

Hi everyone. I'm Brian McLaren. I'm on the faculty of the Center for Action and Contemplation. Our world is deeply fractured. We see the symptoms all around us. We see it in politics. We see it in social media. We see it in our families and denominations. It's as if the left and right hemispheres of our brain with different and complementary strengths that are supposed to work together, have now become enemies and are opposing each other, and we replicate that division all through our society. Those fractures couldn't come at a worse time. We need to come together as never before to address our environmental and climate crises. We need to come together as never before to resist authoritarian movements that have the power of billionaires, the power of social media and AI at their disposal to divide us further and further. We need to come together to imagine and explore better ways of living with ourselves and living with one another and living with this sacred, beautiful Earth.

But just when we need to come together, we see ourselves fracturing and retreating into our opposite corners of isolation, our little echo chambers where we only hear what we want to hear, which often is the opposite of what we need to hear. These fractures, I think, make us feel afraid and sometimes depressed and reactive and paralyzed. And soon we feel ourselves being sucked into being part of the disease instead of part of the healing. For spiritually alive people, for people of deep and genuine faith, we don't want to surrender to despair and cynicism and reactivity and fragmentation. We want to be healed and empowered so we can participate in healing and empowering other people. That's why hundreds of thousands of us receive the daily meditations from the CAC every day. We wake up in the morning and find in our inbox a brief and insightful message that gives us good news, that invites us to be healed and to be agents of healing for others, for our families and communities, for our societies, and for the living Earth itself.

One of the weapons we see people using in our hostilities and fragmentation is the Bible. Many of us have been wounded by the Bible wielded as a weapon. Many of us have wielded the Bible as a weapon ourselves and wounded others. Many of us have just stayed away from the Bible entirely because it feels like something dangerous, a sharpened sword, a loaded gun, a ticking time bomb, a toxic recipe. But more and more of us are trying to learn a lesson that Richard Rohr has been teaching for decades. Yes, the Bible can be abused to do much harm, but if we learn to read the Bible in conversation with our honest experience, and in light of our living traditions we can practice the better, we can learn and model a better way. And that will be our theme in our daily meditations for 2026. We'll be looking at the Bible in new and fresh ways as good news for a fractured world. Let me mention three of those new and fresh ways.

First, we won't read the Bible as if it were a divinely dictated book that descended out of Heaven on a parachute. Instead, we'll be reading the Bible as a set of precious literary artifacts that emerge in the unfolding story of humanity. We will take seriously the historical, social, ecological, economic, and political contexts of the Bible, and we will dig deep for needed ancient wisdom to help us today.

Second, we won't read the Bible as if it were a manual to help people dominate and exploit the Earth and other people. It certainly has been and is being used in that way. But we will instead explore the Bible for inspiration, for creative and nonviolent resistance to that kind of domination and exploitation.

And third, we won't read the Bible as if it were an evacuation plan, preparing us to give up on the Earth and beam up to Heaven. Instead, we will explore the Bible as a prompt for both deep contemplation and for deep loving action. We will approach the Bible contemplatively, quieting our knee-jerk reactions, exposing our deep-seated biases, challenging our untested assumptions, and leading us to see the divine in creation in our own hearts and in one another. And especially in the life and teaching of Jesus, we will

see a call to a special kind of action in the world. Nonviolent action, creative action, Christ-like action, where leadership looks like service, and where the power of love outlasts and overcomes the love of power.

I'm so grateful for the team at the CAC who carefully selects and curates the daily meditations, and I'm so grateful to Father Richard Rohr, whose example and writings have invited us into a life of action rooted in contemplation and in contemplation that always expresses itself in action. And I'm so grateful for each of you who will be part of this shared adventure in 2026, finding, living, and sharing good news for a fractured world.

If you enjoy the daily meditations, I hope you'll spread the word and invite others to join us in our shared journey of transformation, especially in 2026. Through our daily contemplation and daily down to earth action, may we become agents of healing and wholeness and may new vision, new values, and new possibilities spring forth as good news for our fractured world. Amen.