



**A Service of Concern
September 16, 2001
Readings**

When I despair, I remember that, all through history, the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it. Always, they fall. Always.
— Mohandas Ghandi

An Open Letter from the Rev. William G. Sinkford President, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

September 12, 2001

Dear Friends,

The events of this week have shattered our sense of safety. Many of us are in shock. Many of us are afraid. Many of us long to know what to tell our children. Some of us grieve the loss of friends or loved ones. All of us search for our response as people of faith.

The images of destruction will not allow us to escape. The collapse of buildings mirrors a collapse of confidence, rocking the fragile foundations of our lives. Our world will never be the same. Our work to heal ourselves and to heal the world seems puny in comparison with the destruction we see. How shall we respond?

First, let us hold in our hearts and in our prayers the families of those who were killed and wounded in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Let us stand with those who grieve and those who wait the long hours for news of loved ones.

Let us know our fear, but not allow it to overwhelm us. For most of us, life normally seems safe and secure. But people in many parts of the world, and many people in our part of the world, know violence and potential violence in their daily

lives.

The terrorist attacks are being likened to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a day that “will live in infamy.” Pearl Harbor did galvanize this nation into action, and my hope is that this tragedy, too, will impel us to address the brokenness of our world that makes violence an imaginable solution. Remember also that Pearl Harbor led to the impounding and imprisonment of thousands of innocent Japanese Americans. There are Arab and Muslim communities in this country and around the world that grieve as we do, and fear as we do. I hope our congregations will reach out to those communities and stand with them.

We must seek justice and, as our President says, to punish those responsible. But retribution will not create safety, nor move us toward justice.

This tragedy tests our faith. Where is God in this? Where is the Spirit of Life?

May our congregations be centers of support where we can bring our questions and our fears, where we can find the presence of the holy in our coming together.

Yours in faith and hope,
William G. Sinkford

“And...you know what...there is this strange feeling too...that Grace is present.”

The author, Erik Sachs, is Daron Sach's Brother

Dear Friends and Family,

Just a brief note to let you know I'm ok. I am alive and well and at home right now.

If this is my first contact with some of you in months or years, I apologize. I just figured it was best in these situations to contact more folks than less. My apologies if you are offended.

To those of you who want a brief description of my day yesterday, read on. If you don't, just delete knowing I am well and am so grateful you are in my life and love you for your support, phone calls, e-mails, prayers and messages. If you ARE the least bit interested, please do read on as I would rather not repeat it if we have the opportunity to talk as it is painful to keep recalling the details.

I work about a half mile north of the world trade center towers and was coming out of the W4th St. Subway at 8:55am yesterday when I noticed crowds on the street corner. I didn't know what was going on until I looked up and saw the gaping hole aflame in the north side of tower one. In disbelief and amazement, I stood for a few minutes and overheard that a plane had done the damage. Shortly, I decided to get to work. When I got close to the office (in the west village, for those of you who know nyc geography, corner of Houston and Hudson St.'s) I looked again and it appeared there was now more smoke and sparkling things falling from near the second tower. Later I was to find out that the second plane crashed into

tower two as I was walking to work and the sparkles were the plane particles falling and fluttering in the air and to the ground. I got to work and they were evacuating our building. We all were on the street corner watching the towers ablaze. Unbelievable and horrific. The let us up around 9:35 pm. So much confusion and uncertainty. (Got to speak with some of you by phone but they were jammed. I got many of your messages today that were left yesterday.) The agency I work for has TV's throughout the floor so we were able to watch what was going on from the news as well as outside our windows. I work on the 18th (top) floor of our building with a clear view of the upper three quarters of both towers. I can't decide if it would have been better to see it on TV at home or outside our window. In a strange way I am kind of glad I got to see it live, otherwise I almost would not have believed it. It was too awful. I was gripped by horror, sadness, amazement, shock, fear and total disbelief. I could barely react, I was silent, gazing on. I didn't leave to go home because, at that time our building was the safest place to be since the subways stopped running and there was no way for me to get home other than walking. Not an easy walk since I live above 190th St. in Manhattan. Needless to say we watched the buildings collapse before our eyes in horror. We were still far enough away not to have any debris near us, and there was a firm south easterly breeze blowing all in the opposite direction. Around 1pm, a co-worker and I eventually decided to grab some water bottles, a quick bite and try to head home. A friend who resides on the upper west

side at 72nd street agreed to let me hang with him until trains were up and running again. Marge, my co-worker and I walked to the Hudson river (two blocks away) and started the trek up town. At one point some emergency busses came and picked many of us up to take us about a dozen blocks north. There we met some survivors from the towers. We were relieved to know that MANY people DID get out before the buildings collapsed. Spread this good news, please. These folks were even above the plane crash (in the first building I believe)! They all walked down a hundred or so flights of stairs and one even made it down the elevator! It was wonderful to hear the news that many did evacuate before the collapse.

What else to say? It was quite a long walk up town with most city dwellers coming to the river to take the boats to jersey and home since no subways or trains were yet running. Lots of people. There were hundreds of emergency vehicles lined up waiting to help. At times we weren't allowed in certain areas and had to reroute our walk. Marge and I let the sunny weather, Hudson river, and flowers along the route home act as a temporary balm for the gentle state of shock we were in.

Eventually, I got to my friends house and hung there for some time. Heard that the outbound trains were up and running. My friend, Joe escorted me to get a burrito and to Central Park for a bit of a rest before he took off for an appointment and I decided to take the subway home. I got in around 7pm. I had a pounding headache which was relieved by a comforting conversation I had with my Dad on the phone in which I let lots and lots of tears out. After that I was able to sleep in relative peace.

I am grateful for life today and for so many of you who have called, e-mailed and left messages. My neighborhood is healing to my spirits as it is very far away from downtown and full of trees and the nearby park with the gardens and beautiful views of the upper Hudson and Jersey cliffs help tremendously.

Phone lines seem to be clearing up slowly and I look forward to talking with any of you if we haven't already.

My office is closed today and yesterday was told to call in before coming to work tomorrow to see what the situation is

like. I am not really looking forward to going in again. 3

Today I have mixed feelings. I feel better after sleeping and crying. I feel fortunate for my life and especially for all of you in it. I feel moments of great sadness. I ask "why God?" I feel in awe for the preciousness of life...and in disbelief that I am still here. I feel terrible sadness for those that were lost: terrible, terrible sadness...so hard to describe that feeling...hard to describe. I am haunted, at moments, by the images I saw. I feel tremendous grief for what this means for NYC and for the country and world. I walk around today in disbelief and amazement. I also feel like, in a minute I will wake up and it will all be gone; I'll go back to work and everything will be as it was on the day before. I can't believe that the two world trade towers are gone!?! The two towers I walked through every day to work on my first 7 months here! Landmarks and wondrous buildings for me and for most everyone I know...gone?

And...you know what...there is this strange feeling too (I have to include this...I'd be remiss if I didn't) that Grace is present. I am feeling lifted and supported by It. I feel It through all of you, especially. I felt It through the children I saw yesterday and today who are oblivious. I feel It in the sunshine, in the trees and in the gentle breezes. I felt it as I reveled in the sunshine as I did some morning yoga in the park. I feel It in the dove that landed near and in the squirrel that chomped on a nut a few yards from me. So precious it is, and grateful am I for being its recipient today. It is the same feeling I felt lifted by in the times around my mothers death.

Grace is needed now more than ever to heal us all going forward. I am keeping the survivors, victims, their friends and families, those who are responsible (especially them), our nation and world in my thoughts and prayers as I know and hope many of you are. I know our collective thoughts, prayers and dreams ARE making a difference. Especially dreams! I am dreaming for peace and for bringing our entire globe together in unity rather than separating it with anger and actions of revenge.

Please keep in touch. Respond if you want by phone or pc. I love you all. Talk soon,
Erik

Eight Statements Responding to the Horrible and Tragic Events of September 11, 2001.

Statement by The Rev. Barry W. Lynn Executive Director, Americans United Advisory Board Member, Equal Partners in Faith September 12, 2001

At this time of national tragedy, we extend our deepest sympathy to the families of those killed and injured in the horrific attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. As a people, we cannot — and will not — allow these repugnant crimes to weaken our commitment to the American values of democracy, pluralism and freedom of conscience. Our nation stands united in our determination that terrorism will not triumph over constitutional government and that those guilty of these crimes will be brought to justice.

Statement by Ralph G. Neas President, People For the American Way September 13, 2001

Like all Americans, we continue to struggle with the aftermath

of the devastating terrorist attacks in New York City and at the Pentagon.

We grieve for the victims of these heinous acts. We salute the courage and heroism of so many individuals, from passengers and crew on the hijacked airliners to the police, firefighters, and other rescue workers, many of whom have lost their lives in the line of duty. We praise those political leaders who have acted in ways that have drawn us together in the midst of overwhelming loss. This is a time for bipartisanship. It is a time for making a shared national commitment to bring to justice those responsible and for acting appropriately to prevent future such attacks.

But there are other dangers we must guard against, as well as terrorists. While we seek to defend ourselves against future threats, we must also guard against allowing our own anger and fear to cause us to act against our own interests as a free people. We have already seen pundits and political leaders

suggesting that the fight against terrorism requires us to sacrifice the constitutional liberties that are at the core of what it means to be an American. That would be a victory for our nation's enemies.

We have already seen acts of harassment and violence directed against Arab-Americans and Muslim Americans. We call on all Americans to reject that kind of scapegoating and to stand up against it in their own communities. Targeting people based on their ethnicity or religion was not the American Way when Japanese-Americans were taken from their homes and shipped to internment camps during World War II. It is not the American Way today, when Muslim Americans are taunted or attacked on the streets of the country that is their home.

People For the American Way's 500,000 members and activists are guardians of the Constitution and the democratic values that sustain our free society. We will vigorously support the government's efforts to identify those responsible for these acts of terror and to bring them to justice. And we will just as vigorously oppose efforts to exploit this tragedy in ways that diminish the constitutional and civil rights for which generations of Americans - in the armed forces and social justice movements - have fought and died. Now, more than ever, we will act to promote and protect the ideals of the American Way.

Statement by The Interfaith Alliance September 12, 2001
(WASHINGTON - September 12, 2001) The Interfaith Alliance (TIA), The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, their Board of Directors and staff send their heart-felt condolences to the families and friends of those injured or killed in yesterday's horrific attack on this great nation. While we may never fully grasp the devastation and overwhelming sense of loss that have occurred, we continue to pray for everyone affected by this tragedy and offer our strength and support. We also pray for the gift of wisdom for the leaders of this nation as they carry us forward.

While these cowardly terrorists have stolen the lives of many innocent people, we must not allow them to rip apart our souls, alter our historic commitment to freedom and break our spirits.

Even though the great religious traditions of in our nation differ significantly, they do share a set of core values. Let us face into our fears, holding fast to those values. Such a posture will prevent the kind of dangerous stereotyping evidenced in despicable acts of hate and violence fomented upon Muslim and Islamic centers of worship in our land. Guidance from the sacred scriptures and oral traditions of our varied religions will keep us on a path characterized by respect for the dignity and worth of all people, appreciation of diversity, and a compassionate pursuit of community.

In these turbulent hours, I call upon the people of TIA/F to serve as voices of reason, advocates for liberty, supporters of diversity, patriots with civility and a fellowship of compassion as well as people of prayer, meditation and good will.

Statement by the National Council of Churches, September 12, 2001

We join all in our nation and world in shock and anger at

Tuesday's horrific chain of attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, claiming yet-uncounted innocent lives. In particular, we hold the families of the victims in our prayers. We acknowledge the grief, sense of vulnerability, loss and fear that result from these attacks. We condemn these vicious attacks in the strongest possible terms.

Even as our national sites are under attack, we call on all people to manifest the best of our national spirit. At such a time as this, we must hold together. We call on people of faith to reach out to one another. We especially urge churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship to join in prayer and practical help. We must stand united against the temptation to retaliate against innocent persons.

We can all pray. We can respond to calls for donations of blood and other practical assistance. In this the worst attack on U.S. territory since Pearl Harbor, we must turn our eyes to the God of us all. In Psalm 23, we are promised Gods care even "in the presence of our enemies." May God guide us in these days of pain.

Statement by the Islamic Society of North America September 11, 2001

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) joins Muslim Americans and all Americans in expressing its deep sorrow over the deliberate air-crashes in New York and Washington, DC that have led to the loss of countless innocent lives.

ISNA joins Muslim organizations throughout North America in condemning these terrorist attacks and calls upon Muslim Americans to come forward with their skills and resources to help alleviate the sufferings of the affected people and their families.

ISNA condemns these senseless acts of terrorism against innocent civilians, which will only be counterproductive to any agenda the perpetrators may have had in mind. No political cause could ever be assisted by such immoral acts.

We join with all Americans in calling for the swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators, and call upon our justice system to maintain strict standards of justice and fairness in these trying times.

We also urge the media to exercise restraint, and to act responsibly when reporting on these terrorist attacks. Until the perpetrators are brought to justice, all media reports should be accurate, restrained and sensitive.

Let us pray to God that He may Guide us all to keep firm in following our principles and offer relief to the victims of violence wherever they may be.

Statement of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism September 13, 2001

Together with all Americans, we are still in shock, reeling from the devastation of Tuesday's terrorist attacks.

At times such as these and we pray that there will no more such times it is especially important that we behave with deliberation, lest trauma distort our actions. Specifically, we need to bear in mind that this conflict is between the United States and those who would see our way of life destroyed. It is not between some Americans and others. We must not allow this attack on America to divide Americans

We are concerned, in particular, with reports that some in

our nation have directed their understandable anger at Tuesday's carnage at individual Arab Americans and Muslim Americans. We are outraged at reports of attacks on Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and their mosques and businesses and condemn all such acts of lawlessness. Such attacks, such scapegoating, are deeply un-American. They also violate what is perhaps a preeminent lesson of Jewish history the danger of group hatred, of imputing to a group the actions of a few individuals.

We know that like all Americans, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans overwhelming share our revulsion at the terrorist attacks, and our commitment to American values. We know that they, too, have family and friends injured or killed in the attacks, and our condolences go out to them, as to all who are grieving.

On Tuesday, evil was evident, but humanity will prevail. Since Tuesday, we have witnessed a remarkable outpouring of human kindness, as Americans instinctively insist that evil's victory would be limited and that we would not permit inhumanity to prevail. We believe, deeply and stubbornly, that goodness and kindness are more powerful than cruelty. We therefore call on all Americans in their interpersonal dealings, and especially in dealing with those rendered particularly vulnerable by these events, to be fully American to act with kindness and with courtesy, to seek to express, as Lincoln put it, the better angels of our nature.

Statement by the American Civil Liberties Union September 12, 2001

The American Civil Liberties Union joins the nation today in grieving over the devastating loss of life resulting from the joint attacks against the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the crash of the airplane outside of Pittsburgh.

We strongly applaud the words of our national leaders who, in reaction to this unparalleled tragedy, have promised to preserve the free and open society that has made this nation great.

We welcome, in particular, the eloquent words of President Bush who told the nation last night that, "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining."

Similarly, Attorney General John Ashcroft pledged that, "the determination of these terrorists will not deter the determination of the American people. We are survivors, and freedom is a survivor. A free American people will not be intimidated, nor will we be defeated."

In the difficult days ahead, the ACLU will work with our

nation's leaders to help the nation achieve its goal of protecting the security and freedom of all people in America.

We will urge our leaders to continue to uphold the principles of liberty the nation holds dear as they pursue those responsible for this devastating attack on American soil. Finally, we take a measure of comfort in the fact that one of the greatest symbols of freedom and democracy in our nation still stands: through the billowing smoke of destruction in lower Manhattan, the Statue of Liberty lifts her torch to freedom. Long may she survive.

Statement by the Alliance for Tolerance and Freedom Laura Montgomery Rutt, Executive Director and Board member of Equal Partners in Faith September 14, 2001

The Alliance for Tolerance and Freedom wishes to affirm our commitment to diversity and equality during this time of crisis. We offer our condolences to the individuals directly affected by this tragedy.

Already, violence against Arab-Americans and Muslims has taken place as a result of misguided stereotypes and prejudice against individuals based on their nationality, religion and race. As American citizens, we need to insure that all people in our nation are given the same protections from violence and discrimination and assured the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We are the envy of every nation because of our freedoms and our diversity, and this is our strength. Yet we are not perfect. Discrimination and verbal and physical abuse against individuals based on their race, religion, nationality, gender, ability, marital status, gender identity and sexual orientation takes place on a daily basis in this nation.

This is a good time for us to reflect on the violence we can cause to one another as a result of our bigotry and fears, and make sure that we do not turn on each other in our anger, reversing the great progress we have already made as a nation. Let us not make the same mistakes we have in the past, and single out innocent individuals as targets of retribution. Now is the time for healing and we can begin now, we can begin at home.

As we try to make sense of what happened to our nation on September 11, 2001 and seek ways to help each other in this time of disaster, we ask everyone to stand up against hatred and violence in this country, and work to protect the rights of all people, whether Arab-American, Asian, African-American, Latino, Muslim, Jewish, Pagan, Christian, gay, or straight. We can pull together as a nation, and now is the time.

After the Terrorism: A prayer for healing

Holy Life-Giving Spirit and Intelligence, our God, horrors upon horrors have happened to your human family before, and each time we weep, we moan, we mourn our losses - and then return to faith - however we can. Curses rise against you of course because our images of you are imperfect, and the Divinity we curse never existed in the first place nor deserved such a theology of wishful thinking, without reverence for your Absolute Mystery. Can faith survive? Only the faith that reverences evidence, honors doubt, and respects silence, your

silence as well as the silence of sorrow, bewilderment and human agony. Still one mystery above all stuns us: that of human freedom, freedom to do good, freedom to withhold doing good, and freedom to do evil and violence of the most heartless kind. Why have you risked giving us such freedom? And now, after tragedy, do you despair of your human experiment? No, you do not, not after some million years of human society where again and again human creativity balances human destructiveness, and where human hearts rise and

defeat the challenges proffered by hatred and violence. Along with you, then, we lift our eyes to new hopes for a future better than our past, and a healing from hatred and revenge that sur-

renders to what is, and remains wiser than despair and more enduring than sorrow. Amen.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

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“I think of you and I am very, very sorry.”

Many of us remember Anja Kuschk, who lived with the Sachs family for a year as an exchange student.

Hi everyone,

I hope y'all are alright. Do you actually know someone who has been in New York or Washington D.C.? I have a friend in Chicago. She is there for Au-pair for one year. She and her host family are ok. I feel so sorry for all the victims of this horrible, coward attack. What about Texas? Are schools, offices, and shops closed?

Do you actually know that the whole world is troubled? Here in Germany they have interrupted the program of every TV station to show special reports about the USA shortly after the first plane crashed into the WTC. Still, every hour they show news updates and several specials. This morning at 10:00 AM we had a minute of silence to remember the numerous dead people. Last night there were many special church services and groups got together to walk a mile to show their

sorrow and sympathy for every victim. They were several Germans in the planes and in the WTC, too. At least 200 Germans are missed. I know this is almost nothing compared to the probably thousands but a human life is still a human life. This attack affects the whole world. Of course, all the NATO countries (Germany is one of them) stand behind the USA and support you. Lots of people here donate money to help all the victims. We do everything we can.

I know it is a bad situation, but I shortly want to let you know what's going on with me. I was in Brazil in July with my Dad and met Luiza, Paula and Thiago. We had a great time together back then. It was as if we have never been apart for 2 years. I'll start my studies at Siemens in October if life is ever getting back to normal.

I think of you and I am very, very sorry.

Anja Kuschk

“Do not let them win their primary objective - to create fear and terror.”

For all of us there has been a fundamental change in our perception of the world, and the security we have always taken for granted in our homeland. For many of our friends and neighbors, this first battle, of a war we did not seek, has intentionally taken loved ones away who were innocent civilians. While there are always some innocents taken in a war waged by men of honor, it is always error, which is inescapable in the chaos of battle. Our military warriors, who were targeted at the Pentagon, lived in the knowledge that they may be called upon to go in harm's way, but not without a chance to fight back. And even then, have loved ones whose lives are as grievously altered.

A terrorist, by definition, has one goal - to create fear, and terror. And by that creation, disrupt the lives and commerce of their targets. Never in history has there been a parallel to this cowardly and vicious attack. The Pearl Harbor attack comes immediately to mind, because it too was a sneak attack. But there the similarity ends. That was an attack on MILITARY targets. And I fear we will have more casualties from this attack. My prayers go out to the families, and the wounded that will deal with this terror personally for the rest of their lives. And to those trapped and still alive in the rubble, that they might be saved.

We all are frustrated by feelings of helplessness, anger, shock, fear for our loved ones, and some just fear. All of us want to help in some way. Most are calling for the complete and utter destruction of those responsible. As I do. But there is more that we as individuals can do now.

Some are already doing that. By donating blood, their

time, and for those in the local area their manpower and skills. But there is something all of us can do now to absolutely defeat at least some of the goals of the evil men that cold-bloodedly killed as many innocents as they could. We can, as many are already doing, refuse to let them change our day to day lives, our business, our freedom, and most importantly our courage. If fear of safety and security affect us and we become afraid of every plane overhead, or large buildings, then we have surrendered to their evil plan. In that way we can each contribute as warriors, and defeat their plan.

It appears that something heroic happened on board at least one of the aircraft, and I have no doubt that the flight recorder will reflect that when found. So do not think that some Americans did not fight, and defeat, at least one of the units that tried to attack us, and deny them their target, with their own lives. I certainly hope I am right.

My point is that while there is no guarantee that this won't happen again, each of us can fight back by refusing to give in to, or to let them plant, that terror in our hearts and minds. Resolve to fight back with your own courage, patriotism, and resolve that they cannot cower Americans. The unity and resolve to take care of the victims is job one, and for those who don't think they can help, you must realize we are all now on the front line of a war of terror. Job two is to hunt down these cowards like the dogs they are, and to destroy them. Not in anger, but of necessity.

Do not let them win their primary objective - to create fear and terror.

James R. Kelly

“The rendition was everything you could expect from the loudest. . . steam calliope in the world; it seemed to fit.”

Two parables, true stories about what happened to America this week, but not about New York or even Washington.

[Parable 1.](#)

Tuesday's events left me stranded in Orlando, Florida. By Thursday I had figured out that driving home would be quicker than flying, and since I had a rental car, I decided to just hit

the road. Before I left, I felt obliged to tell Avis that I was making off with one of their cars, so I dropped by a local Avis office on the way out of town. There was a young lady behind the desk. As soon as she could liberate herself from the phone, she asked how I was. I said that I'd been better but that I'd been worse too. She said that she had been better, and I couldn't help but notice that that's the way she looked. She called her boss and learned that she had to give me another car which had to be cleaned up which was annoying since the day was wearing on but which worked out since it gave me enough time to grab some barbecue before leaving. My new car was ready when I got back from the barbecue joint. The young lady filled gave me the new contract and told me to have a good trip. I told her to hang in there and she said she would try. Avis employees wear a name tag. The name on this young lady's tag was "Mashid."

Parable 2.

I was passing through Louisiana on Friday on a route just North of New Orleans. But when I came to the turnoff to New Orleans, something in me told me not to bypass the Big Easy. Maybe I needed to make sure that they were still serving beignets and coffee at the Café du Monde, that people were still sucking down oysters at Desire, and that the Mississippi still held the Crescent City in her arms. I took the Basin Street exit off I-10 and headed down Conti St. through the

French Quarter. It was, like it has always been, full of tourists, palmists, horse-drawn carriages, and drunks. I parked in a lot near the river. I made sure that the Café du Monde was still doing business. I fortified myself with an oyster Po' Boy at Desire. I walked back to the river and climbed the banks, over to a pier where the stern-wheeler Natchez was about to take on a load of tourists. An old black guy with a trumpet was trying to make a living keeping the boatloads of tourists entertained. I sat down on a bench beside another guy making a model of a jet airplane out of Budweiser beer cans. I listened to the trumpeter belt out It's a Wonderful World; it seemed to fit. I dropped a couple of bucks in his tip box, and he started to play again. I've forgotten what. As I was walking away, I heard the most amazing whistle coming from the Natchez. After a few notes, I realized that I was listening to the loudest, if not the largest steam calliope in the world. I stood and watched the traffic on the river as the calliope went through a couple of George M. Cohan tunes: Grand Old Flag and Yankee Doodle Dandy. After a run at St. Louis Blues, the calliope fell silent for a moment or two. Then it swung into the song we've heard so much this last week, God Bless America. The rendition was everything you could expect from the loudest, if not the largest, steam calliope in the world; it seemed to fit.

—Henry Halff

What Do We Tell Our Children?

What do we tell our children?

We listen. We hold them. We tell them, "I love you."

"Love is forever."

If they are very young, pre-school aged, tell them, "Parents and teachers keep children safe."

Listen. Hold them. Tell them, "I love you." "Love is forever."

If they are old enough to be aware that this happened, but not really to understand the specifics of what happened, ask them, "What do you think? How does your body feel?" Then listen to their specific feelings and reassure them. Don't answer questions they don't ask, but do listen for the questions behind the questions. They may want to be reassured that there are grownups who love them and will take care of them, no matter what. Tell them, "Let's not watch TV tonight; let's go to church and be with our people!"

Listen. Hold them. Tell them, "I love you." "Love is forever."

If they are old enough to understand the facts of what happened, and want to process why it happened, tell them that sometimes horrible things happen. Tell them that, while every person is inherently good, sometimes people get angry enough and scared enough to do very mean things that hurt other people. Tell them that we don't know yet who did this, and that it is important to respect all people while we take the time to figure it out. Tell them that a small group of individuals did this—not a religion, not a country, not a person who looks a particular way or has a particular kind of name. Tell them about a

time when you were a child and you were afraid because of something scary that happened—the Cuban Missile Crisis, Three Mile Island, another tragedy. Ask them how they feel about what happened, and what they are wondering.

Listen. Hold them. Tell them, "I love you." "Love is forever."

If they know someone who lost parents or other loved ones in the tragedies, talk about what it means to support a friend. Remind them not to gossip, but to speak directly to their friend or acquaintance and acknowledge the loss.

Listen. Hold them. Tell them, "I love you." "Love is forever."

If they go in their room and slam the door and talk on the phone to their friends, if they say "It's no big deal. Why does everybody want to talk about this? We already talked about it all day at school." Slip a note under their door. Tell them: I am going to church now to be with people whom I love and trust. I wish you would come with me. I want to listen. I want to hold you. I want you to know I love you. I love you forever.

As parents, we want nothing more than to protect our children from pain, from fear, from harm. As parents, we know nothing is more impossible. How we handle our own grief and integrity will speak volumes to our children about how to be a human being in a troubled, broken, world. May we be worthy of this most sacred charge that has been given to us. Forever.

Listen. Hold them. Tell them, "I love you." "Love is forever." *Thoughts from the Rev. Meg Riley Director, UUA Washington Office September 11, 2001*

The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo!, he between whom and you there was enmity shall become as though he were a bosom friend. **Qur'an 41.34**

“Nothing’s corny this week.”

Elbow Grease — the Webmonkey newsletter
<http://www.webmonkey.com/>
Friday, September 14, 2001
Hello everyone,

Today marks the end of a terrible, shocking week, and frankly, we’re still pretty dazed.

Watching and reading and talking about all this horror for four days straight has produced a unique kind of exhaustion. On top of that, there’s the strain of “acting normal” and forcing yourself to concentrate on things — work, grocery shopping, school, whatever — that don’t seem to have a whole lot of meaning right now. And then there’s the near-physical act of hoping: for the success of rescuers, that the friends and fami-

ly of victims can find peace, that our country isn’t heading someplace truly awful. All that.

So we’re looking forward to this weekend. We plan to spend as much of it as we possibly can demonstrating how grateful we are to be here. Visiting/calling/writing the people we love, eating a towering piece of chocolate cake, finding a patch of freshly mown lawn and breathing it in ... all sorts of great things.

It feels corny, writing this. But that seems to be the one silver lining to this monstrous event: Nothing’s corny this week. Not patriotism, not heroism, not “happy to be alive”ism. We just hope you can find your way to celebrating that side of things, if not this weekend, then soon.

Imagine (words and music by John Lennon)

Imagine there’s no heaven, it’s easy if you try,
No hell below us, above us only sky.
Imagine all the people, living for today. ah—

Imagine there’s no countries, it isn’t hard to do,
Nothing to live or die for, and no religion, too.
Imagine all the people living in peace, You—

may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one,
I hope some day you’ll join us,

and the world will be as one.

Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can,
No need for greed or hunger, a brotherhood of man.
Imagine all the people, sharing all the world. You—

may say I’m a dreamer. but I’m not the only one.
I hope some day you’ll join us
And the World will live as one.

It’s a crime, not a war.

I don’t often [ab]use my position as the publisher of content on www.quaker.org. Today, I feel led to do so.

The people who did this have committed a crime, not an act of war. Friends should encourage people to think of it this way. There is not a state in the world which will own up to this group. No state will try to protect the group that did this, presuming we have sufficient evidence to convince the world of their guilt. So, once there has been a capture, and a trial, justice will have been served.

It should be simple to position this act as a crime, not a war. When someone says “This means war!!! We must have REVENGE”, just ask them “Against who?” Point out that individuals were behind this heinous act, and that individuals can be brought to justice.

Timothy McVeigh bombed the Alfred P Murrah Office Building. He was accused, tried, found guilty, sentenced, and a form of justice was attained. No war against his home state was contemplated.

Friends are anti-war, to be sure, but we are not now and have never been against justice. Indeed, war is its own form of injustice.

And then, once there has been closure, we must reconsid-

er our role as world policeman. We need to understand why people hate us so much that they are willing to give their lives to hurt us. Do we act in ways that would offend us if other countries were doing them to us? Is our foreign policy one which we would never allow one US state to hold against another US state? Are we operating under the rule of law? Are we carrying out the instructions of a court? Are we taking sides in conflicts that don’t involve us? Or are we acting as judge, jury, and executioner?

And especially and in particular, we need to re-think our official governmental support for Israel. There are enough zionists in America (and I count myself among them) to support Israel out of pocket. We should reduce taxes by the equivalent amount that we are paying to Israel, and get out of the business of taking sides as a country.

Please spread this idea around. Forward this URL (<http://quaker.org/crime.html>), talk about this idea, write letters to the editor, call your congress-critter and demand no war without a Congressional declaration of war.

Russell Nelson
Sep 14 16:38:15 EDT 2001

“That’s a logic that is incomprehensible to some people.”

I watched the BBC and CBC continuous coverage the other night on tv and was brought to tears by the phenomenon of brotherhood that I was seeing. There have been almost constant services going on around here in Sacramento. I’ve heard of no displays of anger against Middle Eastern members of our

community and we have many here. With the exception of the beauty shop craziness I spoke of before—which has to be explained as initial panic and anger—people have settled down to discussions of what’s the best thing to do now, how to communicate the seriousness of this to our children and yet

keep them safe, what can we do for those suffering. Our famed search and rescue team with their dogs who have been seasoned by earthquake and Oklahoma City recovery took off immediately. The blood banks have asked people to slow down and make appointments. The local tv stations are serving as communications and donations clearinghouses.

I am very proud of us, of our friends and of our time. There have been times and places in past human history when this kind of act would have brought on savagery and mindless destruction at once. Open your history books for numerous examples. Instead we grieve together and search our hearts. I feel much better about humanity than I ever have. We have the capacity to feel for each other, to be shocked at evil, to strive to rescue life and sanity out of the rubble.

Our humanity is shown in the fireman I saw this morning who described digging in a hole with his fingers, then clasping a hand. The hand scratched his knuckles and he began to cry, and cried as he dug. The person he brought out was pronounced ok in the ambulance. The fireman said he had lost his father in the "23rd street fire" a few years ago. Today, he said, he balanced the books and gave back a life. Then he cried again.

That's a logic that is incomprehensible to some people.

I'm very proud today, not only of Americans, but of people of good heart everywhere. In spite of all this, today I really feel that we shall overcome.

—Ardyce Chidester

I Have Been Living

I have been living
closer to the ocean than I thought—
in a rocky cove thick with seaweed.

It pulls me down when I go wading.
Sometimes, to get back to land
takes everything that I have in me.

Sometimes, to get back to land
is the worst thing a person can do.
Meanwhile, we are dreaming:

The body is innocent.
She has never hurt me.
What we love flutters in us.

—Jane Mead

Ecclesiastes 3:2-9

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

er;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

“Who has the belly for that? Bin Laden does. Anyone else?”

Dear Friends,

The following was sent to me by my friend Tamim Ansary. Tamim is an Afghani-American writer. He is also one of the most brilliant people I know in this life. When he writes, I read. When he talks, I listen. Here is his take on Afghanistan and the whole mess we are in.

- Gary T.

Dear Gary and whoever else is on this email thread:
I've been hearing a lot of talk about "bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age." Ronn Owens, on KGO Talk Radio today, allowed that this would mean killing innocent people, people who had nothing to do with this atrocity, but "we're at war, we have to accept collateral damage. What else can we do?" Minutes later I heard some TV pundit discussing whether we "have the belly to do what must be done."

And I thought about the issues being raised especially hard because I am from Afghanistan, and, even though I've lived here for 35 years, I've never lost track of what's going on there. So I want to tell anyone who will listen how it all looks from

where I'm standing.

I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York. I agree that something must be done about those monsters.

But the Taliban and Ben Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who took over Afghanistan in 1997. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazi SS. When you think Bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan" think "the Jews in the concentration camps." It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators. They would exult if someone would come in there, take out the Taliban and clear out the rat's nest of international thugs holed up in their country.

Some say, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering. A few years ago, the United Nations

estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan—a country with no economy, no food. There are millions of widows. And the Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves. The soil is littered with land mines, the farms were all destroyed by the Soviets. These are a few of the reasons why the Afghan people have not overthrown the Taliban.

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble is, that's been done. The Soviets took care of it already. Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done. Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. Someone already did all that.

New bombs would only stir the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely. In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans, they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would only be making common cause with the Taliban—by raping once again the people they've been raping all this time

So what else is there? What can be done, then? Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get

Bin Laden is to go in there with ground troops. When people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done" they're thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. Having the belly to overcome any moral qualms about killing innocent people. Let's pull our heads out of the sand. What's actually on the table is Americans dying. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to Bin Laden's hideout. It's much bigger than that, folks. Because to get any troops to Afghanistan, we'd have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by? You see where I'm going. We're flirting with a world war between Islam and the West.

And guess what: that's Bin Laden's program. That's exactly what he wants. That's why he did this. Read his speeches and statements. It's all right there. He really believes Islam would beat the West. It might seem ridiculous, but he figures if he can polarize the world into Islam and the West, he's got a billion soldiers. If the West wrecks a holocaust in those lands, that's a billion people with nothing left to lose; even better from Bin Laden's point of view. He's probably wrong, in the end the West would win, whatever that would mean, but the war would last for years and millions would die, not just theirs but ours. Who has the belly for that? Bin Laden does. Anyone else?
~ Tamim Ansary —

The Cellist

From Maybe (Maybe Not)

It is the year 2050. In a large Eastern European city, one that has survived the vicissitudes of more than a thousand years of human activity—in an open square in the city center—there is a rather odd civic monument. A bronze statue.

Not a soldier or politician.

Not a general on a horse or a king on a throne.

Instead, the figure of a somewhat common man, sitting in a chair.

Playing his cello.

Around the pedestal on which the statue sits, there are bouquets of flowers.

If you count, you will always find twenty—two flowers in each bunch.

The cellist is a national hero.

If you ask to hear the story of this statue, you will be told of a time of civil war in this city. Demagogues lit bonfires of hatred between citizens who belonged to different religions and ethnic groups. Everyone became an enemy of someone else. None was exempt or safe. Men, women, children, babies, grandparents—old and young—strong and weak—partisan and innocent—all, all were victims in the end. Many were maimed. Many were killed. Those who did not die lived like animals in the ruins of the city.

Except one man. A musician. A cellist. He came to a certain street corner every day. Dressed in formal black evening clothes, sitting in a fire-charred chair, he played his cello. Knowing he might be shot or beaten, still he played. Day after day he came. To play the most beautiful music he knew

Day after day after day. For twenty-two days.

His music was stronger than hate. His courage, stronger than fear.

And in time other musicians were captured by his spirit, and they took their places in the street beside him. These acts of courage were contagious. Anyone who could play an instrument or sing found a place at a street intersection somewhere in the city and made music.

In time the fighting stopped.

The music and the city and the people lived on.

Is there any truth in such a parable other than the implied acknowledgment of the sentimentality of mythmaking? The real world does not work this way. We all know that. Cellists seldom become civic heroes—music doesn't affect wars.

Vedran Smailovic does not agree

In *The New York Times Magazine*, July 1992, his photograph appeared.

Middle-aged, longish hair, great bushy mustache. He is dressed in formal evening clothes. Sitting in a cafe chair in the middle of a street. In front of a bakery where mortar fire struck a breadline in late May, killing twenty-two people. He is playing his cello. As a member of the Sarajevo Opera Orchestra, there is little he can do about hate and war—it has been going on in Sarajevo for centuries. Even so, every day for twenty-two days he has braved sniper and artillery fire to play Albinoni's profoundly moving *Adagio in G Minor*.

I wonder if he chose this piece of music knowing it was constructed from a manuscript fragment found in the ruins of Dresden after the Second World War? The music survived the

firebombing. Perhaps that is why he played it there in the scarred street in Sarajevo, where people died waiting in line for bread. Something must triumph over horror.

Is this man crazy? Maybe. Is his gesture futile? Yes, in a conventional sense, yes, of course. But what can a cellist do? What madness to go alone in the streets and address the world with a wooden box and a hair-strung bow. What can the cellist do?

All he knows how to do. Speaking softly with his cello, one note at a time, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin un, calling

out the rats that infest the human spirit.

Vedran Smailovic is a real person.

What he did is true.

Neither the headline nor the mortar shell nor the music is fiction.

For all the fairy tales, these acts do take place in the world in which we live

Sometimes history knocks at the most ordinary door to see if anyone is at home. Sometimes someone is.

—Robert Fulghum

Ojibway Prayer

Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones
Who are divided
And we are the ones

Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion, and honor
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other.

“The best thing for being sad is to learn something.”

The best thing for being sad is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies. You may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins. You may miss your only love. You may see the world around you devastated by evil lunatics or know your honor trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is

only one thing for it, then: to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear, or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you. — T. H. White

Prayers for Peace

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred ... let me sow love

Where there is injury ... pardon

Where there is doubt ... faith

Where there is despair ... hope

Where there is darkness ... light

Where there is sadness ... joy

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled ... as to console

To be understood ... as to understand,

To be loved ... as to love

For it is in giving ... that we receive,

It is in pardoning ... that we are pardoned,

It is in dying ... that we are born to eternal life

Muslim Prayer for Peace

In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful. Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other. If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things. And the servants

of God, most gracious are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say “PEACE.”

Jewish Prayer for Peace

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the paths of the Most High. And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation—neither shall they learn war any more. And none shall be afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

Baha'i Prayer for Peace

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be fair in judgement, and guarded in thy speech. Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness, and a home to the stranger. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be a breath of life to the body of humankind, a dew to the soil of the human heart, and a fruit upon the tree of humility.

Buddhist Prayer for Peace

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses. May those fright-

ened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free. May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another. May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wilderness—the children, the age, the unprotected—be guarded by beneficial celestials, and may they swiftly attain Buddhahood

Hindu Prayer for Peace

Oh God, lead us from the unreal to the Real.
 Oh God, lead us from darkness to light.
 Oh God, lead us from death to immortality.
 Shanti, Shanti, Shanti unto all.
 Oh Lord God almighty, may there be peace in celestial regions.
 May there be peace on Earth.
 May the waters be appeasing.
 May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all. May all beneficent beings bring peace to us.
 May thy Vedic Law propagate peace all through the world.
 May all things be a source of peace to us.
 And may thy peace itself, bestow peace on all and may that peace come to me also.

Native American Prayers for Peace

Almighty God, the Great Thumb we cannot evade to tie any knot; the Roaring Thunder that splits mighty trees: the all-seeing Lord up on high who sees even the footprints of an antelope on a rock mass here on Earth. You are the one who does not hesitate to respond to our call. You are the cornerstone of peace.

Oh Great Spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you. To your messengers the four winds, and to Mother Earth who provides for your children. Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect, and to be kind to each other so that

they may grow with peace of mind. Let us learn to share all good things that you provide for us on this Earth.

Shinto Prayer for Peace

Although the people living across the ocean surrounding us, I believe are all our brothers and sisters, why are there constant troubles in this world? Why do winds and waves rise in the oceans surrounding us? I only earnestly wish that the wind will soon puff away all the clouds which are hanging over the tops of mountains.

Zoroastrian Prayer for Peace

We pray to God to eradicate all the misery in the world: that understanding triumph over ignorance, that generosity triumph over indifference, that trust triumph over contempt, and that truth triumph over falsehood.

Sikh Prayer for Peace

God adjudges us according to our deeds, not the coat that we wear: that Truth is above everything, but higher still is truthful living. Know that we attaineth God when we loveth, and only victory endures in consequences of which no one is defeated.

Christian Prayer for Peace

Blessed are the PEACEMAKERS, for they shall be known as the Children of God. But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you pray for those who abuse you. To those that strike you on the cheek, offer the other one also, and from those who take away your cloak, do not withhold your coat as well. Give to everyone who begs from you, and of those who take away your goods, do not ask for them again. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

“Blow on the Coal of the Heart...”

From J.B., Archibald MacLeish's retelling of the Job story

J.B.: It's too dark to see.

Sarah: Then blow on the coal of the heart, my darling.

J.B.: The coal of the heart...

Sarah: It's all the light now.

Blow on the coal of the heart.

The candles in churches are out.

The lights have gone out of the sky.

Blow on the coal of the heart

And we'll see by and by...

We'll see where we are.

The wit won't burn and the wet soul smoulders.

Blow on the coal of the heart and we'll know...

We'll know...

In the soul, then, let the redemption be sought. In one soul, in your soul, there are resources for the world. --Ralph Waldo Emerson