

Mountain Keeping Column 1-11-07

Is there Wisdom In Our Choices?

By Ron Redmon

Being in London for Christmas has long been a dream of mine, and 2006 was the year that dream came true. One of the highlights of my time there was a Christmas Eve service at the world-renown church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields on Trafalgar Square. St. Martin's holds a special place in the life of the English people and is known to lovers of classical music everywhere because of its chamber ensemble.

The wait to get into the church was long. People began "queuing up," as the Brits say, a good hour and half before the service. From each of the church's two arched doorways, a line of humanity steadily grew, pouring down the great marble steps, around the adjacent corner and down the block, disappearing into the foggy darkness.

I knew I must be in store for something special. The interior of the moderate scale sanctuary was exceedingly plain, even sparse. Considering the specialness of the occasion, and after so long a wait, my first reaction was a tinge of disappointment. Once the program began, however, any emotion other than total reverence evaporated. "Adeste Fideles" bellowing from the church's great organ made sure of that.

The message of this candlelit service was a delicate and enticing intertwining of the Nativity story and man's obligation to the stewardship of all living things. It was told through scripture, song, and reflections offered by members of the church clergy. Part of the reflection upon the lighting of the fourth Advent Candle was, "We remember the future generations whose lives are affected by the wisdom of our present choices. We give thanks for the wisdom revealed in the Christ child." The clergyman then asked us, the congregation, "Where is the wisdom in our choices today about our living Earth, the Earth to which the Christ child came, the Earth that sustains us?" It is a question I carried back across the Atlantic and ponder still.

Wisdom is about being wise. If we were truly wise in our daily, individual choices about how we treat, use, and sustain our Earth, would we be as profligate in our consumption of water? Would some of us throw unwanted bottles, cans, and wrappers onto roadsides? Would we think about energy in different ways? Does not the need for wisdom call us to a higher level of awareness about what we are doing to this planet we call Home?

As I look back on my own record of choices of this past year with regard to the Earth, there is a great deal on which I can improve. Thus one of my Resolutions for 2007 is to do better, much better, in every way I can, starting with reducing my household's eco-footprint! Another is to keep pondering the question from that clergyman at St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

I invite you, dear reader, to ponder with me. Where *is* the wisdom in our choices today about our living Earth? Future generations are counting on us to figure it out -- before it's too late.

