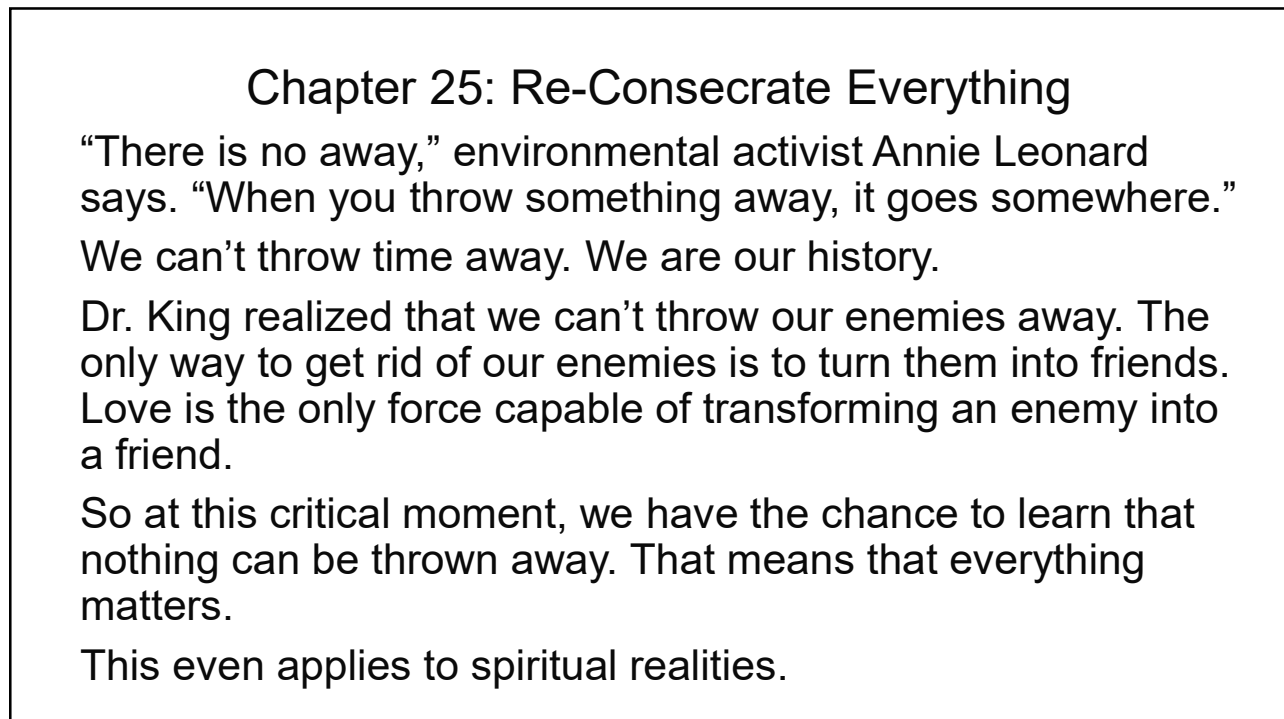


1



2

Christianity must be recycled, whether you stay part of it or not.

Recycled > redeemed > to give new value > reconsecrate

This project of spiritual ecology begins with identifying the elements of our faith that are unholy, unsustainable, and harmful. We need to reduce our trafficking in those elements as we become aware of them.

- Original sin
- Hell
- Bible being used to justify slavery, denigrating LGBTQ

This recycling has recently been called deconstruction and reconstruction

3

McLaren has suggested changing the meaning of baptism from cleansing of original sin to being immersed in the Spirit. The eucharist (blood sacrifice), election (saved vs damned), foreign missions (colonialism), and other elements of inherited Christianity could be reimagined and repurposed - recycled.

Recycle salvation as liberation.

Recycle the final judgment as the realization that only time will reveal the full goodness or evil that flows from any action.

Recycle demons and the devil as a theory of mental illness.

Reframing the Trinity as insight into God's nature.

Ultimately, the word "God" needs to be redefined.

4

Some ways to start:

Review the prayers used in public worship.

Determine which song and hymn lyrics are problematic.

Determine what outcomes we intend from our sermons.

Review and revise foundational documents.

Remember that we won't get this right the first time. It will take time.

“The times are urgent. We must slow down.” Bayo Akomolafe

Imagine there's no religion.

Imagine there's no secular world.

There is no away for anybody, Christian or not.

5

Chapter 26: Renounce and Announce

McLaren recalls the first time a friend outed himself to him. He knew how people talked about gays and how good his friend was. He didn't know how to respond.

Amanda and John Ray confronted by charismatic father.

She confronted her father with “We need to talk. I'm going to speak, and you're not going to interrupt me.” She made an announcement.

McLaren says we need to very lovingly, non-defensively, and non-aggressively be clear about where we are.

If others reject us or prefer that we leave, so be it. In the long run, we will find it better to be rejected for who we are than accepted for who we aren't.

6

“We have to be courageous enough to come out of our closets and go public, not minimizing the change, not feeling embarrassed about who we are becoming, not hiding our light under a bushel of polite ambiguity.”

Our announcement must include a renouncement.

Recently the AG apologized for segregation.

The Catholic church renounced the Doctrine of Discovery.

The Belhar Confession – announcing racism as sin.

“When some Christians make these kinds of announcements, others will, no doubt, refuse, criticize, and double down on defending their innocence, maybe even their supremacy. That is their choice.”

7

“By renouncing the failures of our past and announcing that we are changing, we commit ourselves to live humbly, justly, and kindly in the present and future. It may just be that if we sincerely follow that path, some Christians who were on their way out of the faith will find a reason to stay—and stay in a new way. And some who have left Christianity may find a reason to return—to embody Christian faith with us in this new way.”

He ends the chapter by giving examples of announcements

- a faith crisis, staying Christian but renouncing supremacy, privilege, domination, and violence.
- no longer Christian. Didn't leave faith; rather, it has left me.
- no longer a Christian, I was condemned because I am gay.

8

- I found a new congregation that welcomed me and is on the same journey I am.
- I'm committed to follow Jesus, but not as a "Christian".
- to a professor: I've become what we both criticized. I can no longer remain a conservative Catholic. I will always see you as one of my most influential mentors.

Announcements like these can help you renounce and announce both clearly and graciously, and doing so will help others in the long run, even if it upsets them in the short term. McLaren hopes you receive positive feedback that outweighs the negative reactions. When they constrict their circle to exclude you, you can expand yours to include them.