

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2001 6:07 PM
To: dick bernard
Subject: September11, 2001

I hit the send button on the usual family letter about 7 a.m. this morning. An hour later, in my car, just off downtown Minneapolis, came the first announcement of the World Trade Center disaster. Off and on throughout the day we listened to the radio at our Habitat work site. I didn't see the images - nor did I really grasp the fact that the World Trade Centers had in fact collapsed - until arriving home and watching the news at 5 this afternoon.

This joins the list of tragedies of the past that are burned into our memories - we all can generate our own list. First on my list was the assassination of President Kennedy in November, 1963. You have your own.

Tom and Joni, I remember the one and only time we saw, in person, the World Trade Centers in NYC. It was in late June, 1972. I looked through the slides of that trip this afternoon, and I have three excellent photos of those then-brand new buildings, two taken from the Statue of Liberty. (One tower was completed in 1972, the other in 1973. They were both complete exteriors when we saw them, but apparently only one was fully occupied.)

Last night, at this time, our country was a safe and generally caring place, full of good people.
Tonight, it is no different.

Let us not let the horrific events that happened about 12 hours ago change our attitudes about our own society, and about others. The small band of terrorists want to encourage fear, and reprisals. We must not play into their evil hands.

Those touched directly by this tragedy need our help and our prayers. And we need to continue to seek peace and good will.

Dick Bernard

From: Dick Bernard [dick@chez-nous.net]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2001 6:36 AM
To: dick bernard
Subject: an awful week

Dear Family members:

I am no different than anyone: I cannot imagine a person without feelings in the aftermath of Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

You know some of my opinions already. These opinions are not necessarily always reflected in things I forward - I forward some information I receive, but not all of it - there was just too much - and some of the information I forward I don't even agree with.

1. I did not forward an extremely powerful power point photo essay of Tuesday, entitled "Attack on America" solely because the last photo, the effective "period on the sentence", was of the Palestinians cheering the bombing. In my view, still today, this is an example of trying to make two wrongs make a right: an enemy identified. How can we condemn hatred of Americans as Americans - what led to the terrorist attacks in the first place - when far too many, in effect, condone hatred of Palestinians as Palestinians, etc., or dismiss the rights of others to have and express opinions, even if (in our view) they are wrong. And our own "American" urban terrorists - and that is exactly what they are - are doing their deed to make sure that those who look, talk, dress like "Arabs" are harassed, threatened and in some cases beaten or worse. We have only seen the beginning of these atrocities, mostly emotional, but some physical. (For some perspective: yesterday's paper www.startribune.com had a guest column by Paul August Jasmer, monk at St. John's University, entitled "If life in our Upper Midwest was more like the Middle East". It is worth a read. Enter the monk's name to search. The article should be on line.)

Today I return to the Habitat for Humanity House we are building for a nine member Somali family. We met the husband (a security guard) last Monday as our Basilica crew had a time of prayer before beginning our two weeks on his families new home. The site supervisor remarked last Monday that members of the family came to the site every day, had worked far more than the minimum hours required, and were the best and nicest family she had ever worked with. Monday was the only day last week that anyone from the family came, and if they don't come today, the site supervisor said she will check in with them. Interpret as you wish. This two story house has been under construction for two or three months already - it is nearing completion.

2. I worry a great deal about what the ubiquitous and frequent use of the "War" word now, and what that means, or what meaning it is intended by "spinners" to project to the public. It is being used a lot, by people with lots of power. We spent 13 years at "War" in Vietnam, getting mired further and further in the quagmire of having to win that war. That war ended ignominiously (for us) in June, 1973, before some of you were born. It spanned over 58,000 deaths, and three presidents. I was in the Army at the beginning of that war - one of the very luck Vietnam-era veterans. My brothers saw heavy action there during the worst parts.

(An ironic twist: I have received in the last few days many copies of Canadian Gordon Sinclair's commentary, "A Tribute to America". It is excellent and moving and glorifies what is good about America. I doubt that any of the sender's knew that Sinclair gave the commentary on June 5, 1973, in response to, and at the time of, the ending of our great national humiliation - our Nation losing Vietnam. This is a time in our history from which we have not yet recovered. If you haven't seen this piece, let me know and I will send it on to you.)

Today, we are at the very beginning of what could be a much, much worse and longer term scenario that will be played out on our shores for the first time since the Civil War. My opinion: We will never completely destroy terrorism; but the nature of our response will make it more or less likely terrorists will receive regional or world support (a la the cheering Palestinians last Tuesday). We as individuals need to work on our own attitudes and to not sit passively by and let the future happen because we don't think we have power, because, because..... If you have an opinion it needs to be spoken particularly to political leaders - your legislators, congresspeople, governor and president.... Have the courage to stop hate in its tracks in your families and neighborhoods and workplaces as well. We all play a part.

We can work for war, or we can work for peace. Whatever the choice, we are in for a long, long campaign.

I am picking peace.

Poll finds 94 percent of Americans back action; most expect long war

Washington Post

President Bush received immediate and overwhelming public support for his decision to launch airstrikes against sites in Afghanistan. Most Americans said they think the attacks mark the start of a long war and probably will prompt more terrorist attacks directed at the United States, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.

The survey found that 94 percent said they support the U.S.-led military action in Afghanistan, and just as many Americans continue to endorse the way Bush is handling the response to the Sept. 11 assaults.

The poll found that eight in 10 Americans support sending ground troops into Afghani-

stan to kill or capture terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. Nearly as many would send U.S. forces into Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban.

Nearly eight in 10 approved sending humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, though one in five questioned whether the United States should be providing the assistance while the Taliban controls the government.

A total of 506 randomly selected adults were interviewed Sunday night for the poll. The margin of sampling error for the overall results is 4 percentage points.

The survey found that the airstrikes against Afghanistan are broadly popular with the public. Eighty-three percent said they strongly back the attacks and 11 percent some-

what support them. That's nearly 20 percentage points higher than public approval for the airstrikes against Iraq in January 1991 that marked the start of the Persian Gulf War.

Eight in 10 said the United States had used enough diplomacy; nearly as many said it has tried hard enough to win support of Muslims in other countries.

The survey found that Americans support expanding military action beyond Afghanistan to other countries that harbor terrorists. Seven in 10 said the United States should mount a broad war against terrorist groups and the countries that support them; about one in four favor limiting strikes to groups and countries responsible for last month's terrorist attacks.

MINNEAPOLIS STAR-TRIBUNE

10/8/01

7

9-11 was excuse to go to 'war'

Mels
Star Trek
4-26-02

There is the old truism, "Children learn what they live."

Children become adults and model learned behavior.

So ... half a year into the cult-of-fear-based "war on terrorism," it takes only a cursory look at some recent Star Tribune stories to see where we're at: "Deadliest day in 17 months" (in Israel); "U.S. plans for nuclear scenarios — 7 nations named in secret report"; "India: Fanaticism claims another triumph"; "Maj. Gen Frank Hagenbeck, commander of the [Afghan mountain] operation near Gardes, said of Taliban and Al-Qaida, 'We body slammed them today and killed hundreds of these guys.'" The list goes on and on.

Seven months after Sept. 11 Osama bin Laden and Mullah Muhammad Omar have not been caught and brought to justice. Though it no longer seems to be the case, for a while I thought that the official story would be that they were presumed dead in some bombed cave, like Hitler in his bunker in 1945. And were their families to be killed, I wouldn't expect that fact to get much attention — it might give too human a "spin" to the story of war.

The entire brunt of this "war," so far, has been on Afghanistan and its people, though not a single Afghani was among the 19 perpetrators Sept. 11. We forget that this campaign against Afghanistan was not a war of liberation of Afghan women; nor is it a war for "freedom"; rather it was a campaign for other motives, some of the most important motives likely unacknowledged.

Until Sept. 11, we couldn't have cared less about Afghanistan. Sept. 11 was an excuse to go to war.

Not a single high-level mention has ever been made of possible action against Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which were home to

the perpetrators.

While the administration will not acknowledge officially any innocent civilian death toll in Afghanistan, credible sources monitoring the war make it clear that the civilian death toll, just from the bombing, far exceeds the Sept. 11 death toll — and this in a country about the size of Texas with only 8 percent of the U.S. population.

No one mentions that Al-Qaida, like all terrorist groups, will never be eradicated — that the policy to bomb violence out of existence will achieve only the objective of making certain that violence will continue to be a way of life far into the future.

Some of us seem to harbor the naive notion that Al-Qaida, and others like it, are incapable of continuation-of-government initiatives. Likely they are masters of it, and we simply imitators. They are masters of stealth, and in this era of the Internet and a shrunken world, will always be several steps ahead of the law. Stamp out one cell, and another will spring up ... or two or three.

A once-popular song again needs to become the anthem of this nation. "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" asks, "When will we ever learn? When will we ever learn?"

Until we learn to truly wage peace and justice, all is lost. So long as two-thirds of the Muslim world has serious issues against us — issues that are not contrived, and by and large not constructively addressed — we will continue to have problems. And our children and their children and grandchildren will inherit from us a truly dismal future.

Wage peace and justice.

Who was it who said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself"?

— Dick Bernard, Woodbury. Retired teachers' representative.

NOTE:
NOT A
SINGLE
MENTION
OF
"IRAQ"