

Diane Herr's Dream on Sisters Sermonette

I was only able to be at the Dream on Sisters conference for 2.5 days, but I was moved by many things during that time including the music and a workshop on Sacred Play. I have decided to focus on a very serious aspect of my experience. On my ribbon I wrote "My dream is for world peace in my lifetime."

For a long time I have been impressed with Rev. Dr. Bernice Powell Jackson World Council of Churches (WCC) president from North America. Until December 2005, she was Executive Minister of the Justice and Witness ministries of the United Church of Christ. She wrote a weekly letter called "Witness for Justice" for the UCC Justice website. As a member of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network, I was a voracious reader of her letters. She is a role model of mine.

I was grateful to be able to hear her give an excellent sermon during the opening worship and also to attend a workshop she led entitled "Another World is Possible: Overcoming Violence in Our World". The workshop was about getting involved in the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). It is also the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). We are halfway through the decade and you know what progress has been made. The workshop was great because she and the participants shared examples of what works and ideas for positive change. She also provided amazing World Health Organization 2000 statistics about the rates of violent deaths including the surprising statistic that 50% of deaths are suicides, 33% homicides and 17% due to war. I could go on and on, but won't, perhaps a future adult education class.

In her sermon she focused on the affects of violence on children be it in war, in the home, or on the streets. The scripture was from Matthew 2:17-18 following Jesus' birth. {Herod sent and killed all the children around Bethlehem who were two years old or under. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."} What I most remember from the sermon was her exclaiming: "Where is the outrage!?!?!" I have the DVD ... another adult education class?

I think of the dead and injured children as the escalation of the violence between Israel, Palestine and Lebanon occurred in the last three weeks. I am angry that our government does not promote peace in this situation. I am angry that our representative in the UN Security Council vetoed a UN resolution to call for a cease-fire. I have written multiple emails to everyone in government that I can. I am reminded of Bernice Powell Jackson's sermon. I am outraged! Another World is Possible!