

# Dawn Dawn Dawn

By David R. Brock, Redmond, Oregon, USA



I grew up a ranch and farm kid in Kansas, Missouri, and Idaho, an upbringing for which I am grateful. But it wasn't much preparation for a summer of work in a church-sponsored youth service corps in Chicago's inner city. It was 1970, and "The Age of Aquarius," sung at the rock-musical Hair to which I reluctantly was dragged, was dawning. But I was barely awake. From the moment I arrived in the "City of the Big Shoulders" I was wide-eyed—every day, all day, and long after lights out many nights.

**But the night is long, and I am full of tossing until dawn.**

—Job 7:4 NRSV

The Temptations released their hit, "Ball of Confusion," that summer. It defined so much of my experience; mine and surely that of tens of millions others:

**Segregation, determination, demonstration, integration**

**Aggravation, humiliation, obligation to our nation.**

**Ball of confusion. Oh yeah, that's what the world is today.**

That summer was no gradual, gentle coming of the light over an eastern horizon. It was a sudden, relentless, burning, blinding, shield-your-eyes spotlight. As my eyes adjusted to that urban landscape, as I encountered The Other America of poverty, prejudice, and injustice that Michael Harrington revealed in the early '60s, I couldn't turn away. Confusion changed to conviction, and I was not the same.

Fifteen years later, living in East Africa, I watched sunrises over the savannah on the night train from Nairobi as it made its way on the narrow-gauge railway to a morning arrival in the ancient port city of Mombasa. Africa and its peoples woke me to suffering, as well as hope; to faith born of my doubt; to the rhythms of life lived in a God-soaked world, even in times of devastating drought.

**"...let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth."**

—Hosea 6:3 NRSV

Another decade on, following a time of depression and a bout with cancer, I sat on a log at the shore of Pomme de Terre Lake at Hermitage in the Missouri Ozarks. A heron stood—still and silent, a few yards away...for the longest time. Long enough for the water to reflect the varieties of blue, magenta, red, pink, and orange that defined a new day, a new dawn.

Warm cup of coffee in hand, I sensed a wise invitation to wake up, to drink all of it in.

**Be grateful. Be open to the next surprise. See the silence. Taste the colors of the morning.**

I was living inside Czeslaw Milosz's poem, "Recovery":

**Here it is still dark**

**...But the dawn on bright stilts wades in from the shore**

**And the ball of the sun, ringing, rolls.**

Now, in this decade, I sing "Light dawns on a weary world" with other sisters and brothers in Christ. "The promised day of justice comes." Some days I can point to where God's justice is a river rolling down. But there are other days.

The promised day comes? Really, God? When? Where? Certainly not today. Certainly not now. It's still a ball of confusion out there. Give us a sign midst the mess we too often mire our planet in. Shine us a light or at very least show us a shadow that precedes the coming of the light.

My wife told me she loved me this morning. And she does. Our daughter called to ask how we were doing and to catch us up on her workday. I received a photo of a friend as he was holding his young-adult son's hand in the hospital bed just before brain surgery—less than a year after his wife was taken by cancer. Friends are surrounding them, standing watch, and surgeons are at work.

Dedicated colleagues are working in schools, homes, churches, and state legislatures to address the "impossible" goal of ending gun violence in our nation. Don't ask me why or how, but today I trust the promised day of love and justice is already here...and still coming.

**So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.**

—2 Peter 1:19 NRSV

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