

Sacred Wonder, Shared Wisdom

Soon after September 11, the *New York Times* launched a daily feature that offers short poignant profiles that provide a glimpse into the lives of people who died in the attacks on September 11.

These wonderfully crafted portraits open a window into the world of folks whose loves, struggles, and thoughts are unexpectedly, and painfully, familiar. They are just like us.

It will take the *Times* over a year to complete the project. When I am able to read the stories, I am enriched by my encounter with the sacred wonder of their lives, hopes, and loves.

Which leads me to ask: What's on your mind these days? What causes you to sit up and take notice? What are you working on, caring about, or grappling with that ignites your passion? How are you growing in confidence and competence in your ministry?

We digress from the usual theme approach in this issue of *CR* in order to offer the following collection of articles. We have assembled these pages with the hope that there will be something here that will challenge or inform, provide an answer or prompt a question, so that your mind and heart will be engaged!

Most of these articles were envisioned prior to September 11. Some speak directly about the aftermath of that anguish-filled day. But all are offered with the prayer and expectation that we long to celebrate the precious gift of life that God provides.

What a joy to encounter a new idea that helps us appreciate God's world. What a challenge to renew important commitments. What a privilege to think, feel, and grapple with what it means to be effective in ministry.

I hope you will find in these pages encouragement and propositions that stir you. Maybe even something to argue about. We all want to be alert and attentive since there is so much to do as we seek to love and serve God.

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Neil M. Alexander

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