

Morning Bell Prayer: A Poem and Interview, Mama Linda's Chapbook
The Peale, Baltimore
Recorded in January 2021

Mama Linda ([00:00](#)):

Morning Bell Prayer. Ding, dong, ding. Awake, awake our hearts and sing. Save us. Save us. Save us, oh Lord, save us. Save us. Save us from ourselves. Save the trees. Save the raspberry leaves. Save us from ourselves. Save the butterflies. Save the beehives. Save us from ourselves. Save the afflicted. Save the addicted. Save us from ourselves. Save the abused and the falsely accused. Save us from ourselves. Save the birds and the kind words. Save us from ourselves. Save the youth. Save the truth. Save us from ourselves. Save us. Save us. Save us, oh Lord, save us. Save us. Save us from ourselves. The new year has come. There is work to be done. Save us from ourselves. Ding, dong, ding. Ding, dong, ding.

Brother Miles ([01:25](#)):

So Mama Linda, what inspired you to write this poem in particular?

Mama Linda ([01:30](#)):

Well this poem, I started writing at the end of 2020, I guess in December of 2020. And I completed it when the new year came. And I was like most of us, I was just so... I guess the words would be "shocking" or "stunned" by what happened on January 6th, 2021. On New Year's Eve, my friends, my family, we were so happy to say goodbye to 2020. And so it was like, "Oh, save us, Lord, save us, save us, save us from ourselves". Next you know, up comes January 6th, and it looks like all hell has broken loose on Capitol Hill. And my daughter works there on Capitol Hill, but luckily, she was working from home that particular day, and I'm thankful because when 9/11 hit back in 2001, she was working on Capitol Hill, and she had to run for her life. That's what the police said. They said run for your lives. And I could not contact my daughter until about seven or eight hours later.

Mama Linda ([02:56](#)):

My husband and I were terrified. Did not know where she was. We were just praying that nothing bad had happened to her. Fast forward to 2021 from 2001, and our hearts are beating again very, very rapidly, but this time we're beating it in thanks that our daughter wasn't in danger, but my heart goes out to those who were. And so it's a cry that even though this is a country that has achieved so much, we still have to save ourselves, save us from ourselves, because we have to remember that we have to try to be about peace and not war, love and not hate. That's very important.

Mama Linda ([03:55](#)):

And we have to remember the butterflies, as well as the honeybees. We have to try to save Mama Earth. Mama Earth takes care of us. We have to take care of her as well. So I'm very concerned, and if people who were watching that insurrection that took place up on Capitol Hill, I wonder did they notice that once all that mayhem had taken place, who had to bend down and pick it up? The Brown custodians, the Black custodians, they had to stoop down, bend over. They had to pick up the broken glass, had to pick up the paper, had to pick up all of that trash. In other words, the powerful create the mess and the oppressed has to cleaned it up. And if the oppressed doesn't clean it up, the oppressed receives the punishment, and that's what I saw on January 6th.

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Mama Linda ([05:04](#)):

I saw "The People's House", the Capitol represents the people's house, being destroyed, being desecrated. Now, if that had been Black people and that's still the truth here. Let's let the truth be told, let the Sojourner Truth be told. If it had been Black people trying to get in that Capitol, they wouldn't have made it to the step, let alone the front door. If there had been a group of Muslims or a group of LGBTQ people trying to do all of that, they would have been gunned down.

Mama Linda ([05:49](#)):

So you have to ask yourself more than: Why did it happen? How did it happen? And you do have to think about something called white supremacy, as well as something called white privilege. And as African American, my ancestors built this country off of their backs, off of the enslavement. And now to look at what's going on now, you have privileged people feeling they can just do what they want to do. And we, the people of color, still have to bend over, stoop down and sweep up and clean up the mess they leave behind. So that's why I chose these two particular poems, because we have to save ourselves from ourselves, from one another. And the poem "In the Valley", we have to realize that civilization began in Mama Africa. Homo sapiens, all homo sapiens came out of Mama Africa. Therefore, we're all connected. We're all kin.

Mama Linda ([07:14](#)):

And I do believe in that we should have love for one another, or else we are doomed. We'll have to work together, or we will be doomed together forever. Ashay.

Brother Miles ([07:32](#)):

Asante Sana.

Mama Linda ([07:34](#)):

Asante Sana.

Brother Miles ([07:36](#)):

Powerful, Powerful. I love the way that you put that. What comes to my mind is the concept of "Peace Be Still".

Mama Linda ([07:46](#)):

Oh yes, peace be still, peace be still. Psalms: "Be still and know that I am God". That's what people have to do. They have to do that. Got to read Psalms. You got to be still and know who is in charge, because that's why... Also, what was so sad is that what happened at the Capitol overshadowed the great news in Georgia, that the two democratic senators won, and Stacey Abrams, she worked so hard for those two senators, and they won and that was all over... That good news overshadowed by the chaos going on on Capitol Hill that particular day.

Brother Miles ([08:37](#)):

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Yup.

Mama Linda ([08:38](#)):

And just like when you're on a ship, who's in charge? The captain. If anything happens to the ship, the captain has to bear the responsibilities. The captain is supposed to always go down with the ship. If the ship cannot be saved, and if everybody cannot be saved, you save the children, the women, then the rest. And if no one else could be saved, the captain goes down with the ship. So just as the captain has to take responsibility, the leader in charge of this country has to take responsibility for what happened on January 6th, as well as the over 300,000 people who have died as a result of COVID-19. Someone has to take responsibility. We have to save ourselves from ourselves.

Brother Miles ([09:36](#)):

Powerful, very powerful. Yeah. That was a historic moment in Georgia. That was the...

Mama Linda ([09:50](#)):

It was! It was! [crosstalk 00:09:47] Huh?

Brother Miles ([09:51](#)):

That was the first time, right? That a democratic...

Mama Linda ([09:54](#)):

[crosstalk 00:09:54] The first time a Black man has become a Senator from Georgia. And there's not that many Black senators, period. Hasn't been that many Black senators. I think, reconstruction, you had some Black senators, but not... Still wasn't that many, and since that time, you haven't had... I think you can count them on one hand: Kamala Harris, the lady from Illinois, I can't think of her name, Rett...or something like that. Her name just escaped me. She was a Senator. Cory Booker is a Senator now, and Robin Warnock from Georgia.

Mama Linda ([10:46](#)):

So it hasn't been that many, just like there hasn't been that many Black governors, you know?

Brother Miles ([10:53](#)):

Yeah, definitely. Well, I think the big takeaway is: We have to make a decision at the end of the day. Are you going to focus on the victories, or are we going to focus on the setbacks?

Mama Linda ([11:04](#)):

That's right.

Brother Miles ([11:05](#)):

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It's so easy to get caught up in the frantic-ness and the messiness in the world. Like I said earlier, the concept of "Peace Be Still", focusing on the victim and just recognizing that, at the end of the day, we're going to be all right.

Mama Linda ([11:28](#)):

We're going to be all right. Be Still My Soul. [crosstalk 00:11:28] That song. You heard that song, Be Still My Soul? [singing 00:11:33]

Brother Miles ([11:32](#)):

I've never heard of it. Who sings that song?

Mama Linda ([11:39](#)):

I know I sang it in churches. The tune was... The melody actually was written by a classical composer from Finland. As a matter of fact, it's really the national song of Finland. And I think the song is called Finlandia.

Mama Linda ([11:57](#)):

Yeah, [singing 00:11:59] You could probably Google it. [singing 00:12:03] People loved the tune so much, they wrote lyrics to it.

Brother Miles ([12:06](#)):

Wow.

Mama Linda ([12:10](#)):

And then I guess a spiritual that would be similar to it... I love our spirituals... would be, Let Us Break Bread Together. Are you familiar with that one?

Brother Miles ([12:24](#)):

Show me how it goes.

Mama Linda ([12:26](#)):

[singing 00:12:26] Let me see, I'm trying to try to remember the tune. [singing 00:12:55] Something like that. I don't know all of the words.

Mama Linda ([12:59](#)):

[singing 00:12:59] I give thanks to the rising sun. [Singing 00:13:04] You haven't heard of it?

Brother Miles ([13:12](#)):

I may have heard it before one time at church.

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Mama Linda ([13:15](#)):

Let Us Break Bread Together. And a lot of people didn't realize that that was a spiritual. They just thought it was a hymnal. You know?

Brother Miles ([13:24](#)):

Mm-hm (affirmative).

Mama Linda ([13:25](#)):

Let Us Break Bread Together.

Brother Miles ([13:27](#)):

As we close, Mama Linda, I think we need a song. Do you have anything that you want to sing for us as we close?

Mama Linda ([13:37](#)):

Brother Miles! I didn't know we were having church up in here.

Brother Miles ([13:40](#)):

I think we might have to have some church up in here. Something.

Mama Linda ([13:49](#)):

I'm trying to think of a song that I know all the words to. I don't have my hymnal, my AME hymnal with me. It's in the other room. [singing 00:14:04] I got to get a tune first. What I'm thinking about is Yield Not to Temptation. You know that song?

Brother Miles ([14:30](#)):

Yield Not to Temptation?

Mama Linda ([14:32](#)):

Mm-hm (affirmative). Do you know the lyrics to that song?

Brother Miles ([14:37](#)):

I don't.

Mama Linda ([14:38](#)):

[Singing 00:14:38] You haven't heard her that one before?

Brother Miles ([14:42](#)):

No, I've never heard of that one.

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Mama Linda ([14:44](#)):

Let me see. I got to get the right... Because I always sing alto and sometimes tenor, and the church is really good for a soprano voice. Let's see. [singing 00:16:03].

Brother Miles ([14:55](#)):

That was fantastic.

Mama Linda ([14:55](#)):

Are you serious?

Brother Miles ([16:07](#)):

I'm serious. Man! I feel like our listeners... We need to hear stuff like that because a lot of times people don't know what to do. They don't know whether to cry, to scream, to shout.

Mama Linda ([16:24](#)):

That's true, you're right about that. [crosstalk 00:16:27].

Brother Miles ([16:27](#)):

So that why when you think just for a moment, it puts people at --

Mama Linda ([16:33](#)):

[crosstalk 00:16:33] Yeah, yield not to temptation, that's right, because the Savior is going to help us. He's going to carry us through because he's willing to aid us, and he will carry us through. That's what I believe.

Brother Miles ([16:47](#)):

Thank you so much today, Mama Linda.

Mama Linda ([16:50](#)):

Thank you, Brother Miles. Hey, we are back, Brother Miles! [Crosstalk 00:16:52] Huh?

Brother Miles ([16:53](#)):

Thank you for your extra song that you added on there.

Mama Linda ([17:01](#)):

Thank you for asking me. And we're back, Brother Miles. We were back, back at work together. And 2021...

Brother Miles ([17:08](#)):

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The worst is not done yet.

Mama Linda ([17:11](#)):

That's right. We haven't finished. That's right. We got January down and next is February. And we're going to work on the left, let Sojourner Truth be told. We're going to work on that. So I think good things are happening. Good things are going to happen for us.

Brother Miles ([17:30](#)):

Yep. Just got to focus on the victory.