



Enlarging Our Hearts

I could only stare at the picture that my friend in Australia had just posted on his facebook page. Two Iraqi boys holding up a sign in both English and Arabic: "We Mourn with Boston."

I had been thinking about Iraq for several days, ever since the bombs went off in Boston. As I worried about the victims of the blasts, as I tuned in to the 24- hour news channels to get the latest word about the horror, as I prayed for the three families (so far) who were grieving for members who had been killed, as I felt the weight of yet another terrorist tragedy . . . suddenly I had remembered that a week or two earlier I had casually read a single paragraph on the inside back page of the paper about a bomb in a marketplace in Iraq. How many had died in that blast? Was thirty-something or fifty-something? I didn't remember. I'd only read the headline and the first sentence or two.

And I realized that for all the sermons I've preached on "Love your neighbor as yourself" I didn't. As many times as I have said, "God so loved the world," I didn't so much. If love is measured in degree of concern, I evidently loved Americans most.

But these two Iraqi boys loved better than I did. Somehow, growing up in a nation where bombs are a part of everyday life - where every family knows someone who had been killed or maimed by war - had not hardened them to tragedy. Instead, it had enlarged their hearts, and they had reached out in the only way they knew how: in a hand-lettered sign that someone had captured in a photo.

I could only stare. And then I could only cry.

Our hearts are broken for those who lost family members in Boston on April 14, for those who lost limbs, for those who will live the rest of their lives with new pains and new scars. But let our hearts break also for those who no longer warrant coverage by our Attention Deficit disordered national press. Let our hearts enlarge enough to mourn for Iraq, for Pakistan, for Syria, and for South Sudan.

On May 5, Anita Henderlight, an American whose heart has broken for South Sudan, and who has dedicated her life to the children of that nation, will be our guest for a dinner and presentation. (See the article on pg. 5.) Join us. Hear from Anita's heart. Enlarge your own.