

An Open Letter to America
By Ann Blewett

On Thursday, September 13th, my husband, John, and I left our home in Toronto to visit our friends, Dale and John, who live near the town of Bancroft. The weather was kind to us and brilliant autumn colour already evident as we arrived at our destination. Normally, John and I are very glad to be here, and it is always good to visit with our friends. However, this time, there was a marked difference. We are changed people now as a result of the chilling and surreal events of Tuesday, September 11th, 2001.

The very heart of America was attacked; the twin towers of the World Trade Center symbolizing economic wealth and power, distinctly defining and enhancing the skyline of lower Manhattan; and the Pentagon in Washington, the icon of military might. I visited New York in 1984 with a friend and her adult daughter. We soared up to the top of one of the World Trade Towers to the observation deck on the 110th floor. I can still visualize the view presented that day; the Statue of Liberty, holding aloft the torch of freedom, the Hudson River, the state of New Jersey, and the seemingly limitless expanse of the skyscrapers of the financial district of Manhattan spread out below. I can scarcely believe that the World Trade Center is now no more, vaporized and imploded, reduced to smoldering rubble; obliterated by hijacked American planes employed as instruments of destruction. The sight of that second plane plowing into the south tower in a stunning trajectory of death will haunt me forever.

I could not turn away from the gut-wrenching images on TV; I felt compelled to watch, as horrified and appalled as I was. I felt I owed it to those victims in the four airplanes, the towers of the monumental World Trade Center, and the Pentagon; if only to sense, in some small way, the numb disbelief and unmitigated terror they must have felt knowing they faced imminent death. My thoughts and emotions are very jumbled and confused and I am consumed by overwhelming sadness, outrage, and helplessness. What can I say to my neighbours and friends to the south; how can I address the devastation that has befallen your proud and majestic country? My heart and my prayers go out to all people in America and especially to those who lost someone dear.

September 11th, 2001, truly a day of unbridled and depraved infamy, the world as we know it will never be the same again. We have lost our collective innocence. Many bodies will never be recovered; a horrendous thing for loved ones to assimilate. There will be no remains to bury, no grave to visit in a cemetery, no sense of closure. As in past global conflicts, these souls will be known only to God.

Dale's husband, John, went out and purchased ribbons in red, white, and blue, and we tied those ribbons onto our car aerials as a sign of sympathy and respect to America. We all have to reach out to one another in love more than ever now, seek a deeper spiritual relationship with our God, and cherish each day, never taking anything for granted ever again.

The tragedies of New York and Washington have taught me that we must be ever mindful of the tenuous fragility of our existence. We must all be thankful for the gift of life and make our precious days count, pursuing interests and activities that bring us happiness and contentment. Tell your loved ones that you love them and appreciate them – and live each moment to its utmost.

And now war has been declared and initiated. We must not allow the fanatical and misguided terrorists who perpetrated this crime to gain the final victory. We will prevail. God keep America during this very dark period of your country's history. Your great and incomprehensible sorrow is our sorrow as well.