



Taken from Rudolf Steiner College's e-newsletter.
A week late, but I thought you might like to read...

In Remembrance

by William Bento, PhD

In the light of the eleventh anniversary of that fateful day of 9/11, it is worth pondering the conditions of the world we were living in then and the conditions we are living in now. Although terrorism had not made itself known to the magnitude of 9/11, it did exist in various types of actions prior to that global event. An unsuccessful attack on the World Trade Center in New York had occurred in 1993 and a senseless and violent shooting massacre occurred at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999. These were the early warnings of a wave of terrorism that has become all-too-commonplace in today's world.

The terror that continues to threaten the sanctity of lives everywhere is not merely the result of external factors driven by a collapsing economy, nor the state of corrupt politics, nor the loss of what was once a promising culture of freedoms. Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher, educator and spiritual scientist, prophetically perceived our current situation 100 years ago. His analysis of the trajectory of society was firmly and clearly stated by him in countless lectures after World War I. For him the time for facing the menace of a materialistic greed was urgent, for if humanity were to sleep through this time it would only awaken to the terror of an abyss. Such is the reality we are now facing.

As Steiner saw this wave of destruction rolling into the 20th century he placed his hopes for the future in the education of our children - Waldorf Education. The only true antidote to the dilemmas of so many outbreaks of violence in our time lies in the recovery of the true image of the human being. The image of a being endowed with body, soul and spirit needs to be the guiding light upon the path of learning. If we can realize the spiritual gifts that lie within each child, we can look forward to a different world than the one we are now struggling within. One gift that we need to cultivate in our children and within ourselves is the gift of true fraternity. This gift entails the recognition that we are brothers and sisters in the family of humanity. And as such we are each other's keeper, we have the spiritual mandate to shine the light for one another, and in that light mitigate the terrorism lurking in the darkness of our time.

Through Waldorf Education, the seeds for the renewal of culture can be found. In such schools the true beauty of being alive and being creative thrives. Yet, to venture into the future bearing healing and peace requires that each one of us continue our schooling and reawaken the spirited light that arises from compassion. By taking into our hearts Steiner's words from one hundred years ago, we may light a candle of remembrance, not only for 9/11 but also for the image of the human being that is destined to be the lifeblood of all of humanity.

"If ever thy soul is weak, if ever thou believes that the goals of earth-existence are beyond thy reach, think of man's divine origin and become aware of those forces within thee which are also the forces of supreme Love. Become inwardly conscious of the forces, which give thee confidence and certainty in all thy works, through all thy life, now and in all ages of time to come."

-Rudolf Steiner, 12/26/1911