

## The Toll

The sound of church bells carried through time and space in their rather haunting and lonely peel. Clear, crisp, their rhythmic beat beckons out to humanity to come and be present. The “call” is not some random, come-by-chance event but rather a purposeful priority in the daily cycle of life, galvanizing a people into a stance that speaks to the very core of their existence.

Ever vigilant for the sound, it stirs something deep within, that ushers me toward the future with anticipation, purpose and hope. The rhythm reminds me anew and enables me to participate in a journey so profound, that my life is dedicated to discerning its pathways.

I have heard the rhythmic vibrations in many places: the moors of England, the Black Forest of Germany, the Swiss Alps, the Arctic, the deep South, the Canadian Shield of Ontario and Quebec, the down east coves of the Maritimes, Latin America, the Scottish Highlands, Ireland Green and the remote native villages of coastal British Columbia. Always present, I am drawn to the sentinel sound, sometimes with tears, or a restlessness or even the peace of Christ that passes all understanding.

The tolling bell has enabled me to recognize moments of courage and despair as well as moments of profound love. The sound draws me to the bosom of the church to offer worship and praise, to nurture body and soul, to again prioritize life to the notes of the Gospel. The peeling sound is a reminder that each life lived is to be offered under the grace and wisdom of God as a witness to the love of Christ.

To the truth of eternity, let the bells ring—out and forever call us toward the toll of the “Lord of the Dance.”

-NJP