its most expressive configuration -- “with the rate of social inequity that it brings with it, so that the whole dimension of inequity, of unbalance, of unfairness, of injustice, this is carried through by patriarchy.”

As he says in another paragraph, “In a word, they brought more humanity —“ “they” meaning women. He's just talked about women entering the universities and the job market. “They brought more humanity to a rational, rigid, competitive, efficient world marked by the will to power as domination: the world of men.” So that's his running definition, if you will, of patriarchy, the will to power, domination, competition, rigid, rational.

And of course, I identify a lot of that with the reptilian brain. And because the reptilian brain is about win/lose, it's about survival, and it's a necessary part of us, but it should not get all the play that it gets in so many patriarchal circumstances and philosophies and people.

And then in ending, he says “Politically, the best way to express the civilizational advance“ — and that would be the balance of the masculine and feminine — “would be participatory socio-ecological democracy, in which man and women, cooperatively and in solidarity, would build a dream world that corresponds to the deepest desires of the human psyche.”

Now to me, this also is echoed in the definition of democracy from Abraham Lincoln: “A government of the people, by the people, for the people,” not the billionaires, by the billionaires, and for the billionaires, or of the international corporations by the international corporations and for the international corporations.

So when we're talking about this election having to do with the future of democracy, I think that Leonardo Boff is pointing out this very important dimension, of course, of gender balance.

Now to add a few of the points that he makes that there was not room to include, he says that “the likely fact of a woman becoming president of the most powerful country in the world, would represent a decisive step towards peace between the sexes, including also peace with nature, of which both are part.” For me, that's a very strong statement on Creation Spirituality. “The Common Good implies that privatization and individualism are to give way to a great social sense of solidarity.” And he invokes Jung regarding the terms of Animus and Anima: “The

re- engendering of man will only take place through the new feminine, that is emerging more and more in all areas.”

So men have so much to learn from what women are learning and expressing. And of course, I bring that up very much in my book on *The Hidden Spirituality of Men: 10 Metaphors to Awaken the Sacred Masculine*, that one of the signs of a healthy masculine is that men are willing to undergo changes parallel to the transformation that women are going through at our time. And here's some language that Boff uses. He says,

The androgynous man emerges. The new human being. The man rescuing his Anima dimension, with the help of women. The capacity for tenderness, unreserved delivery, cordial sensitivity, together with his animus dimension. The woman developing the Animus, that is her capacity for initiative, creativity, operational intelligence, direction, together with her Anima.

So in those two sentences, he balances very nicely the energies that we often identify with the masculine and the feminine.

In this way, what the ancient myth wanted, is rescued. The human being is a complete being. Each one is a carrier, in their own degrees, of the Anima and the Animus. It turns out that this one androgynous being was cut in half. This way, they were separated. But in their deep unconscious, they are always looking for each other. The force of attraction seeks to unite them and restore their primordial unity.

Finally, he says “The ancient war of the sexes and oppressive and repressive gender policies would be progressively overcome.”

So those are some of his dreams, to use his language, that he holds for American democracy, if Kamala Harris is elected President. Thank you. We'll see you next week.