

## REFLECTIONS AT GROUND ZERO

*By Ann Blewett*

In early August, Wendy, Elsie and I had a very interesting four-day trip to New York City. We crammed a great deal of sightseeing into those four days and were all captivated by the buzz and passion of this bustling and energetic city. One overcast day, we caught the subway and traveled to Battery Park in Lower Manhattan. There we boarded the ferry to Ellis Island, the portal of immigration to America; and looked upon the impressive Statue of Liberty, the famous symbol of precious freedom. From the deck of the ferry, we then turned our gaze to the skyline of Lower Manhattan and one is struck by the fact that the heart of the massive city of New York has now disappeared forever. Having visited the World Trade Center nearly twenty years ago on my first visit to New York, ascending to the top of one of the towers and taking in the extraordinary view from the 110<sup>th</sup> floor, it really hit home to me how much has drastically and irrevocably changed.

After disembarking the ferry, we took the subway to a station near Lower Broadway and walked to Ground Zero. Arriving at the site, we were overwhelmed and moved to intense silence and solemnity, knowing it is the final resting-place of fifteen hundred people whose remains were never recovered. Green netting surrounds an iron enclosure and through various peepholes one can see building material laid out ready for new construction. Within the environs of the vast site, there is a rude iron cross with a fireman's cap resting at the end of one of the cross's arms.

Having been there in another time, in a time more innocent, what could I say, what could I think? I could not verbally express my thoughts but instead I considered all the souls who had perished there on that appalling morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001; I considered their lives, their dreams, and their loves; and I mentally said a prayer for all of them as a group. It had come full circle; one could say there was a nebulous sense of closure; but for me, there was no final peace of acceptance and there never will be. Nothing that happened that day will ever be assimilated or comprehended as long as time is eternal.

Our attention was drawn to four black granite plaques on the enclosure listing the names of all the people who had died; the office workers from the World Trade Center, all the firemen and policemen. Suddenly the sun appeared as if the spirits of all these beings were shining upon us in a benign and loving fashion as if to say, "Do not fear, all is well; we are safe; safe in the arms of God. Nothing will ever harm us again."

The observation of that site two years after the events of that horrific day underscored the immense destruction and obliteration of the two giant office towers that once graced that tract of ground. The World Trade Center had stood soaring toward the heavens for some thirty years serving as a beacon and focal point for Lower Manhattan; an international and compelling symbol of America's economic wealth and corporate power. And now it is no more.

I was thankful for the opportunity of going to view Ground Zero as I considered it a privilege to be there to reflect on the lives of all those people and pay tribute to them. Being present at such an overpowering yet somehow hallowed place puts all our personal problems and life issues into proper perspective and makes us thankful to our Creator for the priceless gift of being alive.

*"Let us never forget."*

*"In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God." - United Church Creed*