

Why would I want everyone to be the same as I am?



Highland Views

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Guest columnist

Carol and I were eating breakfast this morning with the door open. Hearing a sound, we looked out to watch a fat dove waddling across the deck. We were quiet and still since doves are very skittish. After the bird flew off, a thought landed in my brain: why are doves symbols of peace? They seem so nervous and jittery, unless they're asleep, which seems to be the only time they are truly at rest.

Are we like doves? Maybe we are, but we often don't rest well ourselves. I'm not sure birds are the best models for a sense or a quest for peace in life. Recalling the biblical story of Noah sending the dove to look for dry land after the flood, it returned with an olive leaf, but when it was sent out again, it never returned. We saw an olive branch is a symbol of peace. Maybe another

symbol is the uncertainty, the unknown of the one who didn't return. That sounds more like a dove — a shaky peacefulness that promises something, we hope, with no guarantees.

As I brooded on this, emails soared into my inbox in response to the column, "If you had the ear of the world, for a minute." There were thoughtful words to share and compare.

Deb wrote that "Christian religious leaders often [say] that an atheist or agnostic has a lack of good moral values. [People] should really spend some time with those of us who believe in the goodness of humankind, who believe that it takes human intervention to make the wrongs of the world right. We don't believe that thoughts and prayers make nearly the difference that being active in doing good makes. Some of the best people I know are atheists and agnostics. Some of the most cruel people I know of are believers. I describe myself as an agnostic. I don't know whether or not a God exists but that is not what is important.

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