



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK'S

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*A spiritual community in which we are gathered to celebrate the gifts of God that empower us to engage boldly in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we live and work.*

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C.

SEPTEMBER 2001

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## September 11, 2001

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THIS ISSUE OF THE GOSPEL NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED SOLELY TO THE THOUGHTS, REFLECTIONS & PRAYERS OF OUR COMMUNITY SURROUNDING THE EVENTS THAT OCCURRED IN OUR LIVES ON SEPTEMBER 11TH.

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### *My Dearly Beloved Parish Family:*

There are times when there simply are no words... Today -- with terror and tragedy all round in the injuring and loss of lives in the destruction of World Trade Center in New York and attacks at the Pentagon and other local sites -- is such a day.

There are no words to capture our shock and our sadness, our fear and our anger, our helplessness and, perhaps, too, our hopelessness. There are no words with which to grasp some semblance of the sense of and in it all. Even if, even when we figure out the causes -- who is behind it, what is the rationale for the attacks, the point and the purpose of the destruction -- there still will be no sense to be made of it all, for all of it is senseless. Violence and death, particularly of the innocents (for there always are innocents), never make sense. (Sometimes I think that if I even attempt to understand something like this, then, I, in effect, will have made peace with nonsense.)

I've been thinking of those who died today and those who have been injured... As individuals, they are different people than we, yet, as people, they just like we are. I grieve and suffer with and for them.

I've been thinking of their families and friends... The images of countless people standing in lines at public telephones in New York to call

loved ones, if only briefly, with word that they are safe, that they survived or to found out if a loved one is safe. The sorrowful images of those who cannot "get through", who cannot find out if their loved ones are alright. The sorrowful images of those who do get through and discover the worst of their imagining has been made real. My heart aches.

I've been thinking about those who care for the suffering and the dying... How does one do triage when all the cases are critical? I am stunned and stymied at the impossibility of decision-making at this level of severity and my heart goes out to the caregivers.

My dear beloved, in the midst of much of what we cannot understand, may we then do what we can do...

We can pray. We can hold in our hearts deep and earnest thoughts of care for those who have died, for those who suffer with grievous injury, for their families and friends, and for those who care for the suffering and the dying..

And we can hold in our hearts those we love, remembering that we always only have today...

*Peace and Love,  
Paul*

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

BY REVEREND PAUL R. ABERNATHY

Tuesday morning. September 11. 8.30 a.m. I lay in bed, half-awake. Ponthoella had left earlier for a 7.30 a.m. meeting in Alexandria. I had a 10 a.m. meeting across town near the Cathedral. Feeling tired, I decided not to attend. Ah, another half-hour or so of blessed rest! I turned on the radio to WTOP. A little news update to start the day...

Drowsily, I listened to the first reports that an airplane had crashed into one of the World Trade Center towers. I imagined a small plane, a Cessna. What a terrible accident, I thought. The news reports began to come more rapidly in number and more insistently in tone, breaking through my state of semi-wakefulness. No, not a small plane, but a jet airliner. A hijacked airliner with passengers aboard! What?! Startled, I sat up, leapt out of bed, and turned on the television. The images were horrifying. A smoking, flaming tower. Then, even more unimaginably, a second jetliner appeared into view, clearly, intentionally aimed for collision with the other tower. What?!

The phone rang. Ponthoella's Uncle James calling from South Carolina. "Are you alright?" He spoke calmly, yet, urgently. We talked for a while, sharing words of concern...

Then, a report of the crash of a third plane! Into the Pentagon! I called Ponthoella. She had arrived at her boutique. I shared the horrifying news.

I decided to go to the office. In times of turmoil past, I have found solace in offering solace to others and in receiving solace from others. I didn't know whom I would encounter or what I would do, but I decided that I would be present. Driving down North Capitol and through Capitol Hill streets packed bumper-to-bumper with cars and with sidewalks filled with people, all vacating the city, I arrived at Baxter House near 11 a.m.

Keith was busying himself copying music. Earnest effort in the face of trial, I thought. (I learned later that Stephanie, while heading to work, mired in traffic on 395 North, had witnessed the terrifying crash of United Airlines 175 into the Pentagon. When she arrived at Baxter House, she dismissed the staff. Susan, having returned that very day from vacation, departed for home. Stephanie took Paulette home, then, returned to Virginia.) Jen arrived, frightened, but

deciding to remain at Baxter House as long we were together. Sally McElrath, a parishioner, on her way home, stopped by. She, too, was shaken and saddened. She said, "It may be too much to expect of you to offer a word of consolation, but I hope you might." We spoke for a moment, talking, paradoxically, about not having words, but affirming a need to pray for the suffering, the caregivers, and for ourselves, remembering that all we ever have is this day.

Sally's presence and expression of need provided an idea and an impetus to offer a word to our St. Mark's family. Our brief conversation became the core of a message I shared with our community via our e-groups. So little a thing, I thought, but it was something I could do for the people I love, the community I serve.

Jen and I left the office near 4 p.m. I was to take her home then catch up with Ponthoella who was still in Virginia. As we walked out of Baxter House, we paused, listening to an eerie silence. The streets were empty of cars and nearly empty of foot traffic. It was so very quiet that I could hear the voices of people talking a block or two away on Pennsylvania Avenue. Driving out of the city on 395 South, we were nearly alone, save for a dozen or so other cars. The highway was lined with police and emergency vehicles. As we drew near the Pentagon, we saw the ominous gray smoke and orange flame. Continuing on 395 South, we approached the southwest face. We now smelled the acrid smoke. The blackened, shattered walls were a graphic sight, forcefully flooding our hearts with fear and our consciousness with images of suffering and dying. We began to cry.

I dropped Jen off and caught up with Ponthoella. We spent the rest of the evening watching a variety of television news coverage. Alternately mesmerized and repulsed, pained and numbed, stirred and stilled. In the rush of conflicting thoughts and emotions, we looked at each other and, without a word, acknowledged that life never would be the same...

# BEFORE CROSSING THE 14TH STREET BRIDGE

BY REVEREND STEPHANIE J. NAGLEY

There is a gaping hole in the Pentagon. I see it everyday as I make my way to work. And each day I remember what happened the morning of September 11, 2001. Someone once said "...all sorrows can be borne if you tell a story about them or have a story to tell about them". So you and I tell our stories about that day and the days after.

It was any morning. I moved from bedroom to kitchen to bathroom showering, dressing and drinking coffee. I stood in front of the television for that last sip. Matt and Katie had grown somber and then I knew why. A plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. I thought it a horrible accident, until the next plane approached, turned and exploded the top of building number 2. I knew then it wasn't an accident but it was so unthinkable I continued doing what I did each day. I packed up, put the leash on Diego and headed out the door.

I listened to the news as I drove North on 395. On a normal day rock and roll would be playing from a cassette. But I was already somewhere between normal and surreal. Two normal things were happening. My dog was in his customary place in the backseat and the traffic was slow. Entry into the surreal was a few yards away. A roar over my car. "My, God, that jet is low". A moment, perhaps no longer than a heartbeat or two, then a boom. Heartbeat. Fireball. 9:38 A.M.

Disbelief. I search the other cars. Did you see that? Somebody please look at me. Give me a sign. I watched a large black square of debris float like a toy parachute over HOV lane. The radio. The radio will confirm this reality. Nothing. They were still talking about New York, even the reporter from within the Pentagon. Finally, as I neared the 14th Street Bridge, the news came. The Pentagon has been attacked.

We arrive at the office. I need someone to be here. I need to tell this story. Susan hurries out of her office. Keith bounds up the stairs. He had called the Library of Congress but no one answered the phone. At this point we have no clue what is happening or

may happen. I take Paulette home. And start my way to Alexandria, a 15-minute drive of 2 hours. I think of news footage I've seen of people fleeing across borders to safety. I think of those who live with terror everyday.

Phone calls to family. I'm okay. Phone calls from friends. I'm okay. E-mail friends in London. I'm okay.

I need milk. Stand in line at Safeway. Swipe my ATM card. Enter PIN. Then the roar. The boom. The fireball. "Have a good day".

Shock moves into the comfortable place of planning for what to do next. I wash my windows and think. We need to gather. We need, I need, to share the Eucharist. Attack on Tuesday. Bread and wine on Wednesday. The homily made by the people telling their stories.

The President wants us to pray on Friday. More planning. Grief delayed. I plan a service that morning for Noon using the solemn collects for Good Friday. It seems appropriate. Just as the readings for Maundy Thursday seemed right the day before. Keith, again, holds us together with music. More bread and wine. What is broken becoming whole again.

Sunday the church is packed. I watch the children bring their gifts of food for the baskets under the table. What kind of world will we give them? There is sadness. There is fear. We tell our story. A story of hope shattered and broken before it is transformed, before it is transforming.

There is a hole in the Pentagon. I pass by it everyday. The roar. The stillness and the boom. A fireball rises. Debris falls. There is a hole in my heart that is slowly mending. What is broken and shattered is being made whole again. Not the same. I pray, God, never the same. I pray, God, transformed and changed. Transforming and changing. I pray, God, never the same.

# WHY MY PRAYERS ARE NOT FOR "PEACE"

BY ANNE FOLAN

We have long been told that Americans are an unusually church-going people, and this has seldom been more evident than in the days since September 11. The Friday after the attacks, churches all over the country held noon services for the National Day of Mourning. The Sunday afterwards, churches reported record levels of attendance. I have been attending services and listening to or reading sermons nearly every day since September 11. And while I have been comforted (as I always am anyway) by the music and the beauty of the liturgy, I have yet to hear a sermon or read a pastoral letter that deals with the reality of what happened in New York, Washington, and southern Pennsylvania on September 11.

Most addresses from the pulpit have referred to the "disaster" or the "tragedy." In my view, the Titanic, or the Hindenburg, were "disasters." The death in a Paris tunnel of a beautiful young princess at the hands of a drunk driver was a "tragedy." The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the thwarted attack on a target that was probably supposed to have been the Capitol or the White House, were acts of war. Our nation's response to these acts of war will almost certainly be the most important decision of our lifetimes.

But I have yet to hear a clergy person even mention the long-established Christian doctrine of the "just war," much less deal with it substantively. What I have heard, along with prayers for the victims, the rescuers, and their families, are entreaties not to lump all Muslims in with the terrorists, or to indulge violent revenge fantasies - neither of which the churchgoing portion of the American public seems inclined to do anyway. I have heard very general statements deploring "violence," as if all violence were qualitatively the same. The more daring preachers have gone out on a limb to suggest that turning passenger planes into missiles to murder 6,000 people is in fact an act of great evil. But I have not heard any challenge to Christians to consider seriously what our obligation is when confronted with this evil, even when it comes from someone who has promised that he will do it again, as often as he can.

Christian theologians and scholars from Augustine to Aquinas, to Clement of Alexandria, to Ambrose, to C.S. Lewis to Reinhold Niebuhr have all written extensively on the "just war," defined, for simplicity's sake and reasons of space, as possessing three requirements: right authority (a lawful sovereign); just cause (avenging wrongs, punishing a nation, restoring what has been unjustly seized); and right intention (securing just peace, protecting the innocent). When Aquinas discusses just war in the *Summa Theologiae* (II-II.40), he does so not in the section on justice, but rather in the section on charity - specifically the love of God. He makes it clear that war is not a vice that is opposed to the love of God. On the contrary, war-making, when just, can be a form of love. Of course, war is always contrary to peace, but this is sometimes desirable, since peace is not always a just order that deserves to be preserved. Nazi Germany, for example, pro-

vided peace and order for most of those in the conquered countries who were willing to accept Nazi rule. But no one wishes to argue that the peace provided by the Nazis is the sort of peace we ought to preserve. War, for Aquinas, can be a means to destroy an unjust peace. We keep a just peace and fight just wars because these are acts of charity.

Calvin also wrote extensively on the just war doctrine, and also concluded that a soldier can be an agent of God's love. He argues that to soldier justly - to restrain evil out of love for neighbor - is a God-like act. Much more recently, Reinhold Niebuhr wrote, in reference to a pacifist position (later abandoned) by his lesser known brother: "I realize quite well that my brother's position . . . is closer to the gospel than my own. In confessing that, I am forced to admit that I am unable to construct an adequate social ethic out of a pure-love ethic. I find it impossible to envisage a society of pure love as long as man remains man . . . The hope of attaining an ethical goal without coercion is an illusion which was spread chiefly among the comfortable classes of the past century."

The moral approach to war in Aquinas, Calvin, and many others is a bracing antidote to the past two weeks of sermons - which in my opinion have done little to help Christians think about why they should be prepared to participate in or support war of any kind. The most noteworthy aspect to the just war doctrine is that it teaches - contrary to today's prevailing views - that a failure to engage in a just war is a failure of virtue. It is a greater evil for Christians to fail to wage a just war than it is for skeptics. When an unbeliever fails to go to a just war, the cause may be a lack of courage. When a Christian does, it is a failure of charity. Defenders of just war doctrine typically argue that we ought to be unwilling to fight wars that lack sufficient moral and rational justification (into which category, it is worth noting, the "holy war" concept squarely falls). They regret that they live in a world where they have to kill human beings to restrain evil - that is to say, they regret the Fall. But they find it even more regrettable for Christians to stand idly by while innocent people are being murdered.

If the military accepted 40 year old women, I would sign up tomorrow. As it is, I will continue in daily prayer. And I will not pray for the peace that is no peace but is instead moral relativism taken to the point where the capacity to make even the most rudimentary distinctions has been abdicated. I will not pray for the peace that is actually appeasement, or failure of courage or charity. I will not pray for a peace that is simply wishful thinking taken to perilous extremes. Any hope of a just peace ended in a fireball on September 11 at approximately 9:30 AM. My prayers, rather, will be for victory.

The writer is grateful to Darrell Cole, visting instructor in religion at the College of William and Mary, for permission to use his material on just war doctrine.

# A REFLECTION BY LINDA STAHELI

## VESTRY LIAISON FOR COMMUNICATIONS

The Sept 11th tragedy underscores for me the importance of my community -- and that is St. Mark's. I wrote a small reflection for some friends and family, which gave me a place to voice my feelings. They listened and understood. My brother read the reflection outloud to his 7th graders studying science in Seattle, and they developed 10 foot banners as a result which they are sending to 7th graders in schools near the two disaster sites. We all feel a need to stop, reflect, and share our feelings. It is human nature. I share two separate thoughts from that reflection:

"David and I had a difficult discussion this morning about the root cause of this tragedy and it reminded me that we need to come together and listen and try to understand, to try not to add to the divisiveness that will no doubt take place in this country. My hope is that sometime -- down the road - we do look at the underlying issues here and have a national dialogue about how we are viewed in the world. But my immediate hope now is that Bush and other world leaders will come together and respond thoughtfully and not in a way that gets us into more trouble. It is a fine line to walk between being strong and thoughtful and careful. It is also easy to be critical. Now is a time to be strong and united. If there is ever a time in recent history, it is now."

"All I could think about yesterday is a song I loved when I was 8 years old, that I know helped shape my spiritual thinking and view of the world, that simple folk song is "If I had a Hammer" and the last part of it goes "well I've got a hammer, and I have a bell, and I have a song to sing all over this world. Its the hammer of justice, its the bell of freedom, its the song of love, between my brothers and my sisters, all over this world..." I was listening to it Tuesday - a version by Pete Seeger with children singing, and holding Jackie tight and crying and thinking, will she ever have a song that gives her those values? Will folk singers today

write songs that give the future generation hope? What will be their song? This morning Jackie sang ring around the rosie all by herself, and while I was pleased with the notion that she was singing a song, I thought it surreal that her one of her first songs was "ring around the rosie a pocket full of posies, ashes ashes we all fall down"..."

This Gospel issue that was to address communication issues at St. Mark's is focusing instead on our feelings and reactions to the Sept 11th day of horror. As we move forward, I hope we think more about our communications and how we listen to each other in this time of greater need. As the Vestry Liaison for Communications I encourage you to give me and/or others on the Vestry your thoughts about how we can help. Meanwhile I encourage you to join the St. Mark's e-groups, to visit our website at [www.stmarks.net](http://www.stmarks.net), and to participate in our newsletter, the Gospel.

St. Mark's has been there for me since Sept 11th -- I attended all three services that week, because I had the luxury and need to do so. They helped me. Not all of us have that luxury or even need. But what is important is that in the future we know about worship services, events, etc so that we have the option. While not always perfect, getting plugged in helps -- whether by email, website, or phone. Please help by taking the initiative next time you want to know what is going on. As for communication in a time of crisis about St. Mark's events, the clergy are going to have an electronic email group list developed that they can use to inform the congregation (those with email addresses in the directory) about important timely events, such as worship services (this may come in handy for other purposes too). Also, one should be able to call the St. Mark's number to get an up-to-date recording. Other suggestions are welcome.

Over the past two weeks, I have been dealing with the terrible events of September 11th both professionally as I work on the Congressional response to the tragedy and personally as I face the loss of a childhood friend in the collapse of the South Tower of the World Trade Center. The losses we have suffered, both of friends and of a sense of safety, have shaken any faith I ever had in the existence of a loving God. I am a wandering pilgrim, with my Jewish roots, attraction to Eastern spirituality and more recent exposure to (St. Marksian) Episcopal teachings, and as an adult I have felt a spiritual interconnectedness between all living creatures on the planet. However, now this foundation for my spiritual thought has been threatened by this callous disregard for the life of innocent men, women and children and I struggle to continue to believe in the good in all humans and the need to search it out.

I have been listening as much as possible to those around me, both in my work and my personal life, to try to make sense of the choices we must make as individuals and as a nation in the months and years ahead. I am aware that some of the policies that we have pursued as a country have inadvertently sown the seeds for the acts of destruction that have been inflicted on the United States. Yet I am unwilling to say that we are the cause of these actions, and while we may be a target in part because of actions we have taken, we are also a target for what we represent and because in some places, it is easier to focus popular criticism on the United States (or others) than to change themselves.

In my own view, we do need to seek out those individuals (or networks) who are willing to perpetrate acts like those of September 11th. If we cannot obtain the cooperation that is needed to bring them to justice in the United States or elsewhere and starve them of the resources that allow them to engage in these barbaric attacks, we must look to means that will appear unethical to many. But if through violence against a few extreme declared enemies of peace who are prepared to kill our friends and children, we can save those friends and children, I believe we must reconcile our moral quandries with a harsh reality. To the extent we must meet violence with violence, however, we must not do so blindly. Let me be clear: I do not mean

accepting large civilian casualties in the cause of justice and I do not mean indiscriminate attacks against countries with large muslim populations. I am not even sure large scale attacks of any kind will help prevent retaliation by those who would harm us.

In any case, a simplistic choice to only use force to combat terrorism is, in my view, doomed to fail and merely to create more enemies of the United States. Kill or imprison Osama bin Laden and his ilk, and do nothing else, and we will only exacerbate the problem. We as a people need to understand that as one of the most powerful countries on the planet, we have a responsibility not only to pursue the perpetrators of these acts, but to be involved in addressing injustices around the world, both with our individual and collective time and money. Individuals lured toward extreme views are often victims of their own desperate circumstances and are misinformed of what motivates us and our friends. We need to listen to the world, explain ourselves better, and make a commitment to both easing the suffering and creating more hope for those who are less fortunate than ourselves. I do not believe we have done enough in this regard, either as a country or as individuals. We need to get personally involved politically, elect leaders who are internationalist with a broad view of how to protect our national security (including pressing for more foreign assistance), and make connections, ecumenically and otherwise, with other peoples of all backgrounds, both within the United States and abroad. We need to comprehend how people can become so desperate as to kill not only innocent children, but themselves in the process. And we need to help understand not only our mistakes, but help others understand the mistakes they have been making and continue to make. We simply cannot win this so-called "war on terrorism" without making these types of efforts.

As I reflect on all these events, and deal with my own pain from my loss and those of my friends, I believe I can reaffirm my faith in the connection between all beings that live on this planet. And I hope we can all truly live into that belief, whatever comes next.

# A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS...

BY ELIN WHITNEY-SMITH

Sunday the 23rd of September - 12 days since September 11th - Christian Education started, a young acolyte passed out, and we sang "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". I spent most of the service in tears.

The Christian education kick off did not include EFM. I felt that the program was invisible. I felt invisible (not a usual feeling). I wanted to make a scene. I wanted to kick up a row. I wanted to be a terrorist. Just for a moment I glimpsed into the why of terrorism.

Erin passed out because she hadn't had breakfast. Her father swooped down, picked her up and took her out and cared for her. In the second that I watched her fall she epitomized, complete vulnerability. Vulnerability has become too close, too familiar since the events of September 11th.

Neither event was intentional. Both could be dismissed with the familiar St. Mark's there is a tension between terrorism and vulnerability - and I will get over it. But I think it is important to hold on to the feelings and not smooth them over.

It is important to realize that we are dependent on the good will of others - dependent on a father who swoops down to rescue. But we are also dependent on the good will of people who go to sleep hungry, of people who do not feel heard, of invisible people who see Americans (because Americans are endlessly visible) as powerful, smug, righteous, rich, stable and want to show that they too count, that they can make themselves heard.

We claim to follow Jesus he was vulnerable, he made himself vulnerable and did not push it away. If we push away our vulnerability we will miss the opportunity to address the root cause of terrorism. If we pull our security measures, and our righteous anger around us like a fortress we will continue to make others invisible and till the soil for those who plant the seeds and tend the plant of terrorism.

## A REFLECTION BY DAIL DOUCETTE

Over the last forty years I have lived and worked in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Egypt. I also helped run University programs in Iran and Lebanon. There are many fine people and great contributions that the Arab world has made and can make to the rest of the world.

I need you to help me get this message out to as many Congressional Representatives and policy makers and policy influencers as possible.

Retribution and violence beget more retribution and violence. Any program that we develop should include a large positive portion. It is imperative that we get the following message out now.

September 16, 2001

Current world circumstances place us in an unprecedented position to reach out to the Arab and Islamic world and change the course of history.

We cannot condemn a whole society for the acts of its extreme sects. From the populist Arab societies point of view these sects often seem like the only people who are interested in helping them. We are even more alien to them than they are to us. As a response to the current conditions it is time to build bridges of understanding and personal relationships rather than emotional antagonism and separation.

Psychology teaches us to face our shadow and dark side in order to diminish its power and reduce our irrational fears. We in western civilization have long ignored our Middle Eastern relations since they were difficult to understand. In today's world of fast transportation and communication we are all much closer than we actually realize. We can no longer ignore our irrational response to different perspectives from our own.

There is an old adage that is applicable here: If we continue to do what we have been doing, we will continue to get the same poor results.

We need to change our attitude and relationship to the Islamic world. It is imperative that we as individuals, cultural organizations, and especially churches, reach out and positively communicate with our Muslim and Middle Eastern brothers in our communities and in person. We should do this now as individuals, and in addition, the major countries should help establish a form of the Marshall Plan to help the poorer Mideast countries help themselves. This should be the cornerstone of a positive 21st Century response to this kind of crisis, rather than the old concept of retribution which only replicates the negative actions of society.

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# ONE PERSON'S OPINION: THE ATTACK ON THE TWIN TOWERS & THE PENTAGON

BY NADINE HATHAWAY  
SEPTEMBER, 2001

My reaction to the September 11th attacks was complicated in part because I am just resettling back into Washington after serving from May 1999 - August 2001 as a Peace Corps volunteer in Vilnius, Lithuania. In the last week I felt terribly sad, angry, proud and then, upon further reflection, very fearful for our future. Let me go back to my recent experience of Peace Corps that so influences my reaction to the attack:

I was assigned to work in Vilnius, the capital. With no particular Foreign Service skill training, I landed in this tiny copy of Washington: the site of State government, Ministries and the Parliament; all the Embassies, the United Nations Development Program, UNESCO and headquarters for the European Union all within a mile of each other. Everyone's face looked familiar within a matter of months. There were also the Lithuanian branches of major companies like Coca Cola, PricewaterhouseCoopers, (Arthur) Andersen all working very hard to pull the country out of poverty and into NATO and the EU. My work was to provide non-profit management, strategic planning and fundraising expertise to the national non-governmental advocacy and training center, that is the most important lobbying and advocacy NGO in the country. I also traveled throughout the Baltics training trainers.

The first three months in Peace Corps is traditionally spent in the small city of Alytus, where we

lived with a family and began to adapt to the culture, language, lifestyle and habits of our hosts. Training consisted of many hours of daily language, culture, and practice in adapting our consultancy skills. You could tell the Americans from a mile away by our very energetic walk, informal clothes, healthy bodies and even in middle age, youthful appearance. Lithuanians perceived that we were rich and in many cases unused to the kind of hard work and hardship that was part of their daily life. They were excited, in awe and jealous of our material goods.

Peace Corps volunteers live on a stipend comparable to host country counterparts. For me that translated into renting a seventh floor one room walkup in a Russian neighborhood. On a very small stipend, every lita counted. Most of my neighbors ate potatoes and some vegetables from their garden. About a third of the people owned cars. In non-governmental organizations, a third had no computer and a tenth no Xerox machine. All support money was foreign - with the biggest amounts American. What power that position can give the funding officials and donors. Perhaps this might explain the love-hate relationship with Americans. How easy to talk about open systems and transparency when you have lived freely.

While all the Embassy cultural centers were open six days a week, the American Library was open two afternoons for two hours each. Everyone learning English went to the very cooperative British Council.

While the Embassies put on film festivals that appealed to the brightest young audiences, the horrible array of Hollywood fare played in the commercial theaters, only worsening the impression of how we live and what our values are. USIS closed and so did all the intelligent cultural exchange programs to balance McDonalds and Hollywood images of American mores and violence for the general public.

The third goal of Peace Corps is to bring the learning about other countries back to the US. With this in mind, I want to ask the American leaders to work toward new foreign policy, based on more respect and resource sharing - not lending extraordinary amounts of money with expectations of humble appreciation. The world has changed and will never be the same. Are we Americans ready to change our attitudes?

Just before leaving Lithuania, I read "Tomorrow There Will Be No More Trains" by Agne Karvelis. The book relates the true story of some of the more privileged World War II exiles. A young Lithuanian girl and her family finally find refuge in a small German town that is soon liberated by American troops. After watching these "big smiling men" for a couple of weeks, claiming houses to live in, requisitioning food and the best housing, the little girl looks up at her ex-diplomat father and says: "they don't know who we were, before....". I think part of the problem is that we still look too briefly at the rest of the world and find them wanting.

# LOAVES, FISHES, PEACE & ST. MARK'S

BY PETE EVELETH  
SEPTEMBER 9, 1999

Early this summer, Paul Abernathy gave a sermon drawing on the familiar Gospel story about Jesus and his disciples feeding a multitude with but a few loaves and fishes. During the sermon seminar that followed, folks related stories of scarcity, brokenness and hopelessness in the world that so permeate the media these days. How, I wondered, can the promises of hope, reconciliation and abundance possibly be heard above the incessant din of bad news? From our religious tradition, we have come to believe that hope is as much a reality as despair, and that hopelessness in places like Kosovo and Kashmir is not the last word. How, I thought, can the church become a megaphone -- as C.S. Lewis might put it --- for the good news our faith teaches? How are those in desperate need of hope, and those who daily minister to them, to be supported? As I mused, I wondered how St. Mark's could alleviate hopelessness by supporting the peacemakers of the world.

Recently, I've been thinking about peace, or more precisely, about the tragedy of war. On vacation in northern England last summer, in the close of York Minster, I found myself deeply moved by a small war memorial that stated simply, "When you go home tell them of us, and say for your tomorrow we gave our today." I've been surprised how persistently that message has stuck with me. This summer, outside of Florence, I visited a cemetery for 4,400 American soldiers who were killed liberating northern Italy. On an immaculately groomed, green hillside, row upon row, stand thousands of identical, stark-white headstones, many inscribed, "Here rests in honored glory a comrade in arms known only to God." A mixture of profound sadness and gratitude overcame me. Since my return, I've been reading First World War poets. Beyond their wrenching depictions of horrific trench warfare to which so many young soldiers were senselessly dispatched, I've been most struck by their portrayals of those who "survived" unspeakable carnage.

As long as I've been at St. Mark's, we've wrestled with how we are called upon to minister to the world about us. Social action has often been a muted area of church life. Enthusiasm for church-sponsored outreach has been limited, perhaps because we didn't believe that as a parish we could make a significant difference.

Or maybe it has seemed to run counter to our basic way of approaching outreach through our individual ministries in the world as laity, in our family, workplace, and community.

Recently, I've noticed a shift. More parishioners wish to elevate parish outreach to a parity with other church activities. Maybe this reflects a recognition that the mantle of the church offers something our individual efforts alone cannot. I've also sensed that with new clergy confidently in place, the community is ready to begin moving in previously unexplored directions that may include new ways of manifesting outreach.

This intrigues me. I hope that whatever emerges is something many of us will be drawn to, something that is challenging while at the same time congruent with who we are and what we're good at doing as a community. With a highly educated, articulate membership, this parish has a deep reservoir of talent upon which to draw. As parishioners, we know ourselves as a faith community where we come to have our answers questioned. Could we not also become known as a place where the "conventional wisdom" of the world, wisdom that teaches that war is inevitable and ethnic and religious differences are irreconcilable, is likewise challenged? What to do?

Recent talk about acquiring Sikh House gave me a context for thinking about the parish expanding in new directions - around peace. While buying that building is no longer a possibility, the thought of it did trigger an image I like, an image of shelter, which leads me to this suggestion: I would like us to create a place within St. Mark's where we could invite the peacemakers and healers of brokenness to be "in residence" with us for a month or so -- if only in a spare bedroom of empty nesters. For that time, I would like them to become part of our congregation and our families. St. Mark's could be a place for renewal and reinvigoration, a sabbatical for those who work throughout the world to foster peace and understanding.

Who might these people be? ... community organizers, writers, artists, teachers, students, or clergy, of any nationality, who through their particular talents and visions carry mes-

sages of hope, and bring healing to places where there is deep division and despair.

And why would they want to come to St. Mark's? Riggs Bank used to tell us this is the most important city in the world. Beyond the geopolitical opportunities Washington may afford, a respite with us - if any experience at St. Mark's could be so described - could offer a place to step back, reflect, and learn, as well as a place to teach and inspire us and our congressional neighbors as well. In turn, during their stay we could challenge and support them and, once they have returned to their work, we could provide continuing access to the networks of greater Washington with which we are all involved. Through a St. Mark's center for peace and reconciliation, we could also support existing links -- or inspire new ones -- with churches and other organizations having this common objective.

Such a center could also channel parishioner compassion and expertise into endeavors that would promote local community understanding. Tapping our talent reserves as mediators and meditators, caregivers, businesspersons and professionals (and even functional education teachers), St. Mark's could facilitate regional cooperation to support restorative efforts within Washington neighborhoods and institutions; school programs that teach students peaceful dispute resolution is one such program that comes to mind.

My preference is not that St. Mark's operate extensive programs; rather, I'd prefer us to look for ways to assist efforts of others. As a parish, we could nurture new initiatives for peace and understanding, just as universities underwrite new start-up high tech businesses through their "incubator" support programs.

How would this work? At this point, I don't know. Rather, I write as a starting point for a dialogue from which a collective vision could emerge and future directions become manifest. If you're interested in talking about such possibilities, I'd like to hear from you.

When hope is made real, its possibilities can be breathtaking. A faith that gives us the imagination to feed a multitude with but a few loaves and fishes invites us to imagine how we could, as well, be part of the becoming of a peaceful, reconciled world.

# A REFLECTION BY KENN ALLEN

SEPTEMBER 12, 2001

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I apologize for taking this somewhat impersonal approach to responding to your many emails of the last 24 hours but I hope you will forgive me. Thank you for your messages of condolence, support, and concern.

Yesterday was a tremendously difficult day. Life here will never again be quite the same. It is a day in which our country began to live within the world's reality rather than apart from it. Pray for us, please, that we will have the strength, courage, and wisdom to do what is right, rather than expeditious, to be measured in our judgments and open to what we must learn from this tragedy, that we might put greater priority on once again becoming the world's moral leader, not simply its economic and military superpower.

First and foremost, it is important to tell you that we are safe and well. Kathi Dennis, IAVE's Executive Director and I, were in New York yesterday for the annual NGO conference at the United Nations. As we left our hotel on the West Side to walk to the UN, about 9:30 AM, we heard the terrible news. As we crossed Madison Avenue, we could look south and see the flames and smoke pouring from the towers.

By the time we reached the UN, it had been closed. Police urged all of us on the outside to move away as quickly as possible. There was a great deal of uncertainty, confusion, and fear. As we made our way back across the city, we paused every few minutes to listen to a radio or peer into a store window at a television. We found a space in a crowded restaurant/bar, open so that people could just walk in and stand in front of the televisions. It was there that we saw the second tower collapse.

For those of you who have been in New York City, it was a surrealistic day. People were hushed as they walked the streets. We met people who had relatives working in the towers, people who were crying, people who were lining up at telephones to search for family members and friends. In an age defined worldwide by cell phones, it was ironic and confusing that virtually no cell phones worked in New York yesterday.

By 3:00 PM, I was able to walk down Broadway and Seventh Avenue in the middle of the street because there was no traffic. Over a period of a few hours the city systematically, quietly, shut down. Assuming that the conference would be cancelled on Wednesday as well, Kathi, her partner Ralph, and I decided that we wanted to come home. We walked the 15 or so blocks to Pennsylvania Station, boarded the first available train, and were home by about 9:30 last night.

Today has dawned bright and clear both here in Washington and in New York. The sky is blue, the air warm. It will be a beautiful day that few will even notice. It seems that each of us knows someone who was at work in the Pentagon or the World Trade Center or who was on one of the planes or who in some way was touched by the tragedy. Please join us in praying for the victims, for their families, for the tremendously brave members of the fire and police departments in New York City who did so much and who suffered such terrible losses in their numbers.

As I was completing this, I read an email from the Associate Rector of my church. She witnessed the plane crashing into the Pentagon as she was driving to work yesterday morning. Members of our church will gather tonight for a special service of remembrance and healing. She challenged all of us to pray not only for the victims but also "even for those whose minds conceived such suffering." In our respective spiritual traditions, we must seek to forgive.

Thank you all for the concern you have shown for us. This is a time for us to rededicate ourselves to the original purpose of IAVE - to build international bridges of understanding that can move us toward the day when everyone in the world can live in safety, with opportunity and justice. From prayers and grieving, we must move on to action. In faith, we must continue to believe in the power of people to change the world - and to rededicate ourselves to helping that to happen.

# A REFLECTION BY SUSAN M. KUHN

There are too many words and images floating around, too many e-mails, too many news reports, too many conversations that run in circles. I don't need more information, I don't want to hear the same fears and proposals conveyed a hundred times. I want to touch those I feel closest too. I want to observe how we are interconnected, how I am who I am because of people I give to and who have given to me, and how that is true for all of us. I want to see my mother from whom I came, who survived the Great Depression and WWII and whom I continue to know better the older I get. I want to notice that my cat lives and enjoys himself because I daily treat his life-threatening illness. I want to know that people all over the world laid flowers and lit candles

for us. I want not to hold out false hope for a solution to the East/West divide this incident is indicative of. I want to recognize my own grief symptoms and accept them, not flee to the easier position of fast action that asserts a false sense of control. I want to continue to know God, to find my way to an awareness of God at the heart of this incident, to find peace and acceptance that the faithful find at the core of tragedy. I want to cease being someone who needs to have everything going well. I want to become an adult who can live in the world in truer knowledge of its pain and in truer knowledge of God. I want to shed my American exceptionalist naiveté so that my faith can deepen.

## A REFLECTION BY BILL DANNEMAIER

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*I thought I would pass on to you the reflection that I did at St. Andrew's Zürich on 16 September 2001. The priest asked me to, as an American, do a 3-minute reflection on the tragedies in New York and Washington (actually Virginia, I know).*

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Western societies have developed into a promise of sorts. A promise of security and mutual respect of ideas, religious institutions, property, and people. But as with most covenants, this promise is easily broken. The vicious can always harm the innocent.

On Tuesday men and women living under the western covenant put on suits, grabbed their coffees and went to work. At least 5,000 would never come home. Sixty thousand would lose their offices. The lives of millions would be disrupted.

And in the face of this broken covenant I, and many, go from shock, to despair, to anger. We are not unlike the 1st century community that saw the promise they embraced broken on the cross. I would like to take up the sword and cut off the ear of those that would break the covenant. But I am challenged by a Lord that would instead prefer to heal the ear of his captor.

But the numbers are too large and the questions too broad for a short reflection. Instead let me give you an image.

Eileen, a friend of mine, comes out her front door. It is a beautiful Manhattan fall morning. A plane flies low overhead. She looks up. The plane smacks into the World Trade Center a couple blocks away. She and everyone on the street stops, transfixed. The ball of fire blows out into a perfect blue sky. Wisps of paper, so important a moment

before; post-it notes, and grocery lists, and laundry tickets, and copy paper are blown into the sky. The horror. A few minutes later another plane hits the other tower. But there is no top to this disaster. The people begin to jump from the upper floors. They tumble as they fall.

Knowing nothing better to do, reeling in shock, Eileen decides to go to work. She walks uptown to her office. I talked to her on Wednesday and she hadn't been home.

But let's go back to the people jumping out of the building. Two of them are holding hands. Let us focus on them. I cannot tell you if these two were black or white, men or women, married, gay, or straight. They might even have been English. These two are telling us something.

In the face of ultimate disaster we can still reach out and touch someone else. Though we may jump into the abyss of smoke and fire we do not have to go alone. We are not abandoned by our God. Underneath the checkpoints and the metal detectors and the locks on our doors, is a covenant that cannot be broken. It gives us cause for thanksgiving amid the rubble of our lives.

I would like to close with a prayer from Compline in the American Prayer Book, I couldn't find it in the Anglican one.

"Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

Amen."

# A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO DO GREAT HARM

SUBMITTED BY JOHN F. BARTON

AS MY CONTRIBUTION, I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE A PRAYER THAT I FOUND WHILE I WAS OPERATING THE CENTER FOR PRAYER AND PILGRIMAGE AT THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL LAST WEEK. IT WAS WRITTEN BY THE REV. DR. FRANCIS H. WADE, ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C., ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 AND IS SO ACCREDITED AT THE BOTTOM.

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ALMIGHTY GOD, WHOSE WILL IS TO PLACE AWESOME POWER INTO THE HEARTS, MINDS AND HANDS OF YOUR CHILDREN, LET YOUR CARE AND OUR COMPASSION BE ON THOSE WHO DO HARM AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE HARMED.

LORD, YOU REACHED ACROSS THE LIMITS OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING TO EMBRACE THE OUTCAST AND THE LOST.

REACH NOW BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACE THOSE WHO HAVE CAUSED SO MUCH PAIN AND DEATH THIS DAY.

WE CANNOT BUT COMMEND THEM TO YOU,  
FOR IN OUR HEARTS ARE SEEDS OF HATRED,  
AND IN OUR NOSTRILS THE STENCH OF MADNESS.

AS YOU TOUCH THEM IN YOUR HEALING WAYS,  
LORD GOD, DRY ALSO THE HATE THAT COULD GROW IN US,

SMOTHER THE FEAR THAT WOULD BLIND US AND DELIVER US FROM THE TEMPTATION TO FOLLOW INSTINCTS THAT ARE FAR FROM THE PATH YOU HAVE SET BEFORE US.

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE WE ALWAYS HOPE TO FOLLOW, JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD.

AMEN.

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