

In my last community comment I finished with the statement that the greatest experiment in human history – our Democracy - is slipping through our fingers for the simple reason that we are allowing it. But then the Standing Rock Sioux tribe won a victory over corporate and political power.

Water is important everywhere, but the Sioux people, by protecting the water of their place on Earth, have shown what moral authority looks like. Their commitment attracted support from around the world, and showed people everywhere what it means to protect your home. It may only be temporary but I know it is sending a loud message to all citizens of the world. We, the people, can be heard and resist peacefully.

Reporters and activists are, rightfully so, holding up the Standing Rock victory as a shining example of how we, by breaking out of our single-issue and limited-constituency bubbles, can create a powerful synergy capable of protecting our common home. The victory in North Dakota is rare precisely because it's contagious, because it shows people everywhere that organizing and peaceful resistance is not futile.

The American people want to switch to renewable energy—not to invest in more fossil fuel infrastructure. Many are closing accounts with big banks and moving their funds into credit unions and community banks, thus helping rebuild their local economy.

The need for all of us to move away from single-issue organizing – whether it be peace, social justice, food and farming, campaign finance reform, faith, environment and climate change to name only a few - and coalesce around a shared determination to stand up to corruption and to defend our basic rights and our common home is happening.

At Standing Rock, people found many ways to exert power. In the face of pepper spray, rubber bullets, dogs, concussion grenades, and water cannons, the water protectors generally remained nonviolent. Their responses were prayerful and sometimes even loving. This display of courage moved the hearts of millions. Watching the action of the police reminded me of the horrors of the civil rights movement in the 60s. I knew then, as I know now, that I'm not strong enough to show that type of courage, and I freely admit that I'm ashamed.

The water protectors won a huge victory with the Corps of Engineers decision—a victory that benefits not only the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, not only those along the Missouri River, but everyone. We all drink water and need a stable climate. As we navigate what may be the most dangerous time in human history and create a post-fossil fuel society, we can take the lessons of respect and nonviolence, of valuing life over money, from the Standing Rock Sioux.

A new revolution in values and culture is rippling out across the country and the world, and it started at Standing Rock.

Bill Schausser