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Progressive Ponderings
Hierarchical Systems – Part 2

Hierarchical systems are about power!

The most brutal atrocities in human his-tory originated with quests for power or pursuits for more power. The power of hierarchical systems churned out thousands of wars, oppression, male-distribution of wealth, inequality, bullying, lack of accountability, tyranny, colonization, slavery, apartheid, the Inquisition and torture to name a few. Power systems always seek to be self-perpetuating.

War is the enabler of power!

Hierarchs appeal to nationalism and patriotism preceding and during war. Often divine mandate is tucked in. Once patriotism and divine will are established, blind obedience becomes the most important virtue.

Patriotism, loyalty, and obedience allow “power” to present basic absurdities as self-evident truths:

- We are a peaceful nation.
- They hate our freedoms.
- Perpetual war will bring peace.
- We must restrict your freedoms to protect you (and your freedoms).
- We need 10,000 nuclear bombs so others can't have nuclear bombs.
- Arming the world will bring peace.
- Etc.

The Big Three of hierarchy are wealth, law (govt.), and religion.

What is happening today with the United States being in two wars and threatening another is the rule, not an exception. Big money from political and corporate imperialists bought a neocon administration which allows no compromises on its grand design of world dominance. Nationalistic Christianity blesses greed as God's favor and war as God's chosen method. The same big three cooperated in all the colonial practices in the “New World” – resource exploitation, native removal, white man privilege, slavery, class privilege, wars of expansion. Victims at the bottom of this hierarchical system were salved with “your earthly circumstance is the will of God. Look forward to a heavenly reward.”

Nuremburg exposed the hierarchical system.

One after another the Nazis brought to trial obedience to the system as defense for their participation in millions of acts of genocide. His-tory lessons such as Nuremburg, while extremely important, don't have a lasting effect on deeply entrenched hierarchical cultures.

Patriotism in the U.S. is now defined as obedience and loyalty to the president.

Hierarchs engineer their own impunity.

If a hierarchical system is caught in immorality or illegality the culpability is passed as far down the system as possible. A recent example is the conviction of U.S. soldiers for torture that was approved at the top of the administrative pyramid. The criminal pedophilia scandals within the U.S. Catholic Church illustrate in another way the impunity at the top. The bishop enablers suffered no consequences. In the corporate world CEOs who make decisions that sometimes devastate the lives of thousands of employees and whole communities are often rewarded. Corporate law is designed to shield the corporate hierarchy from liability.

“He's preaching anarchy!”

Such statements are again right-wing traps – hierarchy or anarchy, with us or against us. Modern humankind has achieved the ability to annihilate itself. Shouldn't that same human race be capable of restructuring its societies in a manner different from the hierarchies that have so ill-served it in the past?
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