



I like America  
and America  
likes Me

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# Living in the Balance

March 2014

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My hair has been on fire for several days following the passage of a law by the Arizona state legislature that allows business owners to openly discriminate against gays and lesbians if the owner believes that serving LGBT persons is in violation of his or her personal religious beliefs. The bill awaits the governor's signature. The result has been an uprising by the LGBT communities across the nation and by those who support equal rights. Threats of boycotts. Cancelling of trips and events. And with these threats looming, the business community is getting very fidgety. They are concerned about the potential for both current and future business loss. Arizona will host the Super Bowl next year and some are already calling for THE game to be moved if this legislation becomes law. It remains to be seen if money, rather than principles, will be the trump card that turns back this bill.

And I ask the obvious. How will a business owner know that a person is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender? Will the legislature have some kind of profiling images posted on the internet? Maybe they will size up people using a filter like the matriarch in **August: Osage County** who glares at her daughter, "What happened to your hair!? You look like a lesbian!"

Perhaps Arizona will look at ideas that worked historically in identifying the targeted group. Everyone who is gay or lesbian will wear an "LGBT" patch on their person while those of us who stand with them for equal rights will be recognized by the same tag preceded with an "S" for "sympathizer."

As my rant evolved over the weekend from a simmer to a full blown volcanic eruption, a good friend posted an article on Facebook written by the Episcopal Bishop of Atlanta. He wrote about the responses he received after recommending Rick Warren's book, **The Daniel Plan**. The bishop was quickly fire hosed with "What were you thinking, Bishop!? Don't you know Rick Warren's stand on sexuality?!" The Bishop replied, "By recommending **The Daniel Plan** I am in no way endorsing Pastor Warren's views on human sexuality. Having read the book, there is nothing in its content that is inconsistent with our baptismal promises." The bishop continues, "I confess to you, I struggle with thin, single issue-based fellowship that gets passed off as Christian fellowship. On both sides of the issue. I deeply believe that human beings are too complex and valuable to write off even when their understandings are deemed deplorable. I am afraid that I have preached and taught about a God of limitless grace, love and mercy too long to banish people to a garbage pile of contempt. Or, to teach polite indifference as an acceptable substitute for Christian fellowship."

I can stand with the Bishop when he offers up Warren's book as one that may be helpful to the spiritual journey. I could dialogue with Warren about his book and his beliefs. But what I will not stand with nor tolerate are acts by the collective like the legislature of Arizona who now cloak hatred and discrimination in the guise of religious freedom. To be indifferent to this legislation is, to me, to be complicit with the Darkness that oppresses the Light. Turning a blind eye is what led us to the Jim Crow South and the rise of the Nazis. Actively suppressing the rights of others is not the same as having differences of opinions. I have ears to hear a viewpoint dissimilar to my own. But I will not look away when those in power wrap religion in the flag in order to repress and discriminate against an entire class of people. While I question if the bill is constitutional, I know that, for me, it is not Christian.

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*...Then they  
came for the  
Jews, and I  
did not speak  
out—  
because I  
was not a  
Jew....*

*Then they  
came for  
me—  
and there  
was no one  
left to speak  
out for me."*

*Martin  
Niemoller*



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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Contemplative Outreach of Greater Greenville**

United in Prayer Day  
9:00 until 3:00, Saturday, March 15, 2014  
Christ Church Episcopal, Greenville, SC  
Event contacts are Jacqueline Mickley at [jacquelinemickley@gmail.com](mailto:jacquelinemickley@gmail.com)  
or Judy Lineback at [judylineback@charter.net](mailto:judylineback@charter.net) or 864-246-3973

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### **Contemplative Outreach of Charlotte**

Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop  
Saturday, March 1, 2014, 10 AM - 4 PM  
Calvary Lutheran Church, 950 Bradley Street NE, Concord, NC  
<http://cpcharlotte.org>

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### **Contemplative Outreach of Middle Tennessee**

Lean into Lent, Centering Prayer Retreat, March 9 – 14, 2014  
St. Mary's Center, Sewanee, Tennessee  
[www.centeringprayermidtn.com](http://www.centeringprayermidtn.com)

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### **The Anchorage**

*Ignatian Retreat*, Friday, March 28 – Monday, March 31 at Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC  
Spring Quiet Day, Friday, April 4 – Greenville, SC  
*Spring Directed 4-day group retreat*, Monday, April 7 – Friday, April 11 at Mepkin Abbey  
[www.theanchorage.org](http://www.theanchorage.org)

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### **Interfaith Forum of Greenville**

Sacred Space: The Promise of Peace and Understanding. A film and discussion, Thursday, March 20 at 7:00  
The Kroc Center, Greenville, SC  
National Day of Prayer, Thursday May 1, 2014 in cooperation with Furman University.  
<http://www.interfaithforum-sc.org>

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### **Barbara Brown Taylor**

Saturday, March 22, 2014  
Mary & Martha's Place, Atlanta, GA  
[www.maryandmarthasplace.com](http://www.maryandmarthasplace.com)

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### **Greenville Friends of Jung Spring Event**

Howard Tyas presenting  
Friday evening, March 28  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, SC  
Watch for details at [www.greenvillefriendsofjung.com](http://www.greenvillefriendsofjung.com)

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### **Monasteries of the Heart**

Heart of the Rule for Lent 2014  
On-line retreat with Sr. Joan Chittister  
March 5 – April 16  
[www.monasteriesoftheheart.org/catalog/heart-rule-lent-2014](http://www.monasteriesoftheheart.org/catalog/heart-rule-lent-2014)

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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **The Sophia Institute**

Embodying Spirit in Everyday Life with Joan Borysenko, March 14 to March 16  
Solace with David Whyte, April 11 and 12  
The Book of Awakening, with Mark Nepo, May 16 to May 18  
Charleston, SC  
[www.thesophiainstitute.org](http://www.thesophiainstitute.org)

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### **Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina**

And to the Source Kept True, March 20 – 23  
Working with Emotions the Buddha's Way, March 29 – April 3  
The Nature of Awareness: Insight and Meditation for Experienced, April 25 – May 2  
Marriage of Yoga and Meditation, May 23 – May 26  
For more information about retreats and the schedule  
<http://www.southerndharma.org>

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### **Lake Junaluska**

Peace Conference, March 27 – March 30  
Christoph Benn, Director of the Global Fund, keynotes  
Conference theme: Faith, Health, and Peace: Seeking the Basic Right to Good Health for All God's Children  
Lake Junaluska, NC  
<http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace>

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### **Montreat Conference Center – CANCELLED**

Spring into Writing: A fearless writing retreat, March 22 – 23, 2014  
Montreat, NC  
[www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org)

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### **Holy Listening in a Circle of Trust**

An Introductory Retreat Based on the work of Parker Palmer  
Thursday, May 29 – Saturday, May 31  
St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Brevard, NC  
Karen Jackson and John Fenner, retreat leaders. For more information [john@courage renewal.org](mailto:john@courage renewal.org)

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### **Summer Dream and Spirituality Conference**

May 25 – 30, 2014  
Offered by the Haden Institute and held at Kanuga in Hendersonville, NC  
[www.hadeninstitute.com](http://www.hadeninstitute.com)

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### **Wild Goose Festival 2014**

June 26 – June 29, 2014  
Hot Springs, NC  
<http://wildgoosefestival.org>

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### **Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons**

Dr. John Philip Newell, November 9, 2014  
For more information <http://astlonline.org>

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## About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

### You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

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For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone  
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Wanda Meade, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor  
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*The photos in this month's journal are my work. All the photographs were taken in one of my favorite Southern cities.....*