

The Ambachtsheer Letter

Letter #188

September 2001

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001:

TRUTHS AND CONSEQUENCES

Light One Candle

*Light one candle for [last week's survivors], with thanks that their light didn't die.
Light one candle for the pain they endured when their right to exist was denied.
Light one candle for the terrible sacrifice justice of freedom demand.
But light one candle for the wisdom to know when the peacemaker's time is at hand.*

*Light one candle for the strength that we need to never become our own foe.
Light one candle for those who are suffering from the pain we learned long ago.
Light one candle for all we believe in, that anger won't tear us apart.
And light one candle to bring us together with peace as the song in our heart.*

*What is the mem'ry that's valued so highly we keep it alive in that flame?
What's the commitment to those who have died when we cry out they've not died in vain?
Have we come this far always believing that justice would somehow prevail?
This is the burden and this is the promise and this is why we will not fail.*

*Don't let the light go out, it's lasted for so many years.
Don't let the light go out, let it shine through our love and our tears.*

Peter Yarrow
Betty Wilder

The words above were sung at a memorial service held at First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto two days after the September 11 disaster. In its original version, the song refers to "the Maccabee children" rather than our substitution of "last week's survivors". We hope that the composers will take the substitution as the compliment it is intended to be. Though the original context was quite different from the terrible events of Tuesday, September 11, their words brilliantly capture our complex mix of feeling profound shock, pain, anger, of our cry for justice...tempered by the hope that in the end, our necessary actions will be guided by wisdom rather than revenge at any cost .