

WAR

A CALL TO INNER LIFE



**WORDS OF HOPE
FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES**

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These are times of distress. We cannot blindly retreat from the problems overwhelming society. The only justification for turning inward from the confusing, hectic whirl would be that, through unity with eternal powers, we gain a strength of character ready to be tested in the stream of the world.

Eberhard Arnold

Introduction

We live in a time of war. From Baghdad, New York, and London, to Buenos Aires, Tokyo, and Kabul, the fabric of human society is being torn apart by hatred and greed, and almost everyone is nervous about something—if not droughts or floods, then the stock market, or another terrorist attack. That’s why we put together this e-book: as an antidote to fear, and to the isolation and mistrust it breeds.

The passages that follow were selected by our readers from their favorite Plough books. (If they told us why they chose a particular quote, we included their comments.) Some passages pertain to the events of September 11, 2001; others to escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. Still others address the broader themes of suffering, injustice, retribution, forgiveness, peace, and the eternal battle between evil and good. Directly or indirectly, all of them sound a common note: our faith that though there will be war and rumors of war, God ultimately directs the course of history and holds us in his hands. And he is not a God of fear, but of hope.

The Editors
September 10, 2002

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PHIL, 52: During a typical work day, I'm in e-mail contact with so many colleagues around the world that it's easy to completely miss the people I share my office with, and to blank out the world situation. Ironic, isn't it? Just when you're accomplishing so much by your efforts, you can be "removed from reality," as Blumhardt puts it. It took my wife to point out this quote to me.

Perhaps the greatest danger that threatens us comes from being overly involved in the small, ordinary happenings of daily life—from becoming so enslaved by them that they fill our heart and soul. To go about life in this way is to go about unprotected, unaware, distracted, and removed from reality. Let us never allow ourselves to be dragged down by pettiness, or to take the things of this earth so seriously that they burden us day after day. Let us live constantly in the Promise.

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, *Now Is Eternity*

People today do not need long sermons or religious words; they need to be shown deeds and a practical way of discipleship. Our time needs the tangible demonstration that God is stronger than all hate, all need, all sin, and all disunity.

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Discipleship*

CHAIM, 35: I find myself turning to this essay every time the media reports a fresh outbreak of violence. The author, Alfred Delp, was a Jesuit priest; he wrote it in a Nazi prison shortly before he was hanged in 1945 for "betraying the Fatherland." It helps answer my questions about why things must be as they are—and points out who has the final word.

Faced with him who is the Last, the world will begin to shake. Only when we do not cling to false securities will our eyes be able to see this and get to the bottom of things. Only then will we be able to guard our life from the frights and terrors into which God has let the world sink to teach us, so that we may awaken from sleep, as Paul says, and see that it is time to repent, time to change things.

Let us ask for the openness and willingness to hear God's warning messengers and to conquer life's wilderness through repentant hearts. We must not shrink from or suppress the earnest words of these crying voices, so that those who today are our executioners will not tomorrow become accusers because we have remained silent... To eyes that do not see, it still seems that the final dice are being cast, in valleys, on battlefields, in camps

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and prisons and bomb shelters. But those who are awake sense the working of other powers and await the coming of their hour.

Space is filled with the noise of destruction and annihilation, shouts of self-assurance and arrogance, the weeping of despair and helplessness. But just beyond the horizon the eternal realities stand silent in their age-old longing. There shines on us the first mild light of the radiant fulfillment to come. From afar sound the first notes of pipes and singing voices, not yet discernible as a song or melody. It is all far off still. But it is happening...

Alfred Delp in *Watch for the Light*

I don't gather that God wants us to pretend our fear doesn't exist, to deny it, or eviscerate it. Fear is a reminder that we are creatures—fragile, vulnerable, totally dependent on God. But fear shouldn't dominate or control or define us. Rather, it should submit to faith and love. Otherwise, fear can make us unbelieving, slavish, and inhuman.

I have seen that struggle: containing my fear, rejecting its rule, recognizing that it saw only appearances, while faith and love saw substance, saw reality, saw God's bailiwick, so to speak: "Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid!"

Philip Berrigan in *Seeking Peace*

KEVIN, 57, AND BARBARA, 57: As our four teenage daughters grow up and find their faith being tested, these words of Latin America's famous martyr (spoken on Good Friday, 1979) have inspired us—and them.

God is not failing us when we don't feel his presence.

Let's not say: God doesn't do what I pray for so much, and therefore I don't pray anymore.

God exists, and he exists even more, the farther you feel from him.

God is closer to you when you think he is farther away and doesn't hear you.

When you feel the anguished desire for God to come near because you don't feel him present, then God is very close to your anguish.

When are we going to understand that God not only gives happiness but also tests our faithfulness in moments of affliction?

It is then that prayer and religion have most merit: when one is faithful in spite of not feeling the Lord's presence.

Let us learn from that cry of Christ that God is always our Father and

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never forsakes us, and that we are closer to him than we think.

Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*

We cannot run from the sin and need of the world. Yet we can and must live in active protest against everything that opposes God. We must openly fight everything that cheapens or destroys life, everything that leads to separation and division. Protest alone, which often leads to violence, is not sufficient. Often it is fruitless. Thus we must demonstrate that a new way exists and show the world a new reality, the reality of God's righteousness and holiness, which is opposed to the spirit of this world. We must show with our lives that men and women can live lives of purity, peace, unity, and love wherever they dedicate their energies to working for the common good; and not only by creating spiritual community, but by building up a practical life of sharing. Above all, we must witness to the power of love. Each of us can give our lives to others in the service of love.

Johann Christoph Arnold, *Sex, God, and Marriage*

IRENE, 40: Sometimes I wonder what I'd do if I couldn't feed my children. These words are humbling, because they point out how much I've got to learn from people for whom poverty is a daily reality.

The Lord is not intimidated by the darkness or by the rejection of his own. His light is stronger than all the shadows. If we are to dwell in the tent the Son has pitched in our midst, we must enter into our own history here and now, and nourish our hope on the will to life that the poor of our continent are demonstrating. If we do so, we shall experience in our flesh the encounter with the Word who proclaims the kingdom of life.

Gustavo Gutierrez in *Watch for the Light*

Those who turn their thoughts away from the physical world and set all their hopes on life after death are counterfeiters of truth. The new redemption is intended for us. The new will is to be realized here on earth! Many people over the centuries—most decisively, Jesus—have shown this to be true. But he was murdered, and this was bound to happen. He was killed by the military, by the most organized legal system in history, by the most religious people that have ever lived, by the leaders of the church and the voice of the people. And this was no accident. He was murdered because people, bound by their possessions, could not tolerate his witness for truth.

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Still today we cannot bear his truth, and so we twist it every way possible. We no longer dare to accept the clarity of his words about loving our enemies, even though everything he taught is contained in his simple words, “What you wish for yourself, do to others.

Eberhard Arnold, *Writings*

EMMY, 42: When I hear cries for war drowning out voices for peace, it's easy to become angry and cynical. I need to remind myself that God is still in control. I cannot change the world, but I can change myself.

The present form of the world passes away,
and there remains only the joy of having used this world
to establish God's rule here.
All pomp, all triumphs, all selfish capitalism,
all the false successes of life will pass
with the world's form.
All of that passes away.
What does not pass away is love.
When one has turned money, property, work in one's calling
into service of others,
then the joy of sharing
and the feeling that all are one's family
does not pass away.
In the evening of life you will be judged on love.

Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*

VIOLETA, 43: I'm a mother and a school teacher, and I believe that faith in God's future rulership on earth is one of the most important things I can instill in my children. Of course, I first need to expect it myself—there's the rub! Do I really mean it when I pray “Thy kingdom come”?

Faith in God means faith for the future. Whoever lives in God does not look back, but forward. Whoever is alive does not look back over the short span of his own life—nor even over the greater span of religious development—to find a past realization of his current longing. He looks forward into time, toward the goal, toward the destiny of man as he should be and as he shall be.

The spirit of expectation is the spirit of action, because it is the spirit of faith. Faith is bravery. Faith is reality. If we have faith, even only a small

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seed, we cannot regard anything as impossible. For faith gives us a clear picture of life's ultimate powers. It discloses God's heart to us as the pulse of the entire living creation, and shows us that the secret of life is love.

If we live in love we can never exhaust ourselves in psychic introspection or in narrow conventionality. If we are gripped by the experiences of faith and of love, by the expectation of Christ and his second coming, we will act. For God's love is boundless; it applies to public life just as much as to the individual heart; to the economic as well as the political affairs of men.

Our expectation of the future must mean certainty that the divine will conquer the demonic, that love will conquer hate, that the all-embracing will conquer the isolated. And certainty tolerates no limitation. God embraces everything. When we trust in him for the future, we trust for the present. When we have innermost faith in him, this faith will prove valid for all areas of life.

Eberhard Arnold, *Writings*

JOHN, 51: At the end of his story "A Spark Neglected Burns the House" Tolstoy shows us how simple it could be to live as good neighbors and to find peace among nations. The secret? Forgiveness, an essential component of all religions. Maybe every politician should be required to read this story—before the house of our world goes up in flames.

They lived as good neighbors should. Ivan remembered his old father's command to obey God's law, and quench a fire at the first spark; and if any one does him an injury he now tries not to revenge himself, but rather to set matters right again; and if any one gives him a bad word, instead of giving a worse in return, he tries to teach the other not to use evil words; and so he teaches his womenfolk and children. And Ivan has got on his feet again, and now lives better even than he did before.

Leo Tolstoy, *Walk in the Light*

Father in heaven! Draw our hearts to you so that our longing may be where our treasure is supposed to be. Turn our minds and our thoughts to where our citizenship is – in your kingdom, so that when you finally call us away from here our leave-taking may not be a painful separation but a joyful union with you. We do not know the time and the place, perhaps a long road still lies before us, and when strength is taken away from us, when exhaustion fogs our eyes so that we peer out as into a dark night, and restless desires stir within us, wild, impatient longings, and the heart

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groans in fearful anticipation of what is coming, oh Lord God, fix in our hearts the conviction that also while we are living, we belong to you.

Soren Kierkegaard, *Provocations*

DICKON, 51, AND GERDA, 51: When we get stuck focusing on our own problems, this quote helps us turn our thoughts to the needs of others. Maybe it can help others who are hurting in these difficult days.

A rabbi asked his students: when, at dawn, can one tell the light from the darkness? One student replied: when I can tell a goat from a donkey. No, answered the rabbi. Another said: when I can tell a palm tree from a fig. No, answered the rabbi again. Well then, what is the answer? his students pressed him. Not until you look into the face of every man and every woman and see your brother and your sister, said the rabbi. Only then have you seen the light. All else is still darkness.

Hasidic tale in *Seeking Peace*

JORDANNA, 24: Cleaning a toilet the other day, it occurred to me how odd such a chore must seem to a flood victim in China, a thirsty child in drought-ravaged Ethiopia, a person dying of AIDS in South Africa, or a homeless Palestinian in the West Bank. I'd do anything to change the world; yet here I am, sterilizing the same ceramic bowl every morning...Then I remembered reading about how Gandhi used to argue with his wife over who should clean the latrine—traditionally a job for the lowest caste—until they decided to perform this necessary daily task themselves. The great liberator of India fought for justice and equality within the four walls of an outhouse!

We must overturn so many idols,
The idol of self first of all,
So that we can be humble,
And only from our humility
Can learn to be redeemers,
Can learn to work together
In the way the world really needs.
Liberation that raises a cry against others
Is no true liberation.
Liberation that means revolution of hate and violence
And takes the lives of others
Or abases the dignity of others
Cannot be true liberty.

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True liberty does violence to self
And, like Christ,
Who disregarded that he was sovereign
Becomes a slave to serve others.

Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*

PETER, 42: Muggeridge, a famous, worldly-wise TV commentator, went through numerous periods of depression in his long life, and more than once battled suicidal temptations. I'd like to think that the faith he had—which held him back from ever killing himself—is strong enough to save someone else in similar straits.

It is precisely when every earthly hope has been explored and found wanting, when every recourse this world offers, moral as well as material, has been drawn on and expended with no effect...when in the gathering darkness every glimmer of light has finally flickered out—it is then that Christ's hand reaches out, sure and firm.

Malcolm Muggeridge in *Be Not Afraid*

ROWENA, 23: I came across this passage shortly after September 11, 2001. The sentence, "The finger of justice demands that we follow the voice of conscience and consider what must be changed" jumped out at me and made me stop and ask myself: how do I need to change in light of what happened? It's a question I'm still asking a year later. Am I letting the "powerful flood of historical events" shake and stir me? Am I willing to let others know what I think and feel?

Today judgment is being passed upon our age. The finger of truth points to lies and errors in traditions and customs; the finger of justice demands that we follow the voice of conscience and consider what must be changed. When we live on for decades without being shaken and stirred up by the powerful flood of historical events, we run the risk of becoming dangerously cozy and comfortable. In the end our own human constructions take the place of God. We end up being concerned only about defending these institutions, and we worry that if they are overturned, everything will collapse. Consequently, we become too cowardly to stand up for God's justice. We ignore deficiencies and evils and become so used to them that we tolerate just about anything. We let things go on as usual—no matter how much is wrong with them, no matter how many people groan under them. And when a voice of godly justice arises and cries out for what is true and

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right, we revile and repudiate it, and defend our foolishness.

Christoph Blumhardt, *Action in Waiting*

SAM, 26: These are words I turn to whenever the headlines (or my own prejudices) leave me cynical. If I turn to God, he can help me cut through the crap to see how he is at work in the latest tragedy--or in my obnoxious neighbor.

True faith is not a theory for us; neither is it a dogma, a system of ideas, or a fabric of words, nor a cult or an organization. Faith means receiving God himself—it means being overwhelmed by God. Faith is the strength that enables us to go this way. It helps us to find trust again and again when, from a human point of view, the foundations of trust have been destroyed. Faith gives us the vision to perceive what is essential and eternal. It gives us eyes to see what cannot be seen, and hands to grasp what cannot be touched, although it is present always and everywhere.

If we possess faith, we will no longer judge people in the light of social custom or according to their weaknesses, for we will see the lie that stands behind all the masks of our mammonistic, unclean, and murderous human society. We will not be deceived in the other direction either and made to think that the maliciousness and fickleness of the human character (though factual) are its real and ultimate nature. With faith we will see that in the face of the power of God and his all-conquering love, these realities are of no significance. God is stronger. The energy of his spirit overcomes them all.

Eberhard Arnold, *Why We Live in Community*

Learn to trust Jesus always, even when you cannot understand something. Situations will often arise in life without your understanding why. The only answer is to trust Jesus. You will go through very hard times, but never forget that the final victory is God's. Always believe this. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but a new heaven and a new earth are coming.

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Discipleship*

KIM, 40: As we marked the first anniversary of 9/11, our leaders had already chosen to commemorate it with an undeclared, unsanctioned war of aggression against Iraq--the land between the Tigris and Euphrates, the birthplace of civilization. The excerpt below places this act, and those which will inevitably follow it, against the transcending backdrop of God's "new order" -- his promised kingdom of justice and peace.

Is not the great world organization that names itself after Christ serving a god other than the God whom Jesus confessed? Has not the institutional church sided with wealth and protected it; sanctified mammon, christened warships, and blessed soldiers going to war? Has not this church in essence denied him whom it confesses? Is not the Christian state the most ungodly institution that ever existed? And are not the state and the organized church, which protect privilege and wealth, diametrically opposed to what is to come: God's new order?

Eberhard Arnold, *Writings*

JOYANNA, 42: Just weeks after September 11, 2001, I found I was expecting a baby. It was a complete surprise, and at first my husband and I hardly knew how to react, what with the world falling apart and the future unknown. Before long, however, we were celebrating: in spite of all our fears, God had sent us this child, and we rejoiced in the knowledge of his love to us. This poem gave me solace throughout my pregnancy, and meant even more to me after my son's birth—in May.

To My Unborn Child

I carry life or death within me;
this little stirring, blind and pushing creature
is the sweet paradox
inevitable
weighing me down with either joy
or sorrow.
Teach me, my little one, the slow acceptance,
whether death or life is born within me.
I am in God's hands, and you
in God's hands
through me—
all of it God's: the light, the dark,
the winter,
and this wild, petal-drifting,
sun-dazed May.

Jane Tyson Clement, *No One Can Stem the Tide*

One of the greatest risks in taking up arms against evil is to mistake the battle for something that must be fought on a human level, between opposing camps of "good" people and "evil" ones.

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It is tempting to carry out the fight in others rather than in ourselves. Horrified at the state of the world or at other people's lives, we may become filled with righteous (if not self-righteous) zeal. But rather than winning others over to a new life, or finding their hearts, we may end up distancing ourselves from them. As Gandhi once advised, "If you hate injustice, tyranny, lust and greed, hate these things in yourself." The battle must be waged in our own hearts first.

Johann Christoph Arnold, *Seeking Peace*

TRACY, 15: I'm a sophomore in high school. Looking through my journal, at the pages of anxious scrawl I wrote on September 11, 2001, I discovered a quote I'd jotted down from The Brothers Karamazov. That quote meant everything to me. I didn't know if I'd ever see another sunrise. I still don't. Tomorrow, next week, next year don't count. Neither do my plans for college or the vocation I choose. All that matters is now, and the people around me today.

One day is enough for a man to know all happiness."

Fyodor Dostoevsky in *Escape Routes*

JOHANNA, 41: The quote I picked was written by a college student beheaded by the Nazis for distributing anti-government leaflets. I don't know what it's like to face a guillotine—but I do know how it feels to be totally cut off from God, and to hang on anyway.

I'm still so remote from God that I don't even sense his presence when I pray. Sometimes when I utter God's name, in fact, I feel like sinking into a void. It isn't a frightening or dizzying sensation, it's nothing at all—and that's far more terrible. But prayer is the only remedy for it, and however many devils scurry around inside me, I shall cling to the rope God has thrown me, even if my numb hands can no longer feel it.

Sophie Scholl in *Cries from the Heart*

BOB, 51: A confused young man in the Vietnam era, I wound up joining a cult. Only later did I come to my senses and realize the emptiness of emotional human relationships, and my need for God. The world is still complex and confusing, but through repentance and conversion, I have found clarity and peace of heart.

The great agitation in the world of today makes it more and more urgent to gain inner strength in quiet encounters with Christ. Situated as we are in the midst of a world that is terribly unpeaceful, we need constant

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nourishment for our inner life. It is important to look beyond confining externals. Instead of following the alien spirits of hatred and violence, of lying, impure, and greedy possessiveness, we must follow the one spirit who alone is stronger than all other spirits.

Without a rebirth of the heart, we will glean from fluctuating world events either a false meaning—based on material considerations or on emotional or racial ties—or no meaning at all. Many people interpret current events according to the interests of their own circle, class, or nation. For most people, though, these events never have any meaning at all. There is only one possible way to end such confusion: each person must undergo a complete and life-changing about-face toward the kingdom of God.

Eberhard Arnold, *Writings*

JUSTIN, 52: My mother died of cancer in 1982. Six months later my 35-year-old sister died of the same disease. Today, looking back, I can talk about pain, but when you're in the midst of it, it's hard to understand, much less talk about. I was single then, living at home, and suddenly two thirds of my household was gone.

One day, a friend gave me the poem below. What was so special about it at that moment? It wasn't a matter of recognizing that there was a vast Someplace beyond the reach of my pain. In fact, it was the other way around: it was precisely because I was all ripped up that I had a connection to "the great Then." It's hard to explain, but pain took the cotton out of my ears and slid the blindfold from my eyes. I was connected to a world of spirit then as I have never been before or since.

One morning a couple of months later, I woke up and realized that the pain was going away. I noticed that with time and the accumulation of trivial worries, I no longer felt the void continually. At the same moment I realized that my connection to "the great Then" was fading too.

If you are hurting, I wish you healing. But I also hope the pain never entirely leaves you—and I wish this for myself too.

We shall be circled over at length
by a remoter sky,
and flung into a starrier space
more deep, more high.

Some day the little mind of man
will crack and spin

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to let the chattering years fly out,
forever in.

The sea will be more brief to us
than jewel of rain;
and what now stuns us with its might,
beauty or pain,

will be as faint as cheep of mouse
or swing of flower
under the gusty wing of heaven;
and what seems power

will drop away and pale to dust
held in the palm;
and what seems passion now will sink
to leveled calm.

Therefore be quiet with your breath,
all little men,
and hold some wonder, in the Now
for the great Then.

Jane Tyson Clement, *No One Can Stem the Tide*

JANET, 22: I'm an elementary school teacher, and I often think of all the children in the world who deal with loss and suffering. These words from Dostoevsky have inspired me to make each day a happy one for the children entrusted to me: to make the most of their birthdays, to appreciate their little accomplishments, and to dare that messy finger-painting activity I've been postponing. Looking back on my own childhood, I truly believe that happy memories are the best armor for adulthood—especially in a time when nothing is certain.

You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome for life in the future than some good memory, especially a memory of childhood, of home. People talk to you a great deal about education. But some good, sacred memory preserved from childhood—that is perhaps the best education. For if a man has only one good memory left in his heart, even that may keep him from evil...And if he carries many such

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memories with him into life, he is safe for the end of his days.

Fyodor Dostoevsky in *Endangered*

WANDA, 49: The following lines by William Blake remind me how love can be found in the most unexpected places--even where there is great suffering and sorrow.

Seek love in the Pity of other's Woe
In the gentle relief of another's care
In the darkness of night and winter's snow,
In the naked and outcast. Seek love there!

William Blake in *A Third Testament*

JENNIE, 70: I've always loved this passage; it ought to encourage anyone, no matter their religious background.

The effect of prayer is union with God, and if someone is with God, he is separated from the enemy. Through prayer we guard our chastity, control our temper, and rid ourselves of vanity. It makes us forget injuries, overcomes envy, defeats injustice and makes amends for sin. Through prayer we obtain physical well-being, a happy home, and a strong well-ordered society...Prayer shields the wayfarer, protects the sleeper, and gives courage to those who keep vigil...It will refresh you when you are weary and comfort you when you are sorrowful.

Gregory of Nyssa in *Seeking Peace*

DANA, 48: I can still remember when I first read this quote, in the public library at Peekskill NY, in 1976. It was a decisive moment for me: to recognize that the line between good and evil does not follow political, social, or economic classifications; neither is anyone wholly good, or wholly unregenerate: each of us must contend with walking the knife edge.

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them! But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in *Why Forgive?*

MARGRIT, 14: I still miss my grandma, who died two years ago, but she left me many beautiful poems, like this one:

HOPE

Heaven is above me
no matter where I be:
in the depths of sorrow
in the depths of the sea.

In the mines of evil
in the pits of sin,
Heaven is above me
and the Light creeps in.

Heaven is never sleeping
though my heart is dead
through my soul is rotten
and all love has fled.

I cannot hide from Heaven,
I cannot hide from Light,
for lo, the Light will seek me
down the streets of Night.

There is no fleeing from it
no matter where I be;
above is always Heaven
and Heaven is finding me.

Jane Tyson Clement, *No One Can Stem the Tide*

Nations are building their freedom and security on the most dangerous weapons that have ever existed. Yet we are called to build our security on something else—that which is of God. And we long that something of God might be given to all nations. It is not enough to lead even the most perfect life of personal peace. Our longing will be satisfied only when the whole earth comes under the rulership of God.

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Discipleship*

Never burden yourselves by looking far ahead; always live one day at a time. If you can do this, you will live like children, birds, and flowers—for them, each day is a lifetime. Every day, new joy and hope unfolds, even if every day also brings you new shadows and new nightfall. Every day you

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may break down in guilt and failure; every day may show you a thousand times over how helpless you are. Yet each new day brings new sun, new air, and new grace.

Eberhard Arnold, *Salt and Light*

KEN, 30: As a teacher, I am all too aware of our culture's obsession with things—and with winning, at all costs. Materialism and individualism are destroying the next generation. The quote below is challenging—but it holds a promise, too.

Everyone strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, and wishes to secure the greatest possible fullness of life for himself; but meantime all his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life but in self-destruction, for instead of self-realization he ends by arriving at complete solitude. In our age all mankind has split up into units; they all keep apart, each in his own groove; each one hold aloof from the rest, hides himself, and hides what he has.

He ends by being repelled by others and repelling them. He heaps up riches by himself and thinks, "How strong I am now and how secure" and in his madness he does not understand that the more he heaps up, the more he sinks into self-destructive impotence. For he is accustomed to rely upon himself alone and to cut himself off from the whole, he has trained himself not to believe in the help of others, in men and in humanity, and only trembles for fear he should lose his money and the privileges that he has won for himself.

Everywhere these days men have, in their mockery, ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. But this terrible individualism must inevitably have an end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they have separated themselves from one another. It will be the spirit of the time, and people will marvel that they have sat so long in darkness without seeing the light. And then the sign of the Son of Man will be seen in the heavens...

Until then we must keep the banner flying. Sometimes, even if he has to do it alone and his conduct seems to be crazy, a man must set an example and so draw men's souls out of their solitude and spur them to some act of brotherly love, so that the great idea may not die."

Fyodor Dostoevsky in *Seeking Peace*

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EDITH, 29: At a time when I felt disconnected from God, these words gave me something to think about.

What happens to all my prayers—those that are not answered, and those that seem to make things worse than anyone ever anticipated? Surely they are still sustaining me. Perhaps there will be unexpected answers to them, answers I may not even be aware of for years. I cannot believe they are wasted or lost. I do not know where they have gone, but I believe God holds them, hand outstretched to receive them like precious pearls.

Madeleine L'Engle in *Cries from the Heart*

KATHY, 72: In *The Secret Flower*, a stranger describes the City we all long for...

It is a city of music and little children; a city where peace dwells, and no sorrow but what it is shared and turned to blessing; a city of labor but no strife, where no man speaks but in honesty and love; where sin is turned back at the gate and driven out not by the sword of hate but by a seal of purity; a city beyond our words to reckon.

Jane Tyson Clement, *The Secret Flower*

JEREMY, 25: Dealing with the fear I felt after 9/11, I realized that I needed to take my struggle with temptation more seriously, in order to face the future with a clear conscience. Since then I have often turned to this paragraph.

Often the most difficult situations—unexpected tragedy of death, suffering of sudden loss—will arise in life without our understanding why. It is the same struggle against sinful thoughts. Just when we are sure the battle over this or that obstacle has been won, we may be newly attacked. Even then the answer lies in full surrender to Jesus.

Everyone is bound to go through hard times, and for some, the struggle to accept hardship will seem insurmountable. Yet we should never forget that the final victory belongs to God. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but a new heaven and a new earth are coming.”

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Freedom from Sinful Thoughts*

LUKAS, 55, AND LINDA, 59: The following thought has meant a great deal to us. How strong is our faith?

If we cannot pray for God to hold back warring armies, then it is a mockery to believe he can make all things new.

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, *Action in Waiting*

GEORGE, 67: I grew up in New York City, so 9/11 hit me hard. I'm still trying to grasp its meaning. I found this a sobering but hopeful message.

The New Testament is indeed a book full of hope, but we may search it in vain for any vague humanist optimism. The second coming of Christ, the second irruption of eternity into time, will be immediate, violent and conclusive. The human experiment is to end, illusion will give way to reality, the temporary will disappear before the permanent, and the king will be seen for who he is. The thief in the night, the lightning flash, the sound of the last trumpet, the voice of God's archangel—these may all be picture—language, but they are pictures of something sudden, catastrophic and decisive.

J. B. Phillips in *Watch for the Light*

Everyone goes through periods of spiritual dryness at one time or another, even the most "religious" people. They may feel strong in their beliefs today, but that doesn't mean that they won't be tempted and tested tomorrow.

Clearly, faith is not a trust fund that can be drawn on year after year. It is more like an elusive grail that must be sought and re-won again and again. This is especially so during times of illness or death, when uncertainty about the future, separation, loss or grief bring on unavoidable temptations—and involuntary change.

This should not dishearten or depress us. In my experience, the battle for faith is the battle that gives life meaning, and the more intensely it is fought, the greater its rewards. Without faith, existence becomes a vacuum that is quickly filled by superficiality, conformity, boredom, and even despair. With it comes strength for each day.

Johann Christoph Arnold, *Be Not Afraid*

DAVE, 27, AND ANNETA, 26: As parents of a newborn, we've returned to this paragraph often, because it offers concrete advice—something we can do other than stewing about the dismal state of the world, or worrying about the future.

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Everything depends on whether or not the last hour finds us a generation worthy of greatness. And the only thing worthy of God's greatness is our readiness to die for his cause. We must show this readiness in the trivialities of daily life, or we will not be able to stand firm in the critical hour to come. We need to overcome completely all petty points of view, all purely personal opinions and feelings, all fear, care, and inner uncertainty—in short, all unbelief. In its place we must put faith—faith which, though small as a mustard seed, has the power to grow.

Eberhard Arnold, *God's Revolution*

ELI, 28: My wife has MS, but these words have given us something to hold on to when we make the mistake of looking too far ahead.

When there is suffering, but also obedience in suffering, then you are being educated for eternity. Then there will be no impatient hankering in your soul, no restlessness, neither of sin nor of sorrow. If you will but let it, suffering is the guardian angel who keeps you from slipping out into the fragmentariness of the world, which seeks to rip apart the soul. For this reason, suffering keeps you in school—this dangerous school—so that you may be properly educated for eternity.

Soren Kierkegaard, *Provocations*

REBECCA, 36: It's easy to grow discouraged about the sorry state of our world. But this short passage from one of my favorite stories, "The King of the Land in the Middle," reminds me that the world is not a monolith. The world is made of individuals, and because each was made in his image, each carries the potential for change.

It was a time when grief came... But then came joy as well. And the greatest pain was the cold heart, the offered help that was spurned, the hand held out that met no answering clasp; that, and the sense that neither they, for all their labors, nor any man, could heal all the hurts of the world, until the new time came for every heart.

Jane Tyson Clement, *The Secret Flower*

SUSIE, 46: The news media are obsessed with gloom and doom, but in between the headlines (and in the alternative press) there is plenty to take heart from. Countless individuals and groups are working for positive change in the world, and making a difference. Maybe they are the forerunners of the "new earth and new life" Blumhardt writes about below:

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As surely as the world sets its hopes on the machines of war, I set my hopes on the power of the Spirit. It is so strong that it can reverse everything that seems doomed. The Spirit can bring about a new heaven, a new earth, and a new life—and we ourselves will see it.

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, *Now Is Eternity*

Life has a way of washing us to one side of the stream, even when we think we're successfully navigating the middle. Therefore we must take action by choosing which side we want. It's a decision we will need to renew, but as long as we do so, we will remain either-or people: men and women who are neither infallible nor perfect, but who, because of our conviction, can never be faulted for indifference. Weariness and weakness will often overtake us, but we will not be defeated, because we know every day offers us new liberation, new heart-to-heart encounters, and new opportunities to love. As Walt Whitman put it in *Leaves of Grass*, "This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God..." Will we choose to love, or not? Everything else pales beside this crucial question.

Johann Christoph Arnold, *Escape Routes*

IVA JANE, 33: I read this after my dad died of brain cancer this summer, and it reassured me that taking time to grieve is not selfish. (The writer lost her daughter in the shooting at Columbine High School.) Dad did so much for me, and I intend to go on remembering him, reflecting on his life, and letting myself be changed by his death.

I think death should shake us and wake us up. It should get us asking "What is important in life?" You can't just fall back into normal routines. When you love a person, their life is a gift to you and to just go on with your life seems to me like throwing that gift back in their face and saying, "It was nice having you around but I've got other things to get on to." I don't think that is the proper way to honor a life. You don't have to be all stone-faced and serious—"I'm just going to suck it up and be tough." If you just let your life go on like it did before, you're burying a gift you've been given. You're missing an important moment.

Reflecting is never easy. It is easier to weep. It is also easier to get angry, to point fingers, or to lose oneself in what the media calls the "larger"

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issues. In the wake of Columbine that has meant gun control and video games, school security and Hollywood violence, preventative education and separation of church and state. All of these issues are important, but at the end of the day, they may not be the things that really count. Or are they? The more I think about it, the more certain I am that, we cannot forget the vital role of our personal efforts...

To me, at least, it comes down to acting generously and spontaneously, even when caution holds me back. It means choosing to extend a hand rather than recoiling judgmentally; and following an impulse, even when it might draw me out of my “comfort zone” and cost me something. Finally, it means daring to sacrifice all for Love’s sake—not as a hero or martyr, necessarily—but consistently and with conviction, in the small, everyday things that make up a life.

Misty Bernall, *She Said Yes: The Unlikely Martyrdom of Cassie Bernall*

Like sunshine over a valley, God’s great love spreads out over the whole earth. It is true that there are terrible things in the world, such as war; and wars will come, but God is greater. He is much greater than man, and his love is much greater than man’s. Do not live in fear. Look down across the valley and toward the mountains, and think of the great God who created all things; and who has you in his hand. If you live according to Jesus and his teachings, you have no reason to be afraid. Be faithful to him and to God, and leave your fears behind.

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Discipleship*

Let us not be disheartened,
even when the horizon of history grows dim and closes in,
as though human realities made impossible
the accomplishment of God’s plans.
God makes use even of human errors, even of human sins,
so as to make rise over the darkness what Isaiah spoke of.
One day prophets will sing not only the return from Babylon
but our full liberation.
“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.
They walk in lands of shadows, but a light has shone forth.”

Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*

ELFRIEDE, 49: What Arnold expresses in these paragraphs is an antidote to the fear that I, a mother, have felt ever since last September—a tiny part of

the terror and mistrust that grips our whole country, and which the media has played a large part in creating and spreading. As each new wave dominates the headlines, I have found comfort by putting my trust in God's hands. His peace is deeper than my unease; and his assurance outweighs my fears.

Fear for our own lives prevents us from keeping peace and doing works of righteousness and justice. Enervating fear is overcome by the power of love; then strength of abiding peace enters. It builds up everlasting justice. There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out fear. An armistice with armies lying in readiness, fearing renewed hostilities, cannot be called peace. An armed peace is no true peace. Only the rule of peace staying for ever is true peace. Only eternal peace is true peace.

Eberhard Arnold, *Innerland*

STEPHEN, 50: For years, I lived a "successful" life; then depression struck and everything was chaos. As I sought to refocus my life and sort out my priorities, these words from Henri Nouwen helped me to realize I do not need to be strong or have all the answers:

We have been called to be fruitful—not successful, not productive, not accomplished. Success comes from strength, stress, and human effort. Fruitfulness comes from vulnerability and the admission of our own weakness.

Henri J. M. Nouwen in *Seeking Peace*

SHARON, 72: So much "religion" depends on emotional experiences and rituals—things that do little for me. I've found that serving others brings love down to earth and brings you together with your neighbor.

Love is work: practical, strenuous work of muscle and mind, heart and soul. The kingdom of love, therefore, must be a kingdom of work. Work, truly unselfish work, animated by the spirit of brotherliness, will be the mark of the future, the character of the mankind to be. Work as spirit, work as living reality, such as we all have lost; work as dedication in enthusiastic love of togetherness—that is the fundamental character of the future. Joy in togetherness will show as joy in work.

Eberhard Arnold, *Writings*

Those who acknowledge that they view suffering and tribulation in their own lives only as something hostile and evil can see from this very fact that they have not at all found peace with God. They have basically merely

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sought peace with the world, believing possibly that by means of the cross of Jesus Christ they might best come to terms with themselves and with all their questions, and thus find inner peace of the soul. They have used the cross, but not loved it. They have sought peace for their own sake. But when tribulation comes, that peace quickly flees them. It was not peace with God, for they hated the tribulation God sends.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Bread & Wine*

Do not be one who stretches out his hands to receive, but closes them when it comes time to give. Even if you have earned something by the work of your own hands, pass it on as ransom for your sins. Do not hesitate or grumble when giving, but share everything in common. Do not claim anything as your own. You seek fellowship in the immortal; how much more should you seek it in perishable things?

Eberhard Arnold, *The Early Christians*

You can be the most righteous person in the world, morally speaking, but if you lack love and concern for others, your heart is not yet pure. If you let your neighbor go hungry when you are well-fed, you have not truly overcome sin in your life. Jesus wants us to suffer the injustice and need of the world together with him; to hunger and thirst for righteousness for all people; to witness to his way of love and justice and peace—to fight with him for the building up of a city on the hill.

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Freedom from Sinful Thoughts*

CYNTHIA, 23: My husband died two years ago—six months after we were married. To know that God still hears me even when I cannot seem to find words to express my deepest feelings is a great comfort, especially in hard hours.

When we pray it is as though we cling to a rope God has thrown to us. If we hold fast to this rope—no matter how numb the arms of our heart—he can pull us to safety and freedom. As Jesus says in the Gospel of Mathew, “Come to me, all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” And for those who feel too unworthy to pray, Romans 8 offers this comfort: “The Spirit helps us in our weakness... and intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

Johann Christoph Arnold, *Be Not Afraid*

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SARAH, 21: As the Sadhu says, all of us will have to suffer at some point in our lives. What is important for me is that we can choose who and what we will suffer for.

Whether we like it or not, we will encounter suffering and danger in our lives. If we do not bear the cross of the Master, we will have to bear the cross of the world – with all its earthly goods. Those who bear the Master’s cross know from experience that this cross bears them and takes them safely to their destiny. But the cross of this world actually drags us down and leads to destruction. Which cross have you taken up? Pause and consider.

Sundar Singh, *Wisdom of the Sadhu*

RANDY, 48, AND LINDA, 45: It’s tempting to wish that the world would change, or to think that if this or that government acted more wisely, the results would not be as catastrophic. But we can only change ourselves, and once we understand that, we’ll see what great hope there is in the words “all things new.”

The word that crowns all others is this: “I make all things new!” This is of special support and comfort when we realize how quickly everything passes away and becomes dust and ashes. All things new! God cannot tolerate what is corrupt and destructive but wants to change it. Of course we enter into new life only through repentance (Acts 2:37–38). Sadly, many people think of all sorts of things around them that need to change and not at all of themselves. Or they would like to have only certain things change so as to be able to carry on more comfortably. We should be deeply humiliated to realize that there actually is nothing that must not also become new, especially ourselves. If I were to take a close look at each one of you – all of you must become new!

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, *Action in Waiting*

DAVID, 50: This thought mirrors my feelings about the contrast between Christ’s teachings and conventional Christian attitudes to force:

Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. Therefore he said: “The princes and powers of this world lord it over the people, but you should not.” A Christian, therefore, is not a ruler, and a ruler is not a Christian. A ruler must execute judgment with the sword. In the church of Christ there is an end of war and violence, lawsuits and legal action. Christ does not repay evil with evil. His followers show his nature in all their doings. They act as

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he did: they do not resist evil... Their task is to reveal his kingdom of love. Legal authorities are appointed to shed blood in judgment; the church of Christ, however, has the task of preserving life and soul. The law courts of the State must bring evil to account; the church of Jesus Christ must repay evil with good. The authorities that sit in judgment must hate and persecute the enemies of their order; the church of Christ must love them.

Eberhard Arnold, *Innerland*

EMILY, 23: This poem speaks of sorrow, and compares it to an icy frost that threatens the harvest. I have felt such sorrow in these days, and I have wondered how to hold it or rearrange it so that it doesn't press so deeply.

HARVEST

I shall believe in sorrow when it comes
like the first down-wandering of snow,
laying its drift of shadow on my heart,
hugging against the hedges of my soul,
gathering on the lintel of my door.

Its wide and still possession of the air
I shall acknowledge as necessity
and pray and pray, not for an early spring
but for the harvest that the year must bring.

Jane Clement, *No One Can Stem the Tide*

WELTON, 77: How often my prayers seem to rise no higher than the ceiling. Kierkegaard puts his finger on the cause and gives me courage.

In proportion as one becomes more and more earnest in prayer, one has less and less to say, and in the end one becomes quite silent. Indeed, one becomes quite a hearer. And so it is; to pray is not to hear oneself speak, but it is to be silent, and to remain silent, to wait, until the one who prays hears God.

Soren Kierkegaard, *Provocations*

CHRIS, 34: A father of three, I often find myself wondering what the world will look like by the time they come of age. There's not a lot in our culture that inspires confidence or trust. These words from Hesse hint at a solution. As the old-school socialists put it, "Don't mourn. Organize."

We are not yet men; we are still on our way to humanity. Every pupil of Lao-tse, every disciple of Jesus, every follower of Francis of Assisi was much further ahead than the laws and reasoning of present-day civilization. Yet the sentence, “Thou shalt not kill” has been honored faithfully and obeyed by thousands of people for thousands of years. There has always been a minority of well-meaning people who had faith in the future, and obeyed laws which are not listed in any worldly code. As soldiers they showed compassion and respected their enemies, even during the last, horrible war, or consistently refused to kill and hate when ordered to do so, suffering imprisonment and torture as a result.

And we who believe in the future will raise the ancient demand again and again, “Thou shalt not kill.” It is the basic demand of all progress, of all true humanity which is to come.

This is why every one of us has a personal task. This task is not to help all of humankind a little; it is not to improve some institution, not to abolish a particular kind of killing. All this is good and necessary, too. Yet the most important task for you and me is this: to take a step forward, in our own personal lives, from animal to human being.

Hermann Hesse in *Salt and Light*

If the waiting must be endless, if there is to be no fulfillment, then it is not wisdom to look and wait. We should become like those...who say that there is no truth, and that the only wise men are those who spend their lives in discovering and exposing the lies that have been believed in the world. But the new sunrise will certainly dawn in the appointed time.

Henry van Dyke in *Home for Christmas*

When we come to the end of everything we have done or can do, then God begins. We ourselves are drained and useless, but we have the hope that God will establish his perfect rule. In the face of this, what do our own petty feels of our petty little souls have to say? Absolutely nothing. Let us turn once more to the great cause, for the earth belongs to God and he will conquer it.

Eberhard Arnold in *Against the Wind*

IRENE, 35: I am a mother of five and lost my mother when I was ten. Six years later my sister died of bone cancer. I've battled cancer, too, but survived—and I've had a baby since then. Last year I had a brain hemorrhage...When times

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were tough, the following words have given me hope and a sense of purpose. I hope they inspire you too.

This is the true joy of life: being used up for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; being a force of nature instead of feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to others, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for them whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live...

Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw in *Seeking Peace*

Live your life so that the fear of death can never enter your heart. When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light. Give thanks for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. And if perchance you see no reason for giving thanks, rest assured the fault is in yourself.

Chief Tecumseh in *Drained*

LESLIE, 42: These words remind me how glad (yes, glad!) I can, and should, be to be powerless to change things on my own. At the same time, they remind me that I can be a part of the change God wants to achieve.

A time will come when everybody will realize that they do not have what they ought to have. They will feel a painful emptiness and crave for something they don't even know. All of a sudden it will hit them: "How poor and weak we are, how miserable and depraved! How little certainty we have in what we think, believe, and hope!" Then they will look to those who appear to have what they lack.

That is how conversion begins. When the time is ripe, it will one day spread through the whole world. The those who have what is right and true will be inundated by a flood of people yearning to have it, too. Oh, that this time might come soon!

One thing I have found to be vital in repenting is readiness to seek—and accept—help from others. The present genteel, self-loving brand of piety assumes, "I don't need anybody; I can set things right with God

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myself.” But as long as people quietly try to work out their own salvation, they won’t get anywhere. Only when they recognize their need for one another and reach out and open up to one another will they move forward.

Friedrich Zuendel, *The Awakening*

There are many things that threaten us. Even if war does not break out, millions of people lose their lives all over the world through all kinds of trials: storms, landslides, explosions, earthquakes, epidemics, all kinds of accidents. At the same time there is an enormous amount of sickness of body and soul. How much sighing there still is in hospitals, how much misery in the mental institutions. And how many are being killed, some slowly, through envy, through hatred, through maliciousness of people towards each other. Just think of all the people murdered in one year. It doesn’t even take guns; people are perishing anyway.

Every family must be prepared for something to happen suddenly that will disturb its peace. Then we have to believe and pray that the judgments may be turned away. If God keeps his word, we can stand up against anything, especially if we ourselves are already living in what is new (1 John 5:3–5). Arise and go to meet what is new. Pray for it. Beg for it. The whole world will yet be renewed through the almighty power of God.

Christoph Blumhardt, *Action in Waiting*

In spite of the fact that in history God has appointed a bloody, diplomatic world government anchored in the right to property, God wants only one thing in the end: love without violence, freedom from all possessions and property rights, simple truthfulness and brotherly justice, community of all people without self-interest and property—that is, the kingdom and the church.

Eberhard Arnold, *Innerland*

We are not made of light. We are an admixture, weird and stormy and blind, of light and darkness, high noon and bleak midnight. Our complicity with the world hardly renders us apt for the truth. But for the grace of God (the “unsealing” grace), we stand apt for the culture, and thereby damned. We see and refuse to see. And now and again—too rarely, God knows—we see and cry aloud. The truth, reality!

Daniel Berrigan, *Daniel: Under the Siege of the Divine*

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SALLY, 52: A few nights ago an alcoholic stood outside our house, cursing. In the morning he was sorry for what he'd done, and spoke of his torments, not the least of which is the current threat of war. He sees no answer, but longs for one. Talking with him reminded me of this poem.

VANITAS VANITATUM

The pale heart waits the flow of outward strength;
always our faces in the ambient night
seek the clear flood of a redeeming light,
and the dark surface breaks with sun at length.

Nothing we do, we do ourselves alone;
the peace of love is learned, the use of pain;
beauty falls on us like the lash of rain;
wisdom will touch us and become our own.

Now a wild earth groans with great disease,
the wide thunder breaks and wind breeds wind;
we cry out on others who have sinned
and clutch their guilt to us in faulty ease.

Dear Lord, have mercy on us in this hour.
Teach us that never will the soul be free
till it has known itself athirst for thee,
voiceless and dim, but for thy ultimate power.

Jane Clement, *No One Can Stem the Tide*

In the turmoil of life without, and black despair within, it is always possible to turn aside and wait on God. Just as at the center of a hurricane there is stillness, and above the clouds a clear sky, so it is possible to make a little clearing in the jungle of our human will for a rendezvous with God. He will always turn up, though in what guise and in what circumstances cannot be foreseen—perhaps trailing clouds of glory, perhaps as a beggar; in the purity of the desert or in the squalor of London's Soho or New York's Times Square.

Malcolm Muggeridge in *Seeking Peace*

Dear Father in heaven, we lift our eyes to you. You allow earthly events to follow their own course, and even your own Son had to suffer and die.

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But your plan is already prepared and you will act in our time according to your will. We pray, “Your will be done, your will!” In the midst of all the suffering let your love be revealed in many places, wherever it is possible for people to understand it. You have always protected us; protect us still. You have done much for us and we want to praise your name. We want to be people who always acknowledge you and praise you, for you will never let any be lost who hope in you. Be with us this night, help us, and send us the strength we need to serve you, also in our everyday life. Amen.

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, *Lift Thine Eyes*

TIKVA, 30: This quote has often jarred me out of apathy by making me realize that whatever I do—or don’t do—has an effect on others.

Time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of stagnation.

Martin Luther King, Jr., in *Seeking Peace*

Every evening as the sun sets; every night as it grows dark and the moon rises to conquer the deep blue-black of the starry heaven; every dawn as the morning star rises to herald the return of the sun and the coming of a new day, we see a symbol of the death and rebirth of light. The waxing and waning of the moon too—first fading, then growing full and radiant again—belongs to this cycle too. It all points to a mystery—the marvelous victory of light over darkness, of good over evil.

Eberhard Arnold, *Salt and Light*

In the beginning, even before the creation of the universe, was the endlessly loving Father, God, and with him the Word, which is Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. At the end of time, too, God alone will rule. Groaning creation will be redeemed and the universe will be joyful. There will be pure joy, love, harmony, and justice. God will wipe away every tear, and

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there will be no death, sorrow, or pain. The longing for this time burns in the heart of every being, spiritual or human.

J. Heinrich Arnold, *Discipleship*

VERONICA, 45: I used to rebel when I read anything that suggested I was co-guilty for the terrible injustice in the world. After all, I've never agreed with my government's foreign policy. The last thing I want is for innocent women and children to suffer. Worse, I'm separate myself from this guilt, even if I want to: I buy the cheapest shoes because they're all I can afford. But someone still sweated to make them. I eat simply, but the fruit and vegetables I buy are sold by corporate giants, and I shudder to think of the conditions endured by the farmworkers who harvested them. I abhor the violence and hatred that caused September 11, but doesn't my impulse for revenge perpetuate it? All I can do—as a mother, and as an individual—is to weep with the woman whose husband never returned from the World Trade Center, and to agonize with the mother of the child in Baghdad as the bombers return. Yes, I cannot separate myself from the pain. I am part of it. Perhaps we're meant to feel utterly helpless so that we realize our need for God.

My friends, pray to God for gladness. Be glad as children, as the birds of heaven. And let not the sin of men disturb you in your actions. Fear not that it will wear away your work and hinder you from accomplishing it. Do not say, "Sin is mighty, wickedness is mighty, evil environment is mighty; we are lonely and helpless, and evil environment is wearing us away and hindering our good work from being done." Fly from that dejection, children! There is only one means of salvation: take yourself and make yourself responsible for all men's sins—friends, that is the truth, you know, for as soon as you sincerely make yourself responsible for everything and for all men, you will see at once that it is really so and that you are to blame for everyone and for all things. But by throwing your own indolence and impotence on others you will end up sharing the pride of Satan and murmuring against God.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Gospel in Dostoyevsky*

In the midst of the escalating power of injustice, in the midst of today's widespread cruelty and coldness of heart, love must be revealed: a love that towers above all the mountains of earth; that shines out more clearly and brightly than all the stars of heaven; that is more powerful and mighty than the quaking of the earth and the eruption of all its volcanoes; that is greater

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than all world powers and ruling authorities; that works more powerfully on history than all catastrophes, wars, and revolutions; that is more living than all life of the creation and its most powerful forces. Above all nature and throughout all history, love proves itself as the ultimate power of the Almighty, as the ultimate greatness of his heart, as the ultimate revelation of the Spirit.

Eberhard Arnold, *Innerland*

MARGE, 49: I struggle with depression at times: there's no lack of destruction and turmoil in the world. But there's also hope, joy, and beauty—light. This poem is strong with that light, and it's there for each of us to find.

You who have watched the wings of darkness lifting
and heard the misted whisper of the sea,
shelter your heart with patience now, with patience,
and keep it free.

Let not the voiced destruction and the tumult
urge to a lesser prize your turning mind;
keep faith with beauty now, and in the ending
stars you may find.

Jane Tyson Clement, *No One Can Stem the Tide*

It is a paradox that the government, which is meant to suppress evil, by its very nature uses violence and thus is a beast from the abyss (Rev. 11:7). If I may say something very bold, I would put it like this: God controls the hell of human crimes with an infernal machine, the State.

Now someone may say, "I am going to operate this machine and make it less hellish; I want to moderate the satanic properties of hell, so I will serve the State." Such a resolve commands respect. Very well; whoever wants to do that should go ahead, and I pray that such an undertaking may help a little. For myself, I refuse to mount the machines of hell. I will board the ship that shows all humankind the way to the other shore, which is not yet discovered. It is the Kingdom of peace, justice, and perfect love.

We need people who dare to set the course for this other shore, who dare to discover it, who dare to live in accordance with the ways of the land on the other side.

Eberhard Arnold, *God's Revolution*

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To feel close to God is a great comfort. It is depressing to feel alone and forsaken, to think that we have been left to our own resources and must rely on our own strength. I would not want to live a single day without being able to feel that God's angels are around me, and around the whole world. I cannot live one day without believing that we are never alone.

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, *Now Is Eternity*

At some thoughts one stands perplexed—especially at the sight of men's sin—and wonders whether one should use force or humble love. Always decide to use humble love. If you resolve to do that, once and for all, you can subdue the whole world. Loving humility is marvelously strong, the strongest of all things, and there is nothing else like it.

Fyodor Dostoevsky in *Why Forgive?*

We are standing in a time before a storm, before great events in the world at large. What shall we do? What is most needed in the world today is that true unity and brotherliness be actually lived among men and women.

Emmy Arnold *A Joyful Pilgrimage*