

## Family Matters 2, 2008-09

For those of us connected with the business of school, the fateful day that would forever change our world and our profession began like any other September morning. I recall vividly the glorious weather that beckoned me into the day. Stepping outside to collect the newspaper in the hour just before day break, I looked to the heavens and savored the gentle breezes, offering a prayer of joyful gratitude with an innocence of expectation not soon to be felt again.

But only a few hours later the responsibilities demanded by this day were swirled together in a wild cacophony of turmoil and confusion. Images of chaos and pandemonium and terror were forced upon us and upon many of our children. There was no way to sanitize the ugliness or shield them from it. In the ensuing weeks, my own household would take on a different rhythm and pulse as the environment, usually absent the intrusion of television, would be seldom without it. We would come to the unspoken reality that it was not only the rhythm of daily life that had been shattered, but lives, security, confidence, and hope.

For Americans from coast to coast, the early morning world of September 11, 2001 marked passage into a new world order; one where uncertainty and fear would, for a time, reign supreme. For a time, citizens everywhere clung to each other and expressed love more openly. Faith communities gathered in somber prayer. For school professionals, the new order marked initiation into a world of crisis response plans and heightened security. For parents, it marked ratcheted-up vigilance and protectiveness. For my own family, miles away from the epicenter of tragedy, it marked the end of innocence. The world as we had come to know it was gone.

But what of today? Our students today are growing up in the new world order created by those events. Perhaps it's safer, but is it better? Have we learned lessons from the heroes of that day? Have we worked harder for peace—person to person, in our families and neighborhoods, and communities?

This is a good day to reflect on the lessons of heroism and peacemaking. Our children, thankfully, may not remember the horror of our national tragedy, but, hopefully, its lessons are not lost to the dust and detritus. Our recommitment to being the embodiment of Christ's love can bring light to a world in darkness. We can build a better future. We can make a difference. We must.

*BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS...*