

Peace

Feeding Sheep

He said, "Feed my sheep."
There were no conditions:
Least of all,
Feed my sheep if they deserve it.
Feed my sheep if you feel like it.
Feed my sheep if you have any leftovers.
Feed my sheep if the mood strikes you,
if the economy's OK...
if you're not too busy...

No conditions...just, "Feed my sheep."
Could it be that God's Kingdom will come when each lamb is fed?
We who have agreed to keep covenant are called to feed sheep even when it
means the grazing will be done on our own front lawns.

—Ann Weems
Searching for Shalom
Westminster John Knox Press, 1991
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Letting the Hurt Dissolve

Stop the heartbeat, hurt beat, fast beat of my heart, and slow me into a posture of hope for the peoples of the world. Remind me that other people have children, that other people have hopes, and that other people have hurts too. Let the hurt dissolve in the great sea of mercy which is you, Holy God.

Today let me carry one other with me in my heart instead of its own trouble. Replace my heart's beat with the world's beat. *Amen.*

—Donna E. Schaper
*Prayers for Lent, Easter,
and Pentecost*
Abingdon Press 2005
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Practicing Resurrection

In the poem "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front," Wendell Berry writes about the practices of resistance that are necessary for us to break out of the world's patterns and embody resurrection life. He is convinced that we need to confound the world's expectations, which include wanting more of everything, being afraid to know our neighbors, and fearing death. To counteract these tendencies, Berry calls us to do things that "don't compute," like working for nothing and loving someone who doesn't deserve it. In the last line of the poem, he calls us to "practice resurrection." He does not mean, of course, that we make resurrection happen. Of all the things we cannot do, that is first on the list. But by our practices of doing things that do not compute, by appearing to lose our minds, we participate in the resurrection life that God has loosed upon the world.

By our very life together, we bear witness to the principalities and powers that they lose, that the victory belongs to God. The laughter in our assemblies proclaims to the powers of death, "You lose." The song and dancing and praise in our worship proclaims to the powers of death, "You lose." We are always swimming against the stream of a culture ruled by violence and death. Yet, despite all frustration and failure in the present, we confess that we will share, by God's grace, in the life of the world to come. That is the hope that sustains us.

"Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Practice resurrection.

—Richard B. Hays
Circuit Rider (Jan/Feb 2001)