

WRITTEN BY PAUL VON WARD MINUTES AFTER "9/11" ATTACK
(Note to friends, but circulated worldwide on Internet by news organizations)

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

...My mind and limbs were like water. The cries and moans of the dying and wounded reverberated throughout my cells. A part of my own being seemed to perish with each soul's departure. While one part of me was fighting to express its anger at the deaths and wounds of friends and former colleagues, their names not yet known in both cities, another was feeling the anguish and emptiness that their relatives will experience when they get the news.

At the same time I felt a different sharpness cut through me, the source being another form of soul pain--the level of despair that causes one to maim and kill a fellow human. My whole being was a microcosm of the self-inflicted pain members of our species inflict on others. Why does the human family live in such a way as to die the way so many of us have to do? It was so clear to me that we were all parts of the same body, but it was not clear to me why this body had turned on itself.

All my adult life when I have mentioned my birthday, I have said I was born along with World War II, as Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939 and Britain and France had to declare war on Germany in the defense of the free world. From that date the world changed forever. From now on my 62nd birthday will mark another date of the world shifting directions. We have no idea where it will end and what global society will be like when the consequences of the principle of cause and effect work their way throughout the human race. The direction it takes will be the legacy this generation leaves to the next.

We now must recognize that the world is one place, that all humans are one family, that no country can be independent of others, and that when the world is finally safe for one it will be safe for all. The academic discussions of interdependence has now been made real; everyone in the world is within two or three relationships of at least one person who lives or works in New York City or Washington, DC. When some of us are harmed all of us are hurt. The new direction the world takes must deal with this reality. Conscious humans everywhere will work to keep this reality in our full awareness.

As we seek justice, as we seek understanding, as we seek revenge, as we seek forgiveness, and as we seek the path to a better future, let us remember that whatever we do consciously and energetically will come back to us manifold. As we do unto others, so we do unto ourselves. That which we reap one day is the result of that which we have sown on a previous day. May we be filled with love and compassion for all those who were wounded or died, and for their families, for giving us another opportunity to make a different choice for our collective future than we have exercised in the past.

... To honor the dead we must strive to create a world in which justice and peace are the birthright of all people, and in which the many are not left needy due to the way some of us live. To be truly human we must rise above the emotions that divide, accept our part of the responsibility for the whole and learn from today how to create a better tomorrow.
(Written September 11, 2001 by Paul Von Ward at home in Monteagle, TN)