

Recommended Movie

Mulan. This movie was actually recommended to me by a guest during videotaping of episode #89 of "Sister Who Presents...". The guest was Miss Markie Woods, a transgenderal person, who described a moment in the film, when the title character views her image on the surface of a pool and sings, "When will my reflection show the person who I am inside?"

Though I hadn't seen the movie at the time of the interview, I made a point of borrowing a friend's copy and viewing the movie in its entirety a couple of days ago. I found the story to be quite inspiring, even if rather contrived at certain points.

Mulan struggles against various forms of societal oppression without becoming fixated on any of them. This is not a movie about a woman railing against sexism, even though she lives within a very sexist society. Nor is it a movie about traditional oriental forms of spirituality, though elements of these weave themselves throughout the story also.

Perhaps over-simplified, what this movie is about (among other things) is a young woman's quest for herself and her place within the larger mostly imperfect world around her. The challenge is to embody her own best qualities, rather than become merely a reaction to some particular societal injustice or other.

Even when the reward for living with integrity is to be ostracized, excluded, and impoverished, she clings to the deep values and virtues that make her who she is and acts upon them. Even when the reward for living with integrity is a position within the government which would raise her above all but a handful of people in her country, she clings to the deep values and virtues that make her who she is and acts upon them.

Those with the wisdom to see and understand, recognize the treasure that she is. The rest see her as perhaps nothing more than a war hero. What is perhaps most astonishing are the extremes that her life encompasses.

My favorite quote, however, is toward the end when she is for the second time battling the chief enemy, a man much stronger than herself. Asked in the middle of this second struggle with the enemy, just what her plan is, she responds, "Actually I'm making it up as I go."

Most of the time, it seems, so are we.

"It is just as important to listen to the music, as to dance with all your heart."

---Sister Who

Subscription Information:

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Sister Who's Perspective

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Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of abundant "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances, we often talk at each other without listening, communicating, or understanding.

Humanity needs its icons, but also its iconoclasts to grow beyond the good and bad qualities that now limit and describe us. The essences of both God and us remain, in the midst of questions, to be discovered, experienced, and expressed.

Please share in this ongoing dialogue, remembering to indicate whether and how you wish to be identified.

Blessings, love, and peace to you.

Awareness and Intervention

There is enormous tension to be found within possessing both great blessings and great awareness of those who live in some form of poverty or other. Yet just as I stretch a balloon many times before trying to force air into it, this enormous tension stretches the soul of the individual to contain much more divine breath than would have been otherwise possible.

Yet it is not for me to say how much someone else's "balloon" should be able to contain, and merely shrug my shoulders complacently when a balloon occasionally is stretched too far and breaks.

Breakage does occur. Being aware of this will hopefully remind me to be both gentle and supportive. When a balloon breaks, divine breath dissipates into the atmosphere, perhaps never to be recaptured. One quote I read in a newspaper a number of years ago phrased a similar idea as, "when an old person dies, it's like a library burning down."

Stretching is also necessary and I have occasionally remarked to others, when they question my sometimes-too-trusting nature, that if there were only two choices I'd rather be a victim than a cynic.

Several weeks ago, a couple of young men expressed interest in a sustained friendship with me. One of them was in the process of seeking a better apartment in which to live, but had almost none of the basic furnishings. I responded by selecting a pan or two I thought I could live without, an extra telephone, and an extra shower curtain I happened to have. These I delivered to him promptly along with my phone number and mailing address, promising to supply a pillow and a blanket the following week. The

PLEASE NOTE that I have new postal and email addresses.

Actually, I have a new home address too. Why all this change had to happen at the same time is a mystery to me. Many things within the current season of my life are a mystery to me, probably to remain unsolved for at least several more years. This is a very difficult time in a number of ways, but thankfully not enough to stop me from being Sister Who.

Just as I found myself unable to pay the next month's rent, a friend I hadn't seen in ten years appeared again and said he had a spare bedroom he could rent me very cheaply.

Then I received the directions I needed, to begin channelling my email through my own website.

Then the local post office decided to do some remodelling and change the numbers of the boxes.

My new telephone number is 720-941-8164.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

next week I tried for four days to contact him either by phone or in person, but messages went unreturned and though I knew that someone was present, no one would answer the door when I knocked.

Perhaps his need was only pretended. I was baffled, but as more days passed without any communication, I finally concluded that no more help from me was wanted. Instead of persisting, I accepted that something else must be going on of which I was quite unaware and that I had already done my best and could now move on myself.

The next day, stopping at a red traffic light, an apparently homeless man on the curb held up a sign that said "everyone needs a little help sometime." I rolled down the window and gave him the pillow and blanket, which had been in my car for over a week. Then the light turned green and I moved on again. I thought of him that evening as darkness fell, snuggled up somewhere in the blanket with his head on the pillow, perhaps getting the first good night of sleep he'd had in a long time.

Does knowing that there is someone "worse off" than myself make my own troubles any less painful or significant? Of course not. Pain is pain and pain hurts. The only decent response to pain is healing--whether by prayers, words, or actions.

I have often said "we all take turns being the one in need," but I have never enjoyed taking my turn at it. I would much rather have the resources and strength to be continually helping others in need. Yet one-way relationships never seem to quite reach the level of divine love nor do they affirm the interconnect- edness of all things.

Many needs cross my path each day, to which I simply do not have the resources to respond. But perhaps this is not always what they are asking of me.

When I see a need which others do not see, but I do not have ability to do anything more than empathize--"to laugh with those who laugh and weep with

those who weep"--it is a moment in which I can be the heart of God within the world.

Sometimes all the need asks of me is empathy. If I instinctively refuse, I add to my own blindness. If I naively respond without any depth of understanding or wisdom, I may lose my footing and drown in the quicksand. If I stand firmly within my own integrity upon the rock of divine love, I become (at the very least) a spark of divine light within someone's darkness. Together, the one in need and I wait, and hopefully, in time, the darkness passes.

When I am given the opportunity and the ability to intervene and be a vessel of healing towards another's pain, to participate in something good happening to another person, it is a moment in which I can be the hands of God within the world.

Sometimes the mere fact that I see a need while others do not, holds the possibility that I am among those appointed to do something about the need--however big or small my contribution may seem in my own eyes.

Humanity experiencing oppression cries out for divine intervention and God's response is often the birth of a person with the unique abilities to perceive, understand, and ultimately defeat the oppression.

Individually and collectively, we are God's responses to the prayers of others, but too often we are like amnesiacs--unable to remember what it was we were sent here to do and thus forced to rediscover the purposes of our lives bit by bit.

Sometimes (most of the time?) I am frustrated by the long tedious process of rediscovery. In my better moments, I understand that this is one of the ways God creates truly perfect timing, keeping me from arriving either too soon or too late at each place and event.

Yet in humility I must always remember (awareness again) that I partici-

pate in an unfolding of life much, much greater and more expansive than myself or my physical life can ever encompass.

Perhaps I am participating in the archetype of the starving artist, a role that has lingered for several hundred years within humanity and included far greater masters than I could expect to become, but I do pray that I never become so distracted with making a living that I forget to create my own life--and present it as a gift to all who will come after me.

May one and all and everything blessed and loved ever be.

"Sister Who Presents..." #84-91

When the last newsletter was sent out, final preparations were being made for the production of four new episodes. At present, eight have been completed and four more are less than two weeks away.

Improvements continue to be made in the set and lighting, though disappointments abound as well. Technical problems have created extensive delays. As soon as production was underway, however, four shows were done in rapid succession by dedicated and competent crew members (and myself of course) on each of the two days.

The first production session on January 22 was supposed to be four shows including three guests. One guest accepted, one declined, and one was confused about the date, wasn't ready, and rescheduled for the production session on February 19.

Episode 84 thus became a discussion of sacred dance with Timothy Dobson (the best leader of the Dance of Universal Peace I've ever met). Episodes 85-87 and 90-91 are extemporaneous monologues using metaphor, personal memories, and various explanations and interpretations of symbols.

The room in which the shows are produced can accommodate an audience of up to fifty people, but actual attendance on January 22 varied from two to ten people. Audience attendance on February 19 varied from about one to three people. Several dozen people have expressed interest, but for whatever reason have not managed to be present. I am more concerned, in any case, that whoever is present find some-

thing within the presentations to nurture personal and spiritual growth. For all who are interested, productions occur the third Saturday of each month, from January through October.

On February 19, episode 88 was a conversation with Cora Steiner, who founded the Colorado Psychic Center in 1978. We discussed the freedom to explore spirituality and divine-human relationship beyond traditional dogma, in spite of unsupportive societal response. In most ways, it seemed Cora was just an ordinary person with a hunger for a spirituality that really worked on an individual basis--a spirituality that was genuinely integrated with life. I found the conversation fascinating and her mental sharpness, wisdom, and understanding to be both gentle and provocative. We agreed on some things, disagreed on others, and all in all had a very good little chat.

Episode 89 was a conversation with Miss Markie Woods, a transgenderal person of significant depth and diverse experience. As that show concluded I commended her for being one of humanity's teachers, in the complex realm of society's gender and role definitions.

Significant support has been received and has thus made the production of these shows possible. Financial sponsors or donations are still welcome, however, as various needs continue. Your prayers for the perfect answers to these needs are always appreciated.

Blessings, love, and peace to you, now and always---Sister Who