



**Do I Stay  
Christian?**

A GUIDE FOR THE DOUBTERS,  
THE DISAPPOINTED,  
AND THE DISILLUSIONED

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Part III: How

Chapter 23: Re-Wild

Chapter 24: Find the Flow

Much of the material in this presentation  
was taken verbatim or almost verbatim from  
the book “Do I Stay Christian?” by Brian  
McLaren

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## Chapter 23: Re-Wild

He starts the chapter with a powerful description of a kayaking experience in the Everglades.

He needed to be there to be out in the wild to make up for the effect of writing – to shake off the effect of words.

His theory is that the web of words in our heads often feels more real to us than the web of life outside our heads.

Language was a tool we used to describe reality, but it also could become a substitute for reality, a virtual reality.

Language liberates. It shaped the “inner architecture” of generations of Christians with terms like sin, grace, salvation. But language evolves. Meanings modify. What was liberating can become a cage. Some people are pacing the cage.

2

St. Augustine (Sermon 126.6) put it like this:

“Some people, in order to find God, will read a book. But there is a great book, the book of created nature. Look carefully at it top and bottom, observe it, read it. God did not make letters of ink for you to recognize God in; God set before your eyes all these things God has made. Why look for a louder voice?”

Meister Eckhart, who was about fourteen when Aquinas died in 1274, put it no less strongly:

“A person who knew nothing but creatures would never need to attend to any sermons, for every creature is full of God and is a book.”

3

McLaren means more than just a weekend camping trip.

He means an immersion in “God’s original word” that goes past words to the place where it will “overwhelm and hush the barrage of words chattering inside our heads.”

“In this silent encounter with the natural world, we render ourselves vulnerable to it so that it can impress upon us a new inner architecture, one that is shaped by and in harmony with its wordless patterns and wisdom.”

Instead of “We are spiritual beings having a human experience” he suggests “We are biological creatures, wild animals, in which spiritual experience happens.”

4

In *The Galapagos Islands: A Spiritual Journey*, McLaren wrote: “In all likelihood, wild theology is the mother of civilized theology. And in all likelihood, civilized theology is in the process of killing its mother and acting as if she never existed.... [We need] to be re-situated in the wild, unboxed, outdoor world of creation.”

Some progress is being made:

- honoring the Indigenous peoples of the land
- the Watershed Discipleship movement
- the Seminary of the Wild

The prophet’s voice, we recall, comes from the wilderness. It takes a wilderness to make a prophet.

5

## Chapter 24: Find the Flow

McLaren talks about movements and institutions

In *The Great Spiritual Migration*, he defined the two social realities interdependently: movements challenge institutions to make new gains in human well-being, and institutions preserve the gains achieved by past social movements.

Current institutions tend to oppose the gains proposed by current social movements.

Now he sees larger meta-movements in which all institutions and movements rise and fall like individual waves.

6

Original or wild humanity

- people lived as hunter-gatherers and primal agriculturalists

Old humanity or imperial humanity, which includes social and historical epochs such as

- ancient
- medieval
- modern
- postmodern

This meta-movement has carried on over many centuries.

McLaren believes we are at the transition point to a new all encompassing spiritual meta-movement.

7

McLaren envisions that during this transition

- God is doing a new thing
- Something fresh is springing forth
- There will be good news for the poor
- Swords are turned into plowshares (no more war)
- A heart of flesh replaces a heart of stone
- A river of justice rolls down from the heights, filling the low places first
- People do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with their God

The long succession of prophets were giving us a vision for a new movement being born.

8

Seven practices that are helping McLaren align with this meta-movement and “find the flow”:

1. Believe in it.
2. Go beyond opposition to create positive alternatives.
3. Don't expect any micro-movement or institution, including ones you love, support, or even lead, to be the whole answer.
4. Support every positive change in every micro-movement and institution.
5. Prepare yourself for turbulence.
6. Nurture the practices of spiritual resilience.
7. Believe in it.