

This is about the Quebec Mosque murders, and about bearing light into the darkness.

There is, in Islam, a mystical tradition called the Sufis. In this there is a humorous character, Mullah Nasrudin. One day the elders of the Mosque were walking down the main street of the village when they saw Mullah Nasrudin, down on his hands and knees, searching in the dirt. "What are you looking for Mullah?" they asked, "I dropped my key." he replied. They searched for some time, covering a lot of ground, but to no avail. "Mullah," one asked, "where were you when you dropped your key?" "I was inside." he said. "Then why, Mullah, are you looking out here?" "Because," he replied, "there is more light here!"

"You are the light of the world" Jesus tells us. So I think we need to be carrying that light into the dark places. We have to enter the darkness, imagine it and feel it.

"Why should we put up with these Neo Nazi whites? Why don't we just shut down their facebook pages, their disgusting, racist talk-radio shows, whipping people up into acts of anti Muslim violence? We should lock these people up! Get them out of our society!"

Here's another.

"Why should we put up with these Muslim immigrants? Why don't we shut their Hallal shops and ban them from wearing head-scarfs. They should be forbidden to speak anything but our Canadian language because they could be plotting in Arabic and we can't tell. We should send these people back where they came from! Get them out of our society!"

Ouch! Don't those sound the same? That is the darkness. Now how do we take light, the light of Christ's love, of Christ's Incarnation, into our messy world? How do we take this light that has been given to us...into these darkensses.

I look for experiences I have had that are a bit similar to help me to get in.

Let's look at the darkness of Muslims in weird clothes, looking un-Canadian, and just being "other". Here is my way in. Over 30 years ago Lucy and I came to Canada. We came as very mild refugees fleeing the sexual intolerance of the Church of England. We came so Lucy could explore ordination, deemed a hateful sin by Canterbury. In Montreal the gender tolerant Anglican Church provided us with a haven. The Anglican Church there was full of Brits, far from home. We had English teas. We sang English hymns and made little pockets of Englishness around us. We all missed Britain. We all were there for reasons, and, we all regretted leaving family and friends and culture and TV shows and, well, everything. And we had such a struggle learning Canadian ways, words and culture. We had to become fluent in French! So we clustered and embraced Englishness, and told ourselves that we were better. I wonder what the French thought of us. I wonder what the First Nations think of us.

How like the Muslim communities of Canada! If I were from far away I would cluster and take shelter in my old culture if I could find it. It begins to make sense.

Let me try to find a lens to look at the white male racist community. Let's take some light into that dark house. Here is my parallel. I am not entirely friendly to these new "big box" Christian evangelical churches popping up like Costco Stores, sucking in young families with their electric guitars and power-point sermons and coffee cup holders in the pews. Our genteel and thoughtful faith, our sense of the beauty of holiness and our balanced, intelligent integration of belief and citizenship...all of this will be gone if this new wave of happy-clappy religion, mostly imported from America is not stopped soon. I can remember, when I worked in a small, stone, country church, that I had to pass a newly built mega church, sitting in the midst of a huge car park. My congregation

was about 50 people. I would get all tense when I drove past that place. I was losing. They were taking over. Things were, and are changing, and my way of life is being eroded.

What is it like to live in a culture when your Dad worked hard and that was enough for your family to have a good life, go away to the lake in the Summer, pulling the boat behind, full of stuff for fun and camping out. Everything worked and you knew everybody. There were no surprises. And now there are no decent steady jobs for a blue-collar guy like you. Different people have moved in and house prices are out of your reach. You see the future shutting down, when your parents had seen it opening up. Now everything is strange and changing too fast! It hurts. It makes you feel useless, and powerless. It makes you angry that you can't solve this. So who is to blame? If you can blame *someone*, someone different looking, then it's not your fault. You can turn your pain outward as anger. Just find someone.....

I wanted, just a little bit, to set fire to the Mega Church. Some want to set fire to the Mosque.

How do we “remove the yoke, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil? How do we offer food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted? So that our light shall rise in the darkness and this darkness become like the noonday.”

Jesus once told us not to judge. I think bringing the light to what seems darkness is helpful in side-stepping the judging-condemning-destroying pattern that is all too easy to get into. To be more righteous than the Pharisees is the spiritual practice of looking for the humanity of the person who seems to you to be darkness. Only then can you be friends. Only as friends can you heal the anger, the pain and the hurt of the division.

Six men entered the house of God to bring their day, their failures, their hopes, their loves and their losses before God. Why was that vital for them to do? Why did it make sense to someone to kill them and try to kill more? Where do you have to be for that to be the solution to your pain?

To carry light into darkness is not about judging and condemning. It's pharisaically easy to condemn Moslems. It's pharisaically easy to condemn those who fear and hate and kill them.

The righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees' is to seek to understand, and to heal the sickness that leads to the evil.

We should speak out. We should march and join vigils.

But we must first take our little lights into the darkened rooms and search for where the darkness has come from.

We must un-make the context that allows evil to seem reasonable, and hatred to appear patriotic.

You don't have to go into politics. Just be uncomfortably truthful when these topics arise. You need to be faithful. Invite your friends into the darkness to find the humanity of the “other”. You can, because you are already light in Christ.

The world is changed only by many small truthful conversations.

By many small candles is the darkness made bright with the gentle light of Christ.

As you remember the shootings in Quebec, commit yourself to this. And then you will truly be followers in the Way of Christ.