



Sisters and brothers, In 1967, something magical happened. This brilliant, prophetic, articulate, eloquent minister mounted the podium, 1967, Riverside Church in New York, and laid out his reason for opposing the Vietnam War. It was courageous and historic. He laid out his moral opposition. He saw it as unjust, illegal and immoral. When he stepped away from the pulpit, he was attacked by people in the civil rights movement by saying, "Martin, stay in your lane, brother. You're a civil rights activist. Don't water down the movement. You're going to invite new enemies. You're going to detract from what we're doing. Stay in your lane." Whites attacked him essentially the same way, by saying, "Reverend Martin Luther King, stay in your lane. You're a civil rights leader. What do you know about foreign policy and national security and war and peace? Stay in your lane."

So Martin Luther King begins to criss-cross the country to answer his critics. He comes to Berkeley, California, Sproul Hall steps, University of California at Berkeley, crowded literally with thousands of people. A young black guy, Ron Dellums, standing way in the back of the several thousand people, hanging on every word, didn't realize at that moment that my life would be changed forever.

And I would comment on four points that he made in that speech and speeches going forward challenging the war in Vietnam. **First, he said,** "Why did I stand up?" His response was, "I cannot segregate my moral concerns." That said to me that we must challenge all forms of injustice, because Martin Luther King said we cannot segregate our moral concerns.

Secondly, he said there are two kinds of leaders, one who waits until the consensus is formed and then run swiftly to the front of the group and declare leadership, but then he said there's a second kind of leader, who has the audacity and the courage to risk attempting to shape a new consensus. I interpreted that to mean we had carried the burden of racial, cultural and economic oppression, but we did not have to carry the burden of ignorance, that we had the obligation, the right and the responsibility to enter the arena and be educative, to educate our people, to help them to understand the interrelatedness, the interconnectedness, the relationships between and among all issues of oppression and injustice.

One of his lessons of education was a statement that was so vivid, so powerful: "We are dropping bombs in North Vietnam that are exploding in the ghettos and the barrios of America." How incredibly poetic! How incredibly powerful, the vision! He was saying to people, understand the relationship between the billions of

dollars that are being spent to wage war and the inability to address the injustice that is taking place in the ghettos and the barrios of America, the issue of priorities. Very powerful.

But, to me, **the most powerful statement**, that shaped my life forever, was this comment: "Peace is more than simply the absence of war; it is the presence of justice." I interpreted that to mean, wow, the peace movement is the ultimate movement. Peace is the superior idea, that the umbrella movement for—of all movements, the peace movement, because to come together under the banner of peace forces us to challenge all forms of injustice.

Peace is more than simply the absence of war; it is the absence of conditions that give rise to war. OK? So that if we stayed together, what would the international community look like? What would the world look like globally? What would America look like? What if we had challenged on these issues? But it's not too late.

Martin Luther King told us to raise our voices in the name of peace and justice and equality and peace, because it was the right thing, the moral thing, the ethical thing, the principled thing to do. This generation must do it because it's now the only thing to do. It has now become the imperative. So what was principle for our generation now is the imperative for this generation, because we know that the price of war is too high. We know that the price of neglect of the issues that affect the human condition, we do it at our peril, so that we have a responsibility now to address the imperative.

A second difference is, **Martin Luther King never told us we couldn't do it.** He said go out and change the world. Remember, he said, **"I may not be with you at the end, but I have reached the mountaintop, and I can tell you this: We will achieve."** So we felt that we could change the world, and we went out to change the world. But this generation is being told 24 hours a day the system is broken, you can't fix it; the system is bought and paid for, you can't get it back. **So how can people move to change the world when they are constantly being fed a diet of cynicism, of superficial political analysis rooted solely in partisan politics or the shaping of personalities as if this individual or that individual can change the world all by themselves,** without dealing with the substance of the problems of policies that have to be addressed, but we narrow it down to very parochial, shallow analysis?

So what we have to say to this generation of young people, out of a sense of urgency, out of a sense of the imperative: You now must emerge.

R.I.P. Ron Dellums

ALONE & NO HISTORY

The door has slammed behind us now, in the age of trump. It is amnesia time. There is nothing to remember of the past. Pay attention to the fact that the floor is sliding out from under us. **Have a problem ...blame?...the Moslems!**

I can feel the pain of those who no longer have the Jews to berate because Israel aflame is their irreplaceable launching pad into The Kingdom. Rapturing. Couldn't read the novels of the same theme, too fat and pulpy – and numerous. Why sell them short nonetheless? Traditional Christians – like everybody else -- *know* the world is coming to an end. I follow the Mayans myself, early, early on with the **Hopei. Kali Yuga. Ragnorok** is something even Bigger than the Big Screen. **St. Pat O'Brien**, a local shaman mental case who died a martyr's death in jail, seriously inhabited the **Ragnorok** unfolding around us.

The Bible's famous for prophesying catastrophe. Who can come out of a steady contact with **Daniel, Ezekial, Elijah, St. John of Revelations** with an intact mind. Not if you're a graduate of L.A. like myself. The whole point is to untack that intact mind. **This is the Restaurant at the end of the universe.**

Let's give some approving nods to traditional Christians for reacting to the disruptive end times. It began with the **Great Barbecue** after the Civil War. Corporations were offered legal limited liability in exchange for exploiting the continent as fast as they could pile up those little bars of gold. General after General succeeded to the Presidency, grim memorials to the criminal war raged against the South known as Unconditional Surrender.

The North had morphed into The Feds. A triumphant central government was soon transmuted into an **unlimited limited liability** corporation – the best kind aside from banking where you get money now for nothing in order to cheat us out of it later. Traditional Christians fought back with a cooperative, tool-sharing agriculture. Starting in Texas, it was color blind from the beginning and were the big battle of Jeffersonian agrarians and small town dwellers against the urban and industrialized Hamiltonians. Big Defeat. The banks froze populist cooperatives from capitol and drove the movement into politics where the defeat was total.

Winston Churchill was at the Stock Exchange the day it crashed. It is closest I can get to a historical fact that he was there at the invitation of **Bernard Baruch**, Everyman's Kissinger. I accept the speculation that Winnie was getting a special lesson by Bernie: this is what we do. Crash. Wow. Survive that, small town America where every Main St. had a teletype for the hip to follow the Market on.

The twenties were terrifying for traditional Christians. Women showing their knees, drinking gin and smoking in public. The usual post war party, a little more classy than the Barbecue that preceded it. **F. Scott Fitzgerald** tended bar as **Pontius Pilate**, leader of a national literary hunt for The Truth of this suddenly Bourgeois, materialistic society.

Then we burst our pretty balloons. The Great Depression created desperation for all, except my dad who worked in the produce yards the whole time. Otherwise, rural people were too often up to their ankles in trampled Grapes of Wrath.

It turns out the traditional Christians started very early picking all this out. The Bible is a potent tarot deck and out of it seeped that Rapture message from a popular Bible Concordance, **Strong's**. Everybody had one, even Catholics. Synchronicity of believers always rules the day and another brand new, Made in America religion was born. Evangelical Christians are emphatically present in American politics now.

Always helpful to their fellow supremacists, the **Israeli Rapture Rockets** declared Israel officially racist and so further isolated themselves from any hope of a favorable mention in the textbooks of tomorrow. But you see, we all unfortunately share the perception, hopeful or not, that there won't be any history without tomorrow, and soon, tomorrow's not coming. If you get my drift.

Back in 1968 I started a **SciFi** epic whose denouement was the evaporation of the human species. Nature just threw us out of the airlock, like **Sigourney Weaver** did to the Alien. The book got big, spewing parts, but it has never been finished. The reason I can't is that it's a suicide note and I just couldn't sign it.

The body has habits before the mind has reasons, saith the mathstic Pascal. If we're environmentalists we should love the one we have that's rapped around us: our body. Once again I have been reminded that we have tree running down the back of our trunk. I am humming 24/7 with that energy. Out of harmony, dissonant however is our overburdened, busy brain. Not surprising that Traditional Christians should opt for a culture of soothing sermons and mega-churches. I stop at my Christian FM station on occasion. I am always amazed at how original the identical sermonizing on scriptures. It is the emotional content that offers differing flavors.

White People that I want to give a voice to are beginning to see that selling your soul to, you know, **Satan** in exchange for complete political power, kind of, was a bad bargain. However their scholars parse the sacred political texts but nobody wanted a state religion for American. I'll try and find an exception but meanwhile – No one.

Us ministers of the Gospel must remember what **Luther** said: **"The true Christians are always persecuted."** We are not of this world. **Jesus** wouldn't have a shirt and tie. He cleaned the bankers out of the temple.

Neither as a Jew or as the first Christian did Jesus seek compromise with the state worship of Rome. That lesson is being learned at present as traditional Christians realize that their leader is no **King David**. In fact King David wasn't Messiah material either. This was quite obvious to the prophets the likes of Isaiah who in fact called for a return to the days of the Judges, no Kings for him. The Christian renewal - under way in the ecumenical Moral Mondays movement - finds its center in the Gospel, practicing those primitive gospel virtues of community, sharing, healing, common meals. These are the activities needed to revitalize our communities clustered along our roads and in our small town neighborhoods.

Paul Encimer for the

Universal Life Ministerial Association ULMA