

“There Be Demons and Dragons” “THERE BE GOD!”

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Years ago I heard a sermon that Rev. Jim Wenger-Monroe preached at Corvallis First United Methodist Church, in Corvallis, Oregon. One of the stories in his sermon has stayed with me and spoken to me ever since.

It seems there was a cartographer who lived in the days when people thought the earth was flat. The maps of the period indicated that demons and dragons inhabited the unknown parts of the world. During most of his life the

cartographer also thought demons and dragons ruled the regions as yet unexplored. But when he died, someone viewed the maps he had drawn and discovered that he had marked out the words “There be demons and dragons” and replaced those words with the words “**There Be God!**”

When my husband left his job with IBM in 1993, I began to worry about ‘demons and dragons’ in the unknown aspects of our world too. I prayerfully began to work on this quilt as a way to calm myself and find peace. The quilt stayed on my design wall for years unfinished. I struggled with the methods to complete the design. I think I was trying too hard. The quilt had a life of its own, and had no intention of allowing me to hurry the process.

A few months before we moved to Philomath, Oregon in August of 2000, I noticed the quilt again – as if for the first time. Once again I was feeling uncertainty – but this time the uncertainty was concerning our move. Even though the move seemed totally illogical, both me and my husband felt led to make the huge change. And yet I wondered.... Was this going to be a holistically healthy move for our family as my husband and I hoped? Would the area be fertile with growth for us – or would it feel devoid of stimulation? Was this truly what we were being asked to do - or were we fabricating our own realities? What about my ministry as a chaplain? Would our children be best served by this move? Would the small town embrace us or reject us?

The quilt quickly spoke to me and I immediately knew how to complete it. It seemed to be saying that even though it often feels like demons and dragons are in control, that God

is constantly present and guiding us through our trials – just as the cartographer had experienced in his life.

As one looks at the quilt, one might sense the tensions I felt at that point. When viewing the entire quilt, one might see a fire breathing dragon with its long, finned tail.... Or does one see an angel watching over the viewer.... Or could the central figure be a “sloppy Protestant Sign of the Cross”? (I’m Protestant, so I can say that.) Then again, at first glance, it might appear to be a butterfly’s wings.... Of course, the jeweled buttons could be part of a crown.... Last but not least, the object could be a Chi Rho (the abbreviation for the word “Christ”?) Who knows, maybe each viewer sees something different.... Could it also be that each person sees something different each time she/he looks at the quilt?

Around the perimeter of the central figure in the quilt, I quilted the words “Demons” and “Dragons”. However along the outer edges near the binding of the quilt, I quilted the word “God” – as if it was the final word.... Might one day I look back and clearly see what or whom, was truly present in our lives....