

Songs of Deliberance

Have you given much thought to your legacy, which is defined as “something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past?”

That is much on the mind of Gilbert Beers, former editor of *Christianity Today*. And for good reason.

“How we die is a profound reflection of how we live,” he said. “A life-threatening crisis somehow distills all our theology into a single, pungent drop.”

With those words, Beers encapsulated the poignant legacy of his great, great, great, great, great, great, great aunt, Catharine duBois. He recounts that in 1663, a band of Minisink Indians descended from the Catskill Mountains onto the settlement of New Paltz, New York, and took captive several women and children, including duBois and her infant daughter, Sara.

They were held for 10 weeks before the natives decided to burn them at the stake. Bound there upon that pyre, Catharine, her daughter, and all future generations – still just seeds within her – faced certain death.


But duBois did not despair. She did not curse her captors. She did not curse God. Rather, she broke into song, singing a hymn based on Psalm 137: “There our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’”

Fascinated by her joyous response to her impending fate, they demanded more and more songs of her. As she lifted her voice to heaven, her praises were not only heard by God Himself, but by her husband and the rescuing search party who had, for 10 long weeks, been in pursuit of her.

Reflecting on his ancestor and the crisis she faced, Beers said, “Like each one of us, Catharine was the narrow neck of the funnel where heritage and legacy meet. She could not have known that her decision about how to die would tell her succeeding generations much about how they should live. Nor can we know how some decisions today will affect generations to come. Who cares how one woman chooses to die in a lonely Catskill forest? Who cares, indeed?”

Eight generations have cared, Beers said, “and I suspect at least another eight will care as well. My concern today is that I will faithfully fulfill my role as that narrow neck of the funnel, for the faith of some young man or woman 324 years from now may come to focus on how Christianly I handle a momentary crisis this afternoon.”

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Some reflections worthy of each of us to consider ...

And to celebrate God's call on our lives to represent Him, and to share His love and hope to those we serve in Life Care and Century Park. In doing so, we are building an important legacy – for our own lives and generations to follow, as well as for those men and women we care for.

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts (Psalm 145:4 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter