

**Connie Baxter Marlow**  
**Thoughts on Life and the Maya**

*Rhythms of Creation: An Exhibit of Images and Ideas*  
*Celebration of Family*

**El Centro Cultural-El Puente**  
**San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico**  
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In this show the voice of the indigenous people speaks through their images; a fleeting moment taken from their lives as they harvest from the Earth, create a beautiful basket, a lovely pot, roast corn over an open fire or perform an ancient ceremony. In the written material their voice is heard through their thinking; their worldview and their way of life express a profound connection with the rhythms of life.

Here in Chiapas the indigenous voice reverberates throughout the world through the world-wise, strategic and uncompromising courage of the Zapatista rebels who speak the voice of freedom of the human spirit. To me, the voice of Marcos and the Commandantes speaks for each of us and for our children and far transcends a mere political movement.

I am from Maine - a state in the United States physically about as far away from Chiapas as one can get. In the northern part of Maine there is also a voice of freedom; a voice that does not want the global economy stripping it of its humanity.

I believe there is a life of beauty, balance and harmony awaiting the human race and the path to this life is within the grasp of each of us, and in fact it is within us, in our dreams our hopes, our highest aspirations. It merely awaits our taking up the courage to walk these ideas in our daily lives through our choice to honor our hearts and our spirits.

The lives of the native people are symbols to us of what can be. There are clues we can find there that we can integrate into our own lives and we can boldly use them to transform our systems into systems that enhance our humanity, our beauty, and our spirits.

I have spent much time with the visionary elders of our land and I have listened very carefully with my ears and with my eyes. I have been with the Hopi, the Lakota, the Lacondones and Chamulas and with the people of the Dawn - the Wabanaki in Maine and New Brunswick. I have taken the clues I have found there

and I have applied them to my life. I have raised my children according to the principles I have found in the lives of the native peoples and our lives have become full of grace and beauty and magical events. Einstein, Thoreau, Goethe and many others have described this reality for us but we have not had the ears to hear or the eyes to see.

Now, as our children in the United States commit horrible crimes, massacring each other in the schools, and as all that is truly beautiful slips away because it is not economically viable - we are all asking how do we jump off this merry-go-round without ending up in abject poverty and destroying all that humanity has worked so hard to achieve. There is a way, and the clues to it are here for us to take and to use to transform our lives.

It is believed by many that the Maya are the mother race of mankind; all the native people I have met consider themselves descendents of the Maya. We have with us tonight a Lacandon Maya family who are considered to be the last pure strain of the ancient Maya. Chan K'in Cuarto and his family carry on the spiritual tradition of the ancient Maya. The Lacandones were never conquered by the Spanish and this family has never converted to Christianity. Chan K'in will speak to you briefly tonight on the ways of the Maya. And we have with us a Chamulan Mayan shaman Salvador Lunes Collazo with his family. Chamulan Maya have kept many of the ancient ways integrating them with Christianity, a mixture that I believe brings life, the Earth, the animals and the elements into Christianity, enhancing the words and works of that great teacher upon whom the Christian religion was built.

I believe when all races come together as we are tonight - as equals, as family and each brings the best of who we are, we will find the path to freedom and beauty and balance.

I'll turn the floor over now to Chan K'in and Salvadore. In my photo albums upstairs you will find many photos of these men performing ceremonies and photos of their families as they live their daily lives.

I must mention that today marks the anniversary of the firing of the first shot of the great American Revolution in 1775. It was a shot heard around the world as the voice of freedom and liberty gave birth to a new nation, one that has yet to live up to its highest potential.

Thank you.