

Dorothy Day, Geneva and a New Anthem

My Dear Friends,

On my computer keyboard there is a little sign that was made for me by my friend, Paddy Bruce. It says, "Where is your Spirit? Call it Back." It's a constant meditation and a constant challenge. Life and Death have both been hovering close this Spring. The garden is bursting with lilacs, tulips, apple and plum blossoms. This past week I held a tiny baby, and a brand new kitten. My life and work seem fragrant with hope and possibility. Yet in the midst of it all, our Global Village seems to be in grave danger. In my neighborhood, a 16-year old boy murdered an 8-year old boy. It was my neighborhood's version of September 11th, in which any pretense that we might be exempt from the violence of these times was shattered. Our neighborhood. My son's school. The grief and shock for us all has been immeasurable. Please send prayers to the families of both boys, their neighbors and friends.

To call back my spirit, I look to where I find hope. And there is so much that is hopeful. Here's a quote from Starhawk:

"Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free."

I've found a number of those circles over the past weeks. Just two weeks ago I flew to Philadelphia to participate in the General Assembly of United Methodist Women. Ten thousand women from around the world. I felt so very welcomed and appreciated and blessed and sustained. Hope is alive among those who are putting their heads and hearts into the healing of this world. And I can't begin to tell you how it felt to sing in chorus with ten thousand women! One renewed connection to Musimbi Kanyoro, General Secretary of the World YWCA, resulted in an invitation to Geneva to help with a training in a few weeks. Spring in the Alps! What a blessing!

You can view highlights of the Conference, including hearing the speeches of Musimbi with Michelle Beg, Marian Wright Edelman, Joyce Sohl and many others, on their web site:

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/assembly/>

One of the speakers, a Lutheran pastor named Barbara Lundblad, ended her presentation with new words to God Bless America. The old words are pretty

good. But too often the singing of that song has been accompanied by soldiers and guns and flags and a patriotic sense that seems to have lost connection with the needs of the rest of the world. Some terrible things have been done, and continue to be done, in the name of patriotism.

God bless the world we love
Stranger and friend
Go before us, restore us.
With a hope that despair cannot end.
Ev'ry people, ev'ry nation,
Mighty ocean, heaven's dome!
God bless the world we love,
Our only home.
God, bless the world you love,
Our only home.

Barbara Lundblad

Last Sunday I was singing for another group of people who give me great hope. It was the tenth anniversary celebration of Earth Ministry. Their concern extends to all creation, and is another reminder of the interconnectedness of all things. We cannot afford to ignore any piece of this delicate web.

One constant source of hope is the monthly reading of The Catholic Worker. Here's a quote from Dorothy Day, re-printed in their most recent issue:
"Deliver us, O Lord, from the fear of our enemies which makes cowards of us all."

I find great hope in the work that is evolving with my doctoral project. I've arranged to sing and do a workshop at Radcliffe House, a transitional house for women coming out of prison. I'm working with two women of the WINGS program of the Women of Wisdom Foundation. We are trying, together, to find some funding for this program, in order to bring speakers and artists together with some of the women who are most in need of their gifts. I'm just beginning, and feeling a bit scared and excited by it all. Any of your experiences and wisdom on this endeavor would be most welcome.

I'll leave you with the chorus to the song I sent out to you all with my last mailing "The Ten Commandments". Your suggestions were wonderful! I incorporated several, and the song is much better now. Particular thanks to Donna Glee Williams who came up with the following chorus:

These are the ten commandments
They are not carved in stone
But written on the human heart
A sign to lead us home

May we all find loving arms to come home to....a circle of friends to "join strength to our strength to do the work that needs to be done."

Blessings,
Linda Allen

PS: Just a few words about my work:

Thanks to my computer guru, Brett Lovins (who is also a fabulous musician), the web site has been updated. You'll see that there is a new CD, the re-issue of "Mama Wanted To Be A Rainbow Dancer," now twenty years old! Two songs I sang at Assembly, "Here's To The Women!" and "On Hunger" are on that recording, as well as "Circle Me, Sisters." Here's a link to the ordering page -- you can order with your credit card by using CCNOW, or follow one of the other links to Amazon.com, Ladyslipper, Canadian River Music or others.
<http://www.lindasongs.com/pages/ordering1.htm>

The next month is particularly busy with workshops and concerts. It includes the trip to Geneva, Switzerland for the World YWCA, a peace rally in Bellingham (yes, indeed, there IS an anti-war movement!), a concert with Tracy Spring, Karen Reitz and Marie Eaton, the always amazing Northwest Folklife Festival, and more! Here's a link to the schedule:
<http://www.lindasongs.com/pages/itinerary.htm>

As always, to be removed from this list, please let us know!

FLASH! CHARLIE KING and KAREN BRANDOW will be at Roeder Home in Bellingham on June 12th, 7:30. I'm hosting. Call for information, 734-7979. This is music to give us hope and courage!

Linda Allen
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