



RNDM Earth Community

“We are One, We are Love”

September, 2011

“Let ours be a time remembered for awakening a new respect for our earth and all her inhabitants, for one another, for ourselves and for our common destiny.” (RNDM Congregational Chapter, 2008)

Vol 3, No. 1
Page 1 of 2

THE TREES KNOW

Sandra Stewart, rndm

**Stand still.
The trees ahead and the bushes beside you
Are not lost.**

David Wagoner’s poem “Lost” is one of my favourite metaphors for finding a way forward in difficult times...as well as a siren call to live in the present moment no matter how that reality presents itself, to learn to pay attention to ‘what is’, and not waste precious life energy on ‘what is not.’ The trees around me are never lost! This is good news.

I love trees, and always have. Some years ago a dear friend introduced me to the boreal forest of Manitoba, a magical place where the aspen parkland of the Prairies cosies up to the granite rock of the Canadian Shield. She said, “I want to show you my *church*.” Indeed it was a place of quiet beauty and ancient longing. The black spruce and the jack pine, once strangers, quickly became my friends; their scruffy, stately presence always welcoming and their persistence in the face of adversity – little soil and wicked winds— always a balm for my sometimes-weary soul. I love to sleep under their protection. I feel so alive in their presence, at home in myself. Who couldn’t love such a gift?

**Stand still.
The trees ahead and the bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.**

Here, in *this* moment, it is possible to know and be known, to belong. Many encounters with trees have graced me with this knowledge. How so? They are the lungs of the planet. They breathe belonging! If you are reading this reflection, you are likely breathing (!) and you can thank that *miracle of divine*

energy, as David Suzuki calls it, **photosynthesis**—it is a critical factor in the removal of carbon dioxide from and the contribution of oxygen to the atmosphere. All those tree-friends helping me breathe, keeping me alive to belong to Life. What grace!

The forest breathes. Listen. Pay attention. The most succinct description of contemplation I can suggest is to ‘pay attention without judgement.’ Without definitions, labels, personal likes and dislikes, just paying attention, without imposing myself on the other.

Stephen Isaacs suggests this attentive exercise: When you are low on energy and in need of renewal, go out in nature and find a large tree and put your back against it. The life-force, or grace if you will, that energizes the tree will slowly enter your own being and bring you back to balance. It may take anywhere from ten to twenty minutes but you will notice a difference—a re-connection, a belonging.

**The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you.
If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.**

**If what a tree or a bush does is lost to you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.**

The forest knows where you are. God is not out there; God is in all, through all, and with all. Nothing is excluded, everything belongs. You belong. And the trees know this.

SOME EXCITING NEWS!

Our new website has just been launched! To read about the Canadian RNDMs, our history in this country and our work today, find links to many helpful resources on eco-spirituality, read past issues of this newsletter, and learn about conferences, workshops and other events, click on the following link:

<http://www.rndmcanada.org>

TIPS FOR GREEN LIVING

During this UN International Year of Forests, why not plant a tree? Fall is a good time because the ground is still warm and water loss is reduced as cooler weather arrives.

When looking for a tree to plant, choose one that has at least one-half of its foliage on the lower two-thirds of the plant and the other half on the top one-third. Some nurseries prune out most of the lower branches--these lower branches are vital for proper growth of the tree.

Follow this link for a beautiful meditation on trees entitled "*La Beaute des Arbres*":

<http://www.slideboom.com/presentations/319026/La-Beaute-des-Arbres>

"To plant trees is to give body and life to one's dreams of a better world."

-- Russell Page

A Place at the Table: The Contribution of Christians to the Public Discourse on the Environment

*The Canadian Religious Conference (CRC)
presents*

*A Workshop for All Who Desire to Explore More
Deeply our Relationship with Creation and our
Commitment to the Integrity of Creation*

October 29, 2011 (9:30 – 4:00)
St. Boniface Cathedral hall
190 ave de la Cathédrale
Saint-Boniface, MB, R2H 0H7

Cost: \$50
(covers program costs, lunch and snacks)

Presenters:

Linda Gregg, CSJ, D. Min.
Mary Rowell, CSJ, PhD.

Christians are called anew to a radical and committed engagement in the public discourse on the environment. A renewed theology and spirituality are arising from new understandings of cosmology at the place where faith and science meet. Such developments ground practical initiatives in a world where the "cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one."

To register:
Sandra Stewart, RNDM, at 204-779-6446 or sandrarndm@mymts.net. Please make cheques payable to the Canadian Religious Conference.

**If any of these articles have stirred a
response in you, please share your insight at**
GreenSistersTalk@yahoo.com