



Theme:
Being Peaceful Change

Being Peaceful Change

Saturday, August 1, 2020

Summary: Sunday, July 26—Friday, July 31, 2020

Gandhi's spirit of non-violence sprang from an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself.—Thomas Merton ([Sunday](#))

Authentic spirituality is always first about you—about allowing your own heart and mind to be changed. ([Monday](#))

Nonviolence is the greatest and most active force in the world. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world. —Mohandas Gandhi ([Tuesday](#))

When you understand, you love. And when you love, you naturally act in a way that can relieve the suffering of people.—Thich Nhat Hanh ([Wednesday](#))

We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. —Wangari Maathai ([Thursday](#))

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Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done

Being Peaceful Change

Love at the Center

Friday, July 31, 2020

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognized as children of God.—Matthew 5:9

Today many think we can achieve peace through violence. The myth that violence solves problems is part of the way we think and is in direct opposition to all great religious teachings. Our need for immediate control leads us to disconnect the consistency, connection, and unity between means and ends. We even named a missile created for the destruction of humanity a "peacekeeper." But such peace is a false peace, the Pax Romana of mutually assured destruction (MAD). We must wait and work for the Pax Christi of mutually assured forgiveness.

The above verse from Matthew is the only time the word "peacemakers" is used in the whole Bible. A peacemaker literally is the "one who reconciles quarrels." Jesus is clearly not on the side of the violent but on the side of the nonviolent. Jesus is saying there is no way to peace other than peacemaking itself.

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Being Peaceful Change

Holistic Peace

Thursday, July 30, 2020

Peaceful change starts within us and grows incrementally from where we are. Our social and physical location will influence the problems we see and the solutions we can imagine. We must “think globally and act locally” as did Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Wangari Maathai (1940–2011).

Maathai devoted herself to environmental and democratic reform in her native Kenya.

As a young academic biologist at the University of Nairobi in the 1970s . . . Maathai grew concerned about the environmental devastation created in Nairobi by widespread deforestation. She recognized that a massive replanting program could both save the land and provide a source of income for Nairobi’s poor. So in 1977 she founded a small local organization that paid Nairobi women to plant trees. The organization soon grew into a nationwide and then pan-African one known as the Greenbelt Movement. Since its inception, the movement has planted upwards of forty million trees in Africa and provided income for nearly one million women.

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Being Peaceful Change

Look with the Eyes of Compassion

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

The Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (born 1926) is one of the world’s most influential spiritual teachers. During the Vietnam War, his work for peace brought him into friendship with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton, and other Christians who shared his belief that peace must be who we are, not just something we demand. Thich Nhat Hanh teaches:

This capacity of waking up, of being aware of what is going on in your feelings, in your body, in your perceptions, in the world, is called Buddha nature, the capacity of understanding and loving. . . . It is with our capacity of smiling, breathing, and being peace that we can make peace.

Many of us worry about the world situation. We don’t know when the bombs will explode. We feel that we are on the edge of time. As individuals, we feel helpless, despairing. The situation is so dangerous, injustice is so widespread, the danger is so close. In this kind of situation, if we panic, things will only become worse. We need to remain calm, to see clearly. Meditation is to be aware, and to try to help.

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Being Peaceful Change

Nonviolence: A Spiritual Superpower

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Be the change you wish to see in the world.—Gandhi

My good friend, John Dear, is a devoted student of Mohandas Gandhi and has dedicated his life to the promotion of nonviolence through his activism and writing. John writes:

In his search for God and truth, Mohandas Gandhi [1869–1948] concluded that he could never hurt or kill anyone, much less remain passive in the face of injustice, imperialism, and war. Instead, Gandhi dedicated himself to the practice and promotion of nonviolence. He concluded that nonviolence is not only the most powerful force there is; it is the spiritual practice most neglected and most needed throughout the world.

“Nonviolence means avoiding injury to anything on earth, in thought, word, or deed,” Gandhi told an interviewer in 1935. But for Gandhi, nonviolence meant not just refraining from physical violence interpersonally and nationally, but refraining from the inner violence of the heart as well. It meant the practice of active love toward one’s oppressors and enemies in the pursuit of

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Being Peaceful Change

Change Comes from the Inside

Monday, July 27, 2020

As we come to know our soul gift more clearly, we almost always have to let go of some other “gifts” so we can do our one or two things with integrity. Such letting go frees us from always being driven by what has been called the “tyranny of the urgent.” [1] Soon urgency is a way of life, and things are not done peacefully from within. What if we choose to simply do one or two things wholeheartedly in our lives? That is all God expects and all we can probably do well. Too much good work becomes a violence to ourselves and, finally, to those around us.

Let’s just use our different gifts to create a unity in the work of service (Ephesians 4:12–13), and back one another up, without criticism or competition. Only in our peaceful, mutual honoring do we show forth the glory of God.

The Gospel is not about being nice; it is about being honest and just, and the world doesn’t like those two things very much. Our job is to learn how to be honest, but with love and respect. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us that before we go out to witness for justice, we have to make sure that we can love and respect those with whom we disagree.

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Imagine the surrender necessary for those who have been oppressed for hundreds of years to continue to work peacefully for

Being Peaceful Change

Inner Unity

Sunday, July 26, 2020

Before you speak of peace, you must first have it in your heart.—Francis of Assisi

Generations of Christians seem to have forgotten Jesus’ teachings on nonviolence. We’ve relegated visions of a peaceful kingdom to a far distant heaven. We hardly believed Jesus could have meant for us to turn the other cheek here and now. It took Gandhi, a Hindu, to help us apply Jesus’ peace-making in very practical ways. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968), drawing from Gandhi’s writings and example, brought nonviolence to the forefront of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

The nonviolence of Gandhi, like that of the civil rights activists, affirmed a unity of peaceful ends and means. Thomas Merton, reflecting on Gandhi’s nonviolence, wrote:

Non-violence was not simply a political tactic which was supremely useful and efficacious in liberating his people from foreign rule . . . the spirit of non-violence sprang from *an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself*. The whole Gandhian concept of non-violent action . . . is incomprehensible if it is thought to be a means of achieving unity rather

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