

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

May 16, 2011

Many great changes in the world are caused by one determined individual inspiring others to join in a group effort. Gandhi led the effort to free India from British rule, one woman started Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and Osama was the motivating force behind a world-wide terror organization. Mother Teresa created a world-wide organization to help the poorest of the poor while living under a vow of abject poverty. All it takes is one person to step up and lead the way.

Even though it all starts with one person it seems incredibly difficult for the average person to realize his or her potential to change things. "I'm only one person." "Who is going to listen to me?" "I can't do that." On the contrary, each of us has the ability to create a wave of positive change in our lives and the lives of others. We just lack the belief in ourselves and our cause which would allow us to form the resolve to do what needs to be done.

Peace Pilgrim is a great example of a woman who chose to live the beliefs she had. She abandoned all material possessions and spent decades criss-crossing the U.S. walking for peace. She inspired everyone she met and worked tirelessly for peace until her death in the 1980s. We may not have peace but the world is a better place for her having been in it and given her life to her cause.

I, too, would like to have a cause bigger than my life to believe in and make happen. I want to pour myself endlessly and completely into something so important, good and necessary that there is no room left for the petty concerns of my ego. I have many ideas, many things I would willingly devote my life to accomplishing. But none of which I can do while I'm in prison. I can't seem to find anything compelling or worthwhile that I can do from a prison cell. I volunteer when I can and help those around me when I can but those are just day to day actions which may change things a little bit here or there. They are not my purpose in life.

When the Lord deems me ready for parole he will soften the parole commission members' hearts and I will go out into the world to find my cause greater than myself. Meanwhile, I will prepare myself by learning all I can, meditating and praying so that I am ready when the Lord's voice calls me to His work.

I pray that all who read this find their true purpose to spend their lives on.

## Again

It struck me again,  
As it has so many times in the last 25 years,  
While watching him mop the bathroom floor  
For 12¢ an hour,  
That there are so many other choices  
    I could have made,  
    He could have made,  
    We all could have made.  
Yet I chose to come back to prison,  
Knowing what it was like,  
Hating it while it lasted  
Then forgetting it even existed  
Until deed was done, fate sealed,  
Lifetime committed to horrendous life.  
Oh, to turn back the clock, or forward,  
Anything to end the nightmare.  
Except death, not that, but just barely.  
Only now when it is so late,  
Perhaps too late,  
That I can now say  
Never again, and mean it  
With the sincerity of a life lost  
In the bowels of a monster,  
Chewing up men and women,  
Shitting out husks of humanity,  
After sucking out all that was human.  
Never, ever again.

Harlan Richards

## Help Me

Holy Spirit help me,  
Fill my heart like  
A summer storm fills a rain barrel,  
Slake my thirst for love  
The way a marathon runner slams Gatorade,  
Hear my supplication with the urgency  
Of a newborn's cry in the night,  
Help me see my way to God's loving embrace  
With the keen sight of a soaring eagle,  
Bring me the joy of salvation  
With the abundance Santa brings to Christmas,  
Teach me how to have miracles in my life  
The way the Beatles taught a generation  
All you need is love.  
Holy Spirit help me,  
I'm blind as a day-old kitten  
Crying for its mother,  
Lost, not knowing the answers,  
Or the questions.

Harlan Richards