

**PDF - Lancaster - Sunday, October 3, 2021 - "The Inevitability of Collaboration" - Wil Darcangelo, minister**

Humans, like many other animals, are an interdependent species. We rely on the strength of the group to protect the individual. Over and over again we demonstrate our desire for and need to collaborate with each other. This is social as well as biological. Diversity of the gene pool and survival of the species relies on our ability to collaborate and adapt as a group.

Unfortunately, we too often lean on the paradigm of sharing a common enemy to create that unity. So much so, that society is often manipulated into believing there is an enemy just so a coalition forms. That coalition is rarely intended to combat the imaginary enemy as much as to accomplish separate, unknown objectives, typically political or financial in nature.

Of course there are genuine enemies out there. But are we perceiving them at the same level as their threat? Are those whom we've been told to fear truly as fearful as we've been led to believe? Are we being separated on purpose?

Knowing that there are those who wish to manipulate our emotions for their own political or financial ends is the most important part. It's difficult to be manipulated when you can see it happening and know why they are doing it. All the better if you can manage to have some compassion for the reasons why they might. But even the metrics of evaluating our sources of information are often manipulated as well. It's hard to know whom to listen to. When in doubt, however, ask yourself: Is this loving?

I've always been fascinated by the idea of the Big Bang. I often wonder about what might have existed prior to the explosive moment when all that we behold in the cosmos first violently expanded from a tiny speck. It leads me to a thought that perhaps there are periodic "big bangs" in the life of our universe. Things which explode and then, in the floating vacuum of space, gradually return to unity, only to explode again and unify again. What makes that happen? I can't say for certain that it's even true, but when I look at the tendency of fragments floating in a bowl of water to join and combine as their own wispy gravitational pulls slowly re-attract one to another, I have to admit humans are no less susceptible to that phenomenon. We just can't help ourselves.

We fight and do horrible things, yet we are bound to one another. We refine our relational practices continuously. What is the inner-directive which motivates us toward this innate unity? Put your faith in that. That phenomenon is what will ultimately save us from ourselves.

Sometimes in the midst of all this social turmoil I find myself resisting the urge to despair. Or at least trying to. But then I meditate on the fact that our separation is an illusion. I think deeply about the connectivity we all share even when it looks like the opposite. It comforts me.

If, God forbid, an alien species descended on our planet with the intention of destroying us all, we would immediately see how truly bonded we are. We would see how pointless and futile our childish sibling arguments have been. We would know what is truly important in that moment and what is not. Can't we choose to see that on purpose? Must we wait for the threat of annihilation to join forces more deliberately? Must we have a common enemy in order to recognize our deep and abiding friendship?

On your deathbed, what will you think was important about your life? Will you be glad for all the enemies you maintained? Will you be proud of the resentments you held, the grudges you continued? Likely not. Because they are not natural to us. Collaboration is natural, hostility is not. Cooperation is essential and instinctively ours.

Spend time considering the presence of collaboration in your life. Many things we can do on our own, but must we? Where are the opportunities for us to invite others in? Even if some of the time that might otherwise be spent doing the work are used for explaining and hearing out the other, it is well worth it in the end. The work will ultimately benefit.

A charity that has only one donor, might help a few. But one that relies on the support of many will help many. Allow your work to be made lighter by many hands. Your natural human desire to collaborate, even when you don't think it's necessary, will have a ripple effect throughout the world in ways you cannot imagine. At the very least, it will improve the quality of your own experience. And that is plenty.