

The Origins of The Silent Minute



Wellesley Tudor Pole as a young officer

During the fighting in the mountains around Jerusalem early in December 1917, Wellesley Tudor Pole (WTP) and another British officer were discussing the war and its possible aftermath. They were on the eve of another battle. One of the men realised that his days on earth were to be shortened. "I shall not come through this struggle" he said, "and, like millions of other men in this war, it will be my destiny to go on now. You (WTP) will survive and live to see a greater and more vital conflict fought out in every continent and ocean and in the air. When that time comes, remember us. We shall long to play our part wherever we may be. Give us the opportunity to do so, for that war for us will be a righteous war. We shall not fight with material weapons then, but we can help you if you will let us. We shall be an unseen but mighty army. Give us the chance to pull our weight. You will still have "time" available as your servant. Lend us a moment of it each day and through your Silence give us an opportunity. The power of Silence is greater than you know. When those tragic days arrive, do not forget us:'

Next day the speaker was killed. WTP was severely wounded; stranded behind enemy lines, he managed to get back to the British forces. It was then that the idea of a daily moment of united prayer and silence was born, becoming known as the Silent Minute, and eventually signalled by the chiming and striking of Big Ben at 9 o'clock each evening.

The Silent Minute: Advent

The opportunity suggested in 1917 came during the evacuation from Dunkirk in the spring of 1940 when Britain stood unprotected and alone. Men and women of goodwill in Britain, the Commonwealth and elsewhere were asked to devote one minute of their time at 9 o'clock each evening to pray for peace and to create a channel between the visible and the invisible worlds through which divine help and inspiration could be received. This dedicated minute had the support of H.M. King George VI, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Cabinet and many other leading figures in church and state. The minute was observed on land, sea and air, on the battlefields, in air-raid shelters, hospitals and prison camps. It cut across all social boundaries.

The BBC, continuously lobbied by WTP and the Big Ben Council, decided to restore the voice of Big Ben (stopped because of the war) to broadcasting on Remembrance Sunday, November 10th 1940 as a signal for the Silent Minute each evening. The practice continued on the BBC Home Service until the mid 1950's. Its value was publicly recognised not only by President Roosevelt in America but also by the Nazi high command. Soon after the end of hostilities in

Europe in 1945, a high-ranking German Officer was quoted as saying, "During the war you had a secret weapon for which we could find no counter-measure and which we did not understand, but it was very powerful. It was associated with the striking of Big Ben at 9 o'clock each evening. I believed you called it "The Silent Minute:"

(An extract from the book 'Chalice Well: The Story of A Living Sanctuary' published by The Chalice Well Trust)

From the original Silent Minute Instructions:

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION

Remember you are joining in a great Assembly now gathering before God as the seconds pass towards Nine O'clock. Of these still in this life some are, suffering, some are sad; many are lonely or fearful, all are helped by your companionship in spirit. Remember too those of the great company " which no man can number" whom for a little while we, cannot see, but from whom there is no real separation.

" In quietness and in confidence remember Christ is with you. Lift your heart in thankfulness. Then say slowly the Lords Prayer or simply..."May Thy Will be done on earth- show me how to do my part."

During the minute: "Be still and know that I am God." Rest upon God's unchanging Love and Power. Do not think thoughts.

Receive what God will give you, and through you to others. Never mind "how" or whether you are "worthy."

REST UPON GOD

The Winter Solstice Silent Minute and the Unity of Humanity

21 December 2019 at 9.00pm GMT (1:00PM USA West Coast)

Natasha Wardle interviews Dorothy Maver, Wendy Thompson, Tara Stuart and Viveen Smith, four peacebuilders, about the Global Solstice Silent Minute Initiative during their retreat at Little St Michael's.

Why were you inspired to create the Solstice Silent Minute Initiative at this time?

We have been inspired by the original Silent Minute initiated by Wellesley Tudor Pole -and particularly the birth of the idea. Whenever we tell that story, it touches people. On a battlefield outside Jerusalem in 1917, a soldier who had the capacity to see the future confided to Tudor Pole that he knew he would not survive the war and could see a greater war coming. He asked Tudor Pole to find a way for millions on the other side of the veil to assist daily in the war effort through the power of silence. He died on the battlefield the next day! The Silent Minute was the

solution that Tudor Pole devised to facilitate this cooperation. It inspired millions within the Commonwealth to add their thoughts and prayers to the war effort. Today, the world is in crisis - with numerous "battlefields" on multiple fronts. We think it's time for a "planetary pause" in silence. We know that when people come together with a collective intention in the spirit of goodwill there is nothing more invocative for peace and freedom. Tudor Pole said that:

"There is no power on earth that can withstand the united co-operation on spiritual levels of men and women of goodwill everywhere."

The Solstice Silent Minute offers the opportunity for global cooperation between the worlds in this time - for a shared transformative moment in planetary consciousness for humanity.

How were you inspired?

Earlier this year, at the end of January, three groups were on retreat in Australia - Sydney Goodwill, The Hill Centre in New Hampshire, USA and the Cygnet Centre for Peacebuilding and Transformation, Australia. We were all familiar with a co-creative design process* and that's how this initiative emerged. One brought the 'Chalice Well: The Story of a Living Sanctuary' book to the retreat, another located the story of the Silent Minute in the book and shared it with the whole group. There was an immediate resonance. We felt we needed to create an exact-same silent minute today for people to come together across the globe to create real change.

The Silent Minute was launched during the Second World War at the time of the blitz on London. Citizens of the Commonwealth were invited to unite in thought - irrespective of philosophy or religion - in a daily minute of Silence for Freedom and Peace. Viveen herself experienced the blitz. She was a young girl, but she clearly recalls members of her family listening to the chimes of Big Ben on the BBC World Service Radio marking the beginning of the Silent Minute observance. This focus on a specific point in time was to act as a rallying point within the Commonwealth as well as provide a daily portal for cooperation with an "unseen but mighty army" in the invisible or subtle realms.

Bells play a central part in this initiative, can you say more about that?

The original Silent Minute commenced at 9pm each evening with the chimes of Big Ben. We discovered that currently Big Ben is undergoing repair and refurbishment and its bells will be silenced until 2021. At the same time, we became aware that Mount Kailas, the beautiful holy mountain in the Himalayas is known as 'The Mountain of The Bell'. It seemed right that with the shift to a global focus for the Solstice Silent Minute that Mount Kailas, the planetary bell, tolls in this moment. Mount Kailas is also known in the East as the outer manifestation of Mount Meru, the "axis of the world". Also, according to the Ageless Wisdom, at the heart of the Cosmos is a cosmic bell and within each of us resides an inner bell. We wondered about a deeper opportunity of an alignment between the Cosmic Bell, the planetary Bell and the bell within each of us. That's the inner alignment. In the visible world, were encouraging centres, places of faith, people to ring bells before the Solstice Silent Minute. We hope that the ringing of the bells invokes humanity to align with our true cosmic destiny - to live our purpose.

"What if millions, perhaps 7.7 billion, ALL of the inhabitants of planet Earth paused for a shared minute in silence - the same minute everywhere - to cooperate with the Forces of Light to bring about evolutionary changes in earthly conditions?"

The Solstice Silent Minute will be preceded by the global ringing of the bells by citizens everywhere. The ringing is multifaceted. It is a call to stillness and silence, it's a sounding of a note and a summons to the recalibration of identity within the One Life.

The sounding of a bell is also a call in us to Truth. There is a phrase used in the everyday world - "that sounds - or rings - true". It is not metaphoric, but rather it is a literal statement. When something rings true - the spoken words align with the underlying thought which is, in fact, a rhythmic sound that anchors in, and radiates from, the heart. In reverse sequence, as this rhythmic sound vibrates in the heart it attracts the substance that will most accurately convey the purity of its note through the human sound system in the form of the voice through words. Truth as rhythmic sound is magnetic and communes through the heart with the heart in all, irrespective of word formulation. Truth is accumulated in the Chalice of the heart. Truth is not an abstraction, nor is it relative. Truth is the realisation of cosmic laws based on direct experience. Cosmos in silence makes manifest the language of the heart."

What is the significance of the timing of this initiative for you?

We envisioned a global planetary pause' so it felt important that this Solstice Silent Minute take place around the world at exactly the same time everywhere - 21st December 2019 at 9.00pm GMT /UTC which was the time of the original Silent Minute and holds the frequency of the initial Ashramic impulse.

The Solstice is one of the days where divine essence is celebrated regardless of faith or religion and, in that sense, is truly a global festival. This reflects the same spirit as your Many Paths, One Source ethos at Chalice Well.

We have the support of The United Nations World Goodwill NGO which celebrates a festival week every seven years beginning December 21st this year. This year, the Solstice Silent Minute is the opening event for the Festival Week (festivalweek.org).

"On the verge of the Festival Week for the New Group of World Servers, the commencement of a new cycle will begin with a minute of Silence. In this active Silence, we will consciously cooperate with co-workers in the One Heart to envision the evolutionary emerging seeds of the future. Countless servers and serving groups are, even now, actively nourishing these seeds which will, through our united effort, reveal the underlying synthesis of the One Life shared by all its kingdoms."

The initiative is gathering momentum and we are reaching out to peace communities worldwide. We have the support of many Non Governmental Organisations and information has been shared with United Nations representatives. Just as the Silent Minute was supported by the British Parliament, we've connected with today's UK Parliament and hope for similar support.

Many are spreading the word for the initiative. To optimise participation in the united minute of silence for Global Cooperation - the same minute everywhere on 21st December 9.00pm GMT /UTC - we are encouraging people worldwide to assist sharing the distribution of materials through their networks. We are stewards or custodians - rather than "owners" - of this initiative - and hence have chosen to make resources freely available so that people may participate in whatever way they chose.



Mount Kailash, The Mountain of the Bell

How is this Solstice Silent Minute initiative moving forward and how can people get involved?

Many groups are cooperating to focalise the Solstice Silent Minute and Lucis Trust has created a video (festivalweek.org) and abundant resources such as flyers, frequently asked questions, articles, video clips, facebook events, bookmarks and cards are available on sydneygoodwill.org.au to be downloaded and shared. Information has been translated into multiple languages including; Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish and Turkish.