

THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MIGRATION



BRIAN D. MCLAREN



CONVERGENT



THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MIGRATION

HOW THE WORLD'S LARGEST
RELIGION IS SEEKING A **BETTER**
WAY TO BE **CHRISTIAN**

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THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MIGRATION

A spiritual migration

from system of belief to way of life/
way of love



A theological migration

from violent Supreme Being
to nonviolent Holy Spirit/Spirit of
Christ



I used to be friendly on airplanes.

A missional migration

from organized religion (for self-protection)

to religion organizing for the common good

(institutions and movements in romance,
forming & deploying spiritual activists)

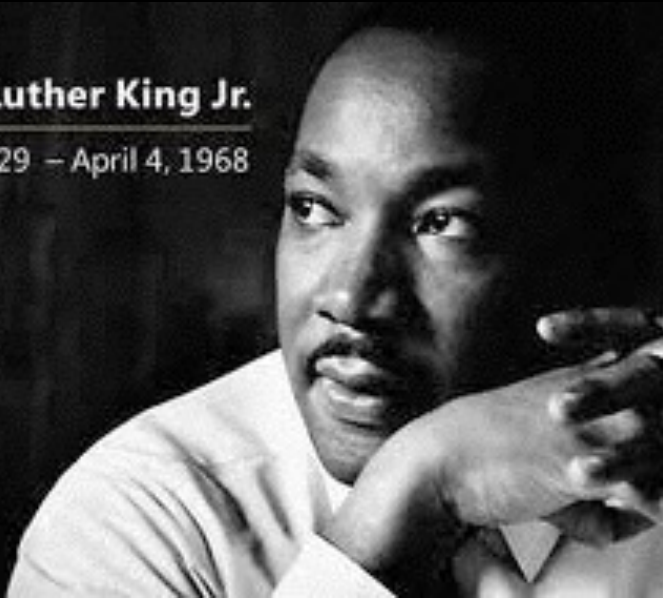




WE NEED A THEOLOGY OF

Martin Luther King Jr.

Jan. 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968



INSTITUTIONS, MOVEMENTS.
AND COMMUNITIES

Communities

Families, individuals, and organizations linked to a common environment, collaborating for the common good.

Institutions:

Organizations which
conserve the gains made
by past social movements.

Social Movements

Organizations which make
proposals or demands to
current institutions to make
progress towards new
gains.

Both movements and
institutions...

Organize for their purpose

Need one another

Are frustrated with one
another

Benefit or harm communities

Without movements ...

Institutions stagnate ...

Without institutions ...

Movements evaporate ...

Some movements
successfully inject their
values into the institutions
they challenge

Other movements
create their own institutions,
or pass away

Vital movements
call people to passionate,
sacrificial personal
commitment

Sustainable institutions
create loyalty across
generations through
evocative rituals & traditions

movements
can be
progressive or regressive



Parker Palmer's 4 stages of social change

1. Divided no more
2. Communities of congruence (conversation)
3. Going public (movement)
4. Alternative Rewards

From Greg Leffel
*Faith Seeking Action: Mission
and Social Movements*

A movement is born when 3 things happen:

- 2 or more people agree what's wrong
 - They agree what should be done
 - They agree to do it.

Leffel's 6 Characteristics of Vibrant Social Movements

1. Opportunity Structure
2. Rhetorical framing
3. Protest (messaging) strategy
4. Mobilization strategy
5. Movement culture
6. Participant Biography

Jesus says the kingdom of God is like gardening (an organic movement) not warfare (institutional action): It spreads through seeds ... sown into systems to grow.

The seeds of the message.

The seeds of people who personally embody the message.

The seeds of communities who socially embody the message.

Jesus seizes the *opportunity*
structure provided by
conflicted elites (Pharisees/
Sadducees; Herodians/
Zealots) and struggling
masses (Galilee/Judea)

He provides rhetorical framing on hillsides, in houses, on retreats, in public teach-ins, in debates, through parables, through rituals and practices. He repeats key themes - commonwealth of God, life to the full, life of the ages, liberation - rooted in dynamic tension with tradition.

His protest (messaging) strategy includes public demonstrations (healings & miracles), teach-ins (sermon on mount), civil disobedience (turning tables), guerilla theatre (exorcisms), festivals (feasts & feedings), naming evil (woes), naming heroes (blessings).

He develops a *mobilization strategy* based on 3, 12, 70, and multitudes. He entrusts freely with responsibility and expresses high confidence in his agents (greater things shall you do ...)

He associates his
movement culture with
love, joy, justice, risk,
hope, creativity, courage,
service, willingness to
suffer, nonviolence.

He provides his disciples
challenge, rest, retreat,
encouragement, recovery after
failures. They testify that
their *participant biographies*
have been forever changed for
the better.

What spiritual movement is trying to be born among us today?

What are its demands/proposals?

What role might we play in its emergence?

Not

Militant Religious Right

Institutional Religious Left

But

Evangelical passion mixed with
progressive social vision of
common good, "beloved
community"

Not

Conservative anti-science bias

Old Liberal anti-spiritual bias

Not

Conservative anti-science bias

Old Liberal anti-spiritual bias

But

Both pro-learning and pro-
spirituality

Not

Strong Hostile Identity

Weak Benevolent Identity

in relation to other faiths ...

Not

Strong Hostile Identity

Weak Benevolent Identity

in relation to other faiths ...

But

Strong, theologically-rooted
benevolent spiritual identity as
neighbors, peacemakers

Not

Jesus as weapon

Jesus as embarrassment

Not

Jesus as weapon

Jesus as embarrassment

But

Jesus as bringer of good news
of the kingdom/commonwealth/
ecosystem of God

Not UnHoly Spirit of corrupted
Pentecostal/Charismaticism
Not spiritless institutionalism

But
Pentecostalism 2.0 - the Spirit
is upon us to proclaim good
news to the poor!

The Holy Spirit movement to ...
protect the planet
liberate the poor/oppressed
build pre-emptive peace
help people everywhere thrive

A joyful new evangelism ...

**Do not merely try to bring others
to where you are, as wonderful as
that place might be.**

**But do not leave them where they
are either.**

**Instead, go with them to a place
neither you nor they have ever
been before.**

Fr. Vincent Donovan (adapted)



your
face
here

May we feel in our innermost being a beautiful and holy dissatisfaction.

May that holy dissatisfaction ignite in us a holy refusal

To remain stuck where we have been.

May that holy refusal break open our hearts to a holy hope,

So that the wind, wine, and fire of the Holy Spirit will fill us all.

May we learn to live in the way of revolutionary love,
And may we experience and embody God as Jesus
did,
As the radiant light of perfect compassion for all
creation.

And may we find or form our flocks,
And may ten thousand flocks and more arise together
In a great spiritual migration of justice, joy, and
peace.

But first,
May we feel in our innermost being a beautiful and
holy dissatisfaction.

