

A Hole In The Wall
BY
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Our country was recently reminded of the horrific tragedy that occurred on 9/11. It is hard to believe that so many years have past; it seems like only yesterday that we watched in disbelief as so many innocent lives were destroyed. Sleep evaded me on that night, forcing me to watch the numerous accounts of devastation, over and over again. It's hard to believe that some people lived to tell the story, but they did. My heart ached as I watched stories of people trapped beneath mounds of sweltering rubble. People trapped atop the burning building with arm's flinging frantically, begging for help as the world beneath then crumbled to the ground. The sight of people willingly flinging themselves from top floors will be forever etched in my mind. If I could have found the remote beneath the covers, I would have changed the channel. It was so heartbreaking!

Finally, they diverted the news reports from tragedy to triumph and began sharing the stories of the survivor's, those who had made it out of the building alive. They had several interviews of those actual individuals. One talked about being in a room filled with smoke that was so thick until it was as if he had fallen into a bottle of black ink. Computers were tossed around the room, desks were overturn, chairs broken into pieces and glass was

everywhere. Blood steamed from his brow; he was so disoriented until he could not find his way out of the room. He began to pray out loud, asking God for help. The burning in his eyes began to grow worse, as streams of tears poured down his face connecting with oozing blood as they fell to the floor. However, he was determined to some how get out of the building, so his screams for help grew even louder.

Suddenly as if his prayers were answered, a beam of light pierced the thickness of the smoke. Apparently on the other side of the wall was another survivor.

There was a small ***HOLE IN THE WALL***, between them, that was the size of a man's hand. The second survivor had found a flashlight and was shining the light through that ***HOLE IN THE WALL***. The wall between them was solid and did not budge in spite of their numerous attempts to break through to reach each other.

Eventually with their continuing efforts to break through, what stood between them, it finally came tumbling down (remember this point). Needless to say because of their refusal to leave each other, they both lived to tell their story. It made me wonder what would happen when people unite, in spite of the debris, with only one goal in mind...to survive!

On that same day, I had been invited to speak to the “*Brother’s Keeper Program*,” at the Grafton Correctional Institution. I had made this same sojourn to that prison numerous times over the past twenty-five years. Therefore, when they requested me to come, on that day, I readily accepted. Many of the inmates and I have grown together throughout the years and have even become like an extended family. I am always intrigued by the gifts and talents of the people behind prison walls. Often when I leave the sessions, I leave feeling tremendous inspiration and hope. *The Brother’s Keeper Program* is geared towards open and honest dialogue. As a direct result everyone gets to express themselves openly for the greater good of society. To me, it’s like crime prevention within the criminal element. If we can get to the root of the problem, then crime would cease. Who better to provide us with the solution than the actual perpetrators themselves?

I often take groups of people with me, who witness the phenomenon of restoration and healing. I tell those who go with me to be prepared to hear anything and that going to these sessions is not for the faint of heart. However, if they will listen, then they might just learn something.

On this particular day as I surveyed the room, I noticed the variations of ages! There were men who have grayed over the years, coupled with teenagers who were still wet behind the ear. Nestled near the door, were

three young men who looked young enough to be my grandson's. I wondered what crime had they committed that placed them in this room of destiny and of course you know that I had to ask. Their answers ranged from robbery, drugs to assault which is what I expected because over the twenty five years of going in the pattern has remained the same.

During our dialogue they expressed their feelings of being cast aside and forsaken by their elders as the true source of their criminal behaviors. A society that has chosen to fear them verses to love them. What they really wanted, they said, was for someone just to say hello in stead of crossing the street to avoid any contact with them. This makes me think of the power of the human touch and what happens to a life that is void of such a positive human need.

“Don't always call the police on us”, one of them said. They wondered if anyone even cared what had forced them to the streets. Does anyone care enough to even have a conversation with us? They don't care how much you know until you show them how much you care. What they lacked was love, which was very obvious. So, I stopped him in mid sentence looking him straight into the eyes and said, “I love you!” He seemed startled, so I repeated it again, “I love you!”

I could see his eyes which had a few moments earlier appeared hardened and cold, now give way to a hint of hope with a tear attached. ***A breath through!***

This conversation reminded me of the two men trapped in the Twin Tower's on 9/11. They were both in trouble and their survival depended on the two of them working together. My words to him were as if I had shined a light through the ***HOLE IN THE WALL***. Now that I had his attention, I reached my hand through that hole and asked him to grab onto it. I wanted him to see my shining light; I wanted him to know that someone does care, care enough to remain until we all could make it out safely. It was an amazing interaction. My words to them all spoke volumes, as I reached my spiritual hand through the ***HOLE IN THE WALL***. I reiterated to him, with everything within me, that everyone has not given up hope for the future of our young people. As I mentioned previously our total survival is not depended on politicians, if there is going to be a change then we have to be the change that we are expecting to see in the world.

Generations are dying as some of us sit idle, waiting on some one else to fix the problem!

Some of us act as if we are waiting on Calvary to come to our rescue but I say to everyone reading this article on today that you are the Calvary! Therefore, If you are feeling trapped and cannot find your way out, then put your hand through the ***HOLE IN THE WALL*** and you just might find someone on the other side, in a similar predicament, waiting on someone to hold onto. My grandmother used to tell me that there is strength in numbers. Therefore, if you are willing to join me then start pushing, who knows the wall between us might just come tumbling down.

Let's leave no one behind! Not even those who you fear!

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