

Reflection Friday Week 23 – 2021

Planks and splinters! This is one of the most sobering parables of Jesus for preachers and yet it is ignored. There is a gentler saying in English that states you can only see the faults in other that exist in yourself.

In 1952, on Koshima island, scientists provided monkeys with sweet potatoes dropped in the sand. The monkeys liked the taste of the potatoes but found the dirt unpleasant. One day a female monkey solved the problem by washing the potatoes in a nearby stream. She taught this trick to her mother. Her playmates also learned this and they taught their mothers. Between 1952 and 1958 all the young monkeys learned to wash the sandy sweet potatoes to make them more palatable. Only the adults who imitated their children learned this social improvement. Other adults kept eating the dirty sweet potatoes. Then something startling happened. In autumn 1958, a certain number of Koshima monkeys were washing sweet potatoes – the exact number is unknown. Assume there were 99 monkeys who had learned to wash their potatoes. Later that day, the hundredth monkey learned to wash potatoes and something extraordinary happened. By that evening almost everyone in the tribe was washing sweet potatoes before eating them. The added energy of this hundredth monkey somehow created an ideological breakthrough! Then a most surprising thing was observed by these scientists. This habit of washing sweet potatoes jumped over the sea. Colonies of monkeys on other islands and the mainland troop of monkeys at Takasakiyama began washing their sweet potatoes. It follows that, when a certain critical number achieves an awareness, this new awareness may be communicated from mind to mind. Although the exact number may vary, this Hundredth Monkey Phenomenon means that when only a limited number of people know of a new way, it may remain the conscious property of these people. But there is a point at which if only one more person tunes-in to a new awareness, a field is strengthened so that this awareness is picked up by almost everyone!

This is why the efforts we make to help the planet heal are so important!