



LEADERSHIP FOR NATION BUILDING

DR. GARY I. ALLEN

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CHRISTIAN MISSION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS COMMUNITY

Leadership for Nation Building
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Cover Photo: Mosaic of Norman Rockwell's "The Golden Rule" in the United Nations Headquarters in New York.
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To The Reader

I am convinced that any honest Head of State or Head of Government will readily admit that administering a nation is beyond the capability of any human being. The foundational truth is that each nation was established by Almighty God who is actively seeking to work out His plans for that nation.

For a national leader to try to fulfill his/her responsibilities without seeking to understand the mind of God and depending upon Him would be analogous to your piloting a ship through the barrier reef around Bermuda without using the navigational maps that are available. Let me ask you: Would the use of those navigational maps be an insult to your intelligence, or an affront to your leadership ability? Of course not! It would be common sense. How foolish it would be to view a national leader's expression of dependence upon God as a sign of weakness! Guiding our nations is far more complex than navigating a ship through a reef.

If a leader fails to view himself/herself as the junior partner in this relationship and ignores God's purposes and plans for the nation, I am convinced that untold, unnecessary suffering will be experienced by the people, suffering that cannot be fully alleviated no matter how much money or manpower is poured out in an effort to overcome the problem.

John Adams, one of the founders of the American democratic experiment, said:

Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts contained! Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality and industry; to justice, kindness and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God.¹

This book examines this truth and argues for its application in the governing process.

1. In *Life and Works of John Adams*, Volume XI, pp. 6-7, quoted in Stephen Abbott Northrop, *Cloud of Witnesses* (Portland: American Heritage, 1987), p. 2.

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Dr. Allen led research teams of visiting international scholars in the study of brain mechanisms used in controlling skilled movements. He has trained some of the leading brain scientists in Asia, Europe and North America. He has published 40 articles in scientific journals, and has lectured throughout North America, Asia and Europe.

Dr. Allen completed his undergraduate education in electrical engineering at Cornell University. He earned his Ph.D. in neurophysiology at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Dr. Allen has spent more than a quarter century at the United Nations working with diplomats and visiting government officials, exploring the applicability of faith in God to problems facing nations and leaders. Dr. Allen, together with his wife Elaine, founded the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community in 1983.

Christian Mission for the United Nations Community

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community is a non-denominational Christian organization based at the United Nations serving as a spiritual resource and encourager for government officials and others who are seeking solutions to the problems confronting our world.

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community is motivated by a concern for mankind and a love and respect for those who are seeking to solve the problems facing the global community. It is convinced that there is a God who has created mankind out of love and that He is actively working out His plan for individuals and nations today. It is convinced that it is of paramount importance for individuals and nations to understand the mind and plans of the One who is working out their destiny. Otherwise, mankind could be fighting the very One trying to promote well-being and, as a result, bring unnecessary suffering.

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community also believes that the spiritual dimension is important personally for those serving their nations. It agrees with the late Dr. Charles Malik, the former Lebanese Ambassador to the U.N., who served as President of the Thirteenth General Assembly, when he said,

The needs of the world are much deeper than political freedom and security, much deeper than social justice and economic development, much deeper than democracy and progress...The deeper needs of the world belong to the sphere of the mind, the heart and the spirit, a sphere to be penetrated with the light and grace of Jesus Christ.¹

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community focuses a large part of its energy on government officials who are either posted at the United Nations or who visit the U.N. in the service of their nations. The members of this team research and write on Biblical principles for national development. They also make themselves available to serve those in national leadership.

The ideas that led to the establishment of the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community developed during the years following 1978, when Dr. Gary Allen and his wife, Elaine, began serving the U.N. community and travelling to serve those in leadership throughout the world. The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community is an independent organization, not affiliated with any denomination.

This effort receives all of its finances from the contributions of private individuals plus a few church congregations, who believe in what it is doing. No funds are received from government agencies. The strict standards of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability are adhered to.

1. Reference unknown.

The Building of Healthy Societies—The Challenge

This volume consists of statements I have made to non-official gatherings of United Nations diplomats and visiting government officials. I am motivated by a conviction that there is a God who, by design, created each individual out of love to enjoy a quality of life that we as a global community have largely missed. I am convinced we have missed this goal through turning our backs on our Creator. In a day when we are focused on development, democratization, quality of life and human rights, I am convinced that these noble drives originate from God and that God's aspirations for us in these areas far surpass our own. As such, we cannot achieve these apart from dependence upon Him.

The move toward democracy is one of the most exciting endeavours in which the human spirit can participate. At the same time, it is a journey filled with many obstacles and dangers. The pitfalls facing a society attempting democracy are so severe and so numerous that John Adams, one of the architects of the American democratic experiment, warned:

*Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide.*¹

Democracy does not arise by itself. Democracy does not sustain itself.

Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul E. Sigmund concluded their book *The Democratic Experience* with these words:

*Unstable democracy is the normal case because the democratic idea still has great appeal, and as the authoritarians fail, as they often do, the only legitimate alternative is to be found in democratic institutions...The prognosis for the future of democracy in the developing areas is a mixed one. Sometimes the circumstances will be such that a democratic leader and a particular combination of historical accidents will permit these forms to take root and grow. In many more cases, once the pattern of traditional rule is broken, a cycle of alternation of democracy and dictatorship ensues...The prospects then are for continued instability in a world in which stable, efficient democratic government is an ideal more often than it is an operative reality.*²

Let me repeat that last sentence:

The prospects then are for continued instability in a world in which stable, efficient democratic government is an ideal more often than it is an operative reality.

The harsh reality is that there are nations seeking to move from Marxism or dictatorship to democracy today that may fail and revert to a more human-degrading regime than the people experienced in the past.

Professor Alexander Fraser Tytler, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, said:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the Public Treasury. From that moment on the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the Public Treasury with a result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy always followed by dictatorship. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through the following sequence:

*From bondage to spiritual faith,
From spiritual faith to great courage,
From courage to liberty,
From liberty to abundance,
From abundance to selfishness,
From selfishness to complacency,
From complacency to apathy,
From apathy to dependency,
From dependency back into bondage.³*

It is clear that the most important factor affecting the building of a healthy society is the character of the people.

Ralph Buultjens concluded his book *The Decline of Democracy* with these words:

I feel a profound sense of drama, if not tragedy. Democracy is an ideal that has inspired the noblest sentiments of human civilization...The modern democratic experience appears as a brief interlude, a short flowering of freedom, in the human record of political injustice and oppression...We must remember that the expectations for democracy have far exceeded its capacity; the reality has never been able to match the ideal. It is also clear that the traditional concept of democracy, the product of two centuries of effort, is passing into history...Democracy arose in a time when the values of liberty and self-determination outranked all others...If we seek to restore democracy, we must first renew the values that gave it birth.⁴

In this statement, he reiterates the danger faced by a nation moving toward democracy:

The expectations for democracy have far exceeded its capacity; the reality has never been able to match the ideal.

But let us focus on his last sentence:

If we seek to restore democracy, we must first renew the values that gave it birth.

I am convinced, and seek to demonstrate, that faith in God must be the foundation for establishing the values necessary for democracy. A sobering thought is that the foundation which was present in the United States two centuries ago is no longer present, and I am convinced that if democracy was attempted in the United States today for the first time, it would fail.

Without drawing God in, democracy cannot work. An unknown commentator made the following analysis:

Freedom can only work to the extent of the morality of the people living in it. Without strong moral motivations, freedom develops into license and license into anarchy. Doing what is right in one's own eyes, usually ends up in doing what is wrong.⁵

William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, said:

*If we are not governed by God, then we will be ruled by tyrants.*⁶

Phillips Brooks, the nineteenth century historian, said:

*No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude. There is no such thing as an entirely free man conceivable.*⁷

Submission to God is necessary in order to handle our freedom — to prevent my freedom from hurting my neighbour and his freedom.

Theodore H. White wrote in *The Making of the President 1960*:

*Although Christianity has never been the guarantee of a democratic state anywhere in the world, no democracy has ever thrived successfully for any period of time outside of Christian influence.*⁸

Thus, the overwhelming evidence is that faith in Jesus Christ is the indispensable foundation for a democratic society. In the statements that follow, my goal is to explore the mechanics of this with you. I will explore with you God's purposes for nations, government and individuals; democratization and the necessary changes within society; God's role in helping a society move toward economic reform; restoring the values to a society necessary for it to function as a democracy; and satisfying the deepest needs of the citizens of your nation.

I have stated my case strongly for two reasons. First, as a scientist, I was greatly influence by the philosophy of Sir Karl Popper, who argued that one should state his conclusions so strongly that they stimulate further investigation and are amenable to it.⁹ He argued that we should always summarize our conclusions with the formulation of "testable hypotheses" and that is what I have tried to present.

Secondly, in a pluralistic world, it is essential to be tolerant of all viewpoints. However, what if that which you have discovered is not simply "a way," but rather "the way." As we dialogue together to learn the truth about God, we will in many cases discover that He has designed a very narrow solution to a problem — that there is only one way and that all others are invalid. If all ways are not equal or acceptable, for the sake of our people we had better know this. Thus, where I am convinced God has revealed "the way," I emphasize this.

What about the application of Christian perspectives in a nation that contains other religious groups? Listen to this perspective from a Jewish man with regard to the role of Christianity in the United States:

*As a Jew, I'm entirely comfortable with the concept of a Christian America. The morality of Christianity, though not necessarily its theology, is my morality...Should America be a Christian nation? It comes down to this: in any society, someone's values must prevail. If America isn't animated by the Judeo-Christian ethic it will be governed by less enlightened doctrines.*¹⁰

*The more Christian, in the true sense of the word, America becomes, the more morally sensitive it will be and the better for all of us — Christians and non-Christians, atheists and agnostics alike.*¹¹

My perspective is summarized in the proposition in the following section. In the statements included in this volume, I attempt to support the tenets and the implications of this proposition. I invite you to dialogue with me on the issues presented here.

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

1. John Adams, c. 1785, quoted by Ralph Buultjens, *The Decline of Democracy* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978), p. 146.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul E. Sigmund, *The Democratic Experience: Past and Prospects* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), pp. 183-4. See also p. 73.
3. Alexander Fraser Tytler (1748-1813) in *The Decline and Fall of the Athenian Republic*.
4. Ralph Buultjens, *The Decline of Democracy* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1973), pp. 105-6.
5. Unknown.
6. William Penn, quoted in A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1985), p. 79.
7. Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), *Perennials*, quoted in *Focus on the Family Citizen*, 20 April 1992, p. 8.
8. Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960* (New York: Atheneum, 1961), quoted in *Focus on the Family Citizen*, 20 April 1992, p. 8.
9. Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).
10. Feder, *A Jewish Conservative Looks at Pagan America* (Lafayette: Huntington, 1993), pp. 58-61.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

Framework for Nation Building

CONVINCED *there is a God who designed and created everything with a purpose and actively superintends that creation, orchestrating all of His creation as He seeks to move it toward His desired purposes;*

CONVINCED *God created each nation with a purpose and a plan;*

CONVINCED *God's plan for each man, woman, and child is well-being in the complete sense of the word;*

CONVINCED *God laid down principles that must be adhered to by His creation in order for His desired objectives to be achieved, including well-being;*

CONVINCED *that in order for a democratic society to operate, there are characteristics required in the lives of citizens that can only be produced by God, and that inter-personal relationships are the most constructive when people are walking with God;*

CONVINCED *God specifically ordained government to facilitate the above;*

THEN, *the implications for those in leadership are:*

1. Leaders must make sure they understand the mind of God.
2. Leaders must work to adopt God's plans for their nations.
3. Leaders must lead their people in walking with God.

Governing a Nation in Partnership with God

12 November 1999

For two decades I have been testing, together with heads of nations and other officials, the proposition that our nations must be governed in partnership with God. I am fully convinced of the truth of what I am about to share with you.

The foundational truth is that there is a God who has created each nation with a purpose and a plan, and who is actively working to carry out His purposes for each nation. God has described the general tenets of His plan as follows:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”¹

God has a plan for each of our nations that is good in every way. He has revealed more about His plan in the following:

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.²

God, as a part of His plan for each nation, determines the times of entrance into history and exit from history for that nation. Furthermore, He determines the boundaries for each nation at each point in history. Part of God's purposes in working through the nations is the last statement:

God did this so that men [and women] would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

God's purpose in the nations is to facilitate our seeking and finding Him. This is amazing, isn't it? Once we realize this truth, it changes the way we look at events in our nation.

God Actively Governs Every Nation. God spoke through one of His servants to reveal the following truth:

He rules forever by His power, His eyes watch the nations.³

You (God) rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.⁴

Governing in partnership with God requires understanding His three institutions. God has established three institutions to be a part of implementing His plan within a nation: marriage and the family; the Church; and government. Each of these three institutions originated with God. God is the head of each of these institutions. Anyone who serves in either of these institutions is a servant of God and reports to Him. These three institutions have different responsibilities. The spheres of influence for these three institutions overlap to a certain extent. These three institutions must remain in submission to God in order to avoid conflict with the other institutions. For example, government must be careful not to take upon itself responsibilities that, according to God, fall upon the shoulders of the family.

Specifically, government is God's idea, not man's idea. God has told us what He expects of government:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.⁵

Government is a God-ordained institution, established by God for the purpose of achieving His purposes for society. A main purpose for government is to maintain an orderly society in which we can flourish. As a part of this, government is God's agent to control anti-social behaviour. Similarly, government is expected to commend for good behaviour.

The Head of Government is a servant of God. All government officials are servants of God, with responsibility for administering this institution. They are servants of God as much as any clergy. The Head of Government is chief among these.

God revealed His partnership with the chief human governor over the nation, with these words:

Be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses....When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law....It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom....⁶

This instruction was originally given to ancient Israel. However, this is God's general mandate for the Head of Government of every nation. Israel was to be a model to every other nation of the way that God interacts with the nation. As the other nations watched God's interaction with Israel, they were to learn how they were to interact with the same God, who is also the God over their nation.

Notice that the head of the nation was to write out for himself the Law of God. He was not simply to read it, but he was to make his own copy. It is a well-known principle that learning is far more effective when an individual takes the information into his brain and then writes it out with his own hand, in comparison with simply reading the material. After having written out the Law of God, the head of the nation was to meditate on it daily. The Law of God imbedded in his mind and heart would affect his judgments and affect his behaviour.

Notice the last phrase "will reign a long time over his kingdom." In the current, democratic context, this is speaking of political stability. One of the results of the head of the nation continually seeking to apply God's principles in

the governing process is political stability for the nation.

God's Purposes for the Head of a Nation. God revealed His purpose for the Head of Government to two powerful rulers who headed early empires. During a six-century period leading up to the birth of Christ, the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires in succession dominated the known world. God revealed His purpose to Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylonia, and Cyrus, King of Persia. There is common truth to these two that I am convinced extrapolates and applies to every Head of Government today.

God said the following to Cyrus, King of Persia:

*I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please"....This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of.... "so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name....I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me."*⁷

Who was speaking here? Clearly, it was God Himself. He describes Cyrus as "My shepherd" and as "His anointed". He also makes it clear that as Cyrus enters office, he does "not acknowledge Me". God summons Cyrus by name, picks up Cyrus, takes hold of his right hand to guide him, bestows upon him a title of great honour, bestows His anointing upon him, strengthens him, and uses him as His shepherd even though Cyrus does not acknowledge God. This tells us about the grace of God—His patience with us while we become all that He wants us to be.

In the English language, there are some interesting constructions which communicate cause and effect. One of these is the expression "so that". This expression alerts us that purpose follows. There are two powerful "so that" statements in the passage we are looking at. The first is: *so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God....* God's first purpose in the life of Cyrus is that he would know for certain that God exists and is in charge. By extension, God's first great purpose in the life of the head of a nation is that he/she knows He is God. All of the things that God does in the life of Cyrus, which he does not deserve, are so that Cyrus will know that He is God. Similarly, the discerning head of nation will be able to see God's hand at work if he/she is willing.

The second "so that" statement is: *so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.* God's second great purpose in the life of the head of a nation is that everyone else will also know that He is God. God will work in the life of the head of a nation so that the average citizen will recognize that there is a God who rules over that nation and the lives of all men and women.

What I find intriguing is that God revealed these instructions and His purposes to Cyrus in approximately 710 B.C. Cyrus actually entered office 538 B.C. God has His hand so much on the affairs of a nation that He could reveal His work in Cyrus' life more than a century before Cyrus was even born!

The office of Head of Government is so important in God's overall work on this earth that He sovereignly picks an individual, even before he/she is born, and lifts him/her up, and places him/her in office. He does this with two overpowering objectives:

1. *So that you may know that I am the Lord,*
2. *So that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.*

We can also gain valuable understanding by looking at the way God dealt with the head of the first of the four empires, the Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar — actually, Nebuchadnezzar II — described how God worked in his life to accomplish the same two purposes that God had achieved in Cyrus' life. Nebuchadnezzar wrote an open letter to every person in the known world. He began:

King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you

*prosper greatly!*⁸

He wrote it in the third person, but it is clearly a personal letter from Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar continued:

*It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are His signs, how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; His dominion endures from generation to generation. I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.*⁹

Nebuchadnezzar then sought help in interpreting his dream. No one could help him until he asked Daniel. Daniel was able to interpret the dream for him as follows:

*This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times (years) will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.*¹⁰

Nebuchadnezzar then proceeded to describe, initially in the third person, what God did:

*All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes." Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified Him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have you done?" At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendour were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.*¹¹

Here is a man who is among the most powerful rulers of all time, a man who was proud and arrogant. God warned him and then after giving Nebuchadnezzar sufficient time to change his ways, God broke him. After it was all over, what was Nebuchadnezzar's reaction?

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.

This is the heart of a repentant man who has allowed God to change his heart.

Can we find God working out the same two overpowering objectives in Nebuchadnezzar's life that He did in Cyrus' life?

1. *So that you may know that I am the Lord.*
2. *So that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.*

Yes, we can! Nebuchadnezzar made it very clear that he recognized God's working in his life. You might think that it would be easy for Nebuchadnezzar to recognize God's hand working in his life. However, pride can blind the head of a nation. And in Nebuchadnezzar's case, it took seven years before he was able to recognize that it was God working in his life. Secondly, through Nebuchadnezzar's clear words, every subject in his empire would know there is a God who reigns over the empire and over his/her life. We can imagine that both Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus governed more compassionately as a result of recognizing God working in their lives.

From my view at the United Nations, I have a partial, albeit very incomplete, picture of what God is doing in the lives of the heads of nations. Recently, over a two-week period, I saw God working in the lives of a dozen heads of nations. So as not to betray trust, I will share very cautiously, without identifying anyone. One example is a man who governed for several years as a Marxist dictator. With the close of the Cold War and the opening up of his country to free elections, he was soundly defeated in the first election and removed from office. In the process, God began to work in his life. God caused him to repent before the parliament, certainly sparing him from the consequences of his past abuses. He then focused his life on getting to know God. When the next elections were held in his country, he had so changed that he was elected by popular acclaim to head the nation. One of his cabinet ministers told me that there is no comparison between the way he governs now and the way he governed before. God was working out the same two purposes in this man's life as He had in Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar. And in the process, this man governs more compassionately as God is becoming the ruler in his personal life. It appears that God took him through a *Nebuchadnezzar experience*, and in the process, changed him into God's instrument in the nation.

I met another newly elected President of a strategic nation. This man had been President of his nation two decades ago. His earlier regime was reputed to be extremely corrupt. This time, as President, his efforts to remove corruption from his country are astounding friends and critics alike.¹² What is the difference in his life between his two terms in office? Under the previous regime, he spent several years in prison on political charges. In the process, he submitted his life to God as his Lord. Recently, he said "Without Jesus, as President I can do nothing. With Him, all things."¹³ He described his years in prison as "God's way of slowing me down to hear His message and His words."¹⁴ It appears that God also took him through a *Nebuchadnezzar experience* in order to remake him into God's instrument in the nation.

I have seen numerous examples of God working this way in the life of a head of nation. I am convinced that God cares so much about the way the head of a nation governs that, out of love for the leader and for the people he governs, He will, if the leader persists, take that leader through a *Nebuchadnezzar experience*. At the same time, God is doing a special work in the heart of the head of the nation, by virtue of the office he (or she) holds, to cause him/her to hunger to know God. Jesus described it this way to His close followers:

*Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*¹⁵

God has placed within the heart of the head of the nation, and to a certain extent all leaders, the desire to understand the mysteries of God. When the leader gives in to this work of God in his/her life, there is no need for God to lead that individual into a *Nebuchadnezzar experience*. It is only through stubbornness, as evidenced in the life of Nebuchadnezzar, that God felt such an experience was necessary.

Governing in God's Wisdom. The job of administering a nation is so complex in this interdependent world that

no human mind can possibly perform this task. I am convinced that we need the help of the Master Designer of each nation to accomplish this task. God clarified our need with these words:

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”¹⁶

No human being by himself can automatically implement the plans of God.

The Lord foils the plans of the nations (that are conceived apart from Him); He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever; the purposes of His heart through all generations.¹⁷

Plans developed not in cooperation with and in dependence upon God will be thwarted. It is only the plans developed in dependence upon God that can succeed.

God spoke through His servant to describe the wisdom that He gives those who walk in dependence upon Him:

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory....but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit....But we have the mind of Christ.¹⁸

God also described the self-imposed failure of those who refuse to cooperate with Him:

Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.¹⁹

Abraham Lincoln expressed his need for God's wisdom and his dependence upon God as he discharged the duties of the head of the nation with these words:

I have always taken Counsel of Him, and referred to Him my plans, and have never adopted a course of proceeding without being assured, as far as I could be, of His approbation.²⁰

I should be the veriest shallow and self-conceited blockhead upon the footstool, if, in my discharge of the duties which are put upon me in this place, I should hope to get along without the wisdom which comes from God and not from men.²¹

If it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected to my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me....It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it!²²

I am convinced that the key to receiving God's wisdom is in the last two sentences of the last quotation:

It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it!

He was committed to doing the will of God once God revealed it to him. I submit to you that this is the only way to be sure of receiving God's guidance. He will not reveal it under any other conditions.

Governing with God's Blessing Upon the Nation. God paints two pictures of what the nation can be. The first

picture is:

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:....The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land He is giving you....Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you....The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of His bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none....If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.²³

The second picture is:

However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking Him....A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labour produce, and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days. The sights you see will drive you mad....You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it....All these curses will come upon you. They will pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the Lord your God and observe the commands and decrees He gave you.²⁴

Which picture is the closest to describing your nation? What can we do to move your nation from the second picture to the first picture? What was the determining factor that caused the difference between the first picture and the second picture? It was obedience to the Law of God, on the one hand, and disobedience to or careless disregard of or ignorance of the Law of God, on the other hand. This is a universal principle that applies to all nations, not just the one in the example.

The head of the nation plays a large role in bringing God's blessing or God's judgment upon a nation. Listen to this example of two kings in the life of one nation.

Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses. Nevertheless, the Lord did not turn away from the heat of His fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to provoke Him to anger.²⁵

Even the best king could not overcome the judgment provoked by a disobedient king. It is essential that the head of a nation walk with God in serving his/her nation. If the head of a nation does not walk with God, they can by themselves bring God's judgment upon that nation. The good news is that we can turn around from our disobedient behaviour, i.e., repent, and God will forgive us. God spoke directly to one king with these words:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.²⁶

Abraham Lincoln reminded his people of this powerful principle with this public proclamation:

It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.²⁷

As Lincoln modelled for us, I am convinced that the head of the nation must take leadership in bringing a people into obedience to God. Recently, King Letsie III of Lesotho declared a national day of prayer for rain on his country. On that very day, the rain came.²⁸ God still asks us to come to Him acknowledging our dependence upon Him and to repent for our dependence upon ourselves.

There are consequences for the head of a nation who understands these truths. The Head of Government who views himself as a servant of God preserves his nation. Dr. Billy Graham has rightly pointed out that: “No nation has ever fallen in the history of the world that was right with God.”²⁹

Shepherding the People. The Head of Government must view himself as a shepherd. God paints the following picture to visualize the role of the Head of Government in the life of the people:

He chose David His servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep He brought him to be the shepherd of His people....And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.³⁰

The shepherd is servant to those who cannot take care of themselves. The shepherd views himself as responsible for the well-being of those in his care. Being a shepherd is not an option for the head of a nation. When the head of a nation does not play that role, God judges him/her harshly:

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds ... who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally....Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because My flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because My shepherds did not search for My flock but cared for themselves rather than for My flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for My flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue My flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.³¹

God deals with the head of nation who does not have the attitude of a shepherd.

Jesus instructs leaders that the essential attitude of leadership is to be a servant:

Whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.³²

God admonishes leaders to shepherd those whom they oversee with these words:

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.³³

Viewing oneself as a shepherd has implications for the Head of Government. First, the Head of Government who views himself as servant of God and shepherd of the people sets a healthy tone within the government: office is not a prize to be won, but rather an opportunity to serve. Second, the responsibility of the Head of Government is to shepherd the whole flock, not just the sheep that selected him/her as shepherd.

Nelson Mandela relates in his autobiography how God used the mentor in his life to teach him the importance of the attitude of a shepherd.³⁴ I am convinced that this attitude spared South Africa much pain, and may even have saved it.

Governing in Partnership with God and the People. The partnership includes, in addition to God and the head of the nation, the people. It is a three-way partnership. Let us look at this truth a couple of ways.

*First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*³⁵

When the head of a nation acts as if governing is a partnership, the people will participate, first of all, by praying for the head of the nation to make responsible decisions with God's wisdom.

Secondly, the people will become a supportive force to the head of the nation. With the first transfer of leadership in the life of ancient Israel, we have this account:

*After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "...No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law My servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*³⁶

As the new leader took up his position, the people responded to him this way:

*Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as He was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"*³⁷

The people acted as if there was a three-way partnership between the human chief governor, God and the people. The benefit of the people sensing their participation in this partnership is the encouragement they provided to the new leader. What leader would not want the supportive response he received?

The Victory of Living and Governing in Dependence Upon God. God makes some very powerful promises that apply to those in the leadership of their nations:

*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*³⁸

*We need have no fear of someone (God) who loves us perfectly. His perfect love eliminates all fear of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us and shows that we are not convinced that He really loves us.*³⁹

*Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*⁴⁰

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*⁴¹

*You (God) will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*⁴²

*For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.*⁴³

*You (God) are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.*⁴⁴

*“No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from Me,” declares the Lord.*⁴⁵

This last promise is a powerful one for the public figure.

When one takes all of these promises as a whole, there is victory for the individual who understands these truths from God. That victory flows from the following foundational truths:

- God is powerful, He loves us and He is completely involved in our lives.
- No problem can overcome us that He does not permit.
- His ultimate goal is our living with Him as our closest friend.
- As we live in dependence upon Him, we can feel secure and be at peace because it is His name and His reputation that are at stake in whatever happens to us.
- No one can destroy us against God's will.
- Even if we die, we are with Him and will be happier than we are now.

Question for Further Thought. The role of the Head of Government is so important in God's plan for the nation that God intervenes in the life and decisions of the Head of Government when necessary. God cares so much about the decisions of the Head of Government that He actively intervenes even when the Head of Government does not acknowledge his Master. If the work of the Head of Government is so special to God that He intervenes in the life and actions of the Head of Government, shouldn't we readily cooperate with our Master rather than forcing Him to drag us along like a stubborn, disobedient child?

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Creating a Democratic Mindset

24 March 1994

The human heart hungers for freedom. This drive, which welled up in many peoples, finally led to a flood that has swept out many non-democratic governments and swept in many attempts at democracy. We want to do everything we can to encourage these peoples. However, we see some serious difficulties at the same time. We are watching nations attempt to repeat in a short period of time the democracies that other nations have achieved over decades and centuries. We see many awkward steps being taken.

We are reminded that the transition from non-democratic to democratic governments is not automatic. One observer, writing in 1990, reminds us that the number of democracies was then the same as at the end of World War I.¹ Another analyst, writing at the end of 1993, observed:

*The period of rapid democratic gains occasioned by the collapse of Soviet communism appears to have ended. As 1993 draws to a close, freedom around the world is in retreat while violence, repression and state control are on the increase. The trend marks the first increase in five years of states that violate basic human rights and is a dramatic blow to the democratic renaissance that began in 1989...The proportion of people who are free today stands at 19%—the lowest since 1976.*²

If the drive for freedom is so strong, why are there so few truly democratic societies? Why is not every nation democratic? One lesson we have learned is that democracy does not easily and quickly take root in non-democratic soil.

President Havel of the Czech Republic said:

*I think in the Czech Republic we have created all the basic institutions of democracy—political parties, a Parliament, elections. Now much more effort should be focused on building a civil society, to promote a climate that would encourage people to act as citizens in the best sense of the word.*³

He pointed out that there is an “important distinction between creating democratic institutions and fostering a spirit that would make them work at their best.”⁴ He was saying that it is relatively easy to establish democratic institutions. However, it is not the institutions themselves that make a society democratic. Rather, it is the attitudes of the people who make up the society. His conclusion is that the institutions can be changed much more easily than the people. However, unless the people are changed, the institutions will be severely limited in their effectiveness. The institutions will be misused, and out of frustration the people may give up, despairing that their dream of a democracy was an unattainable dream.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn described the problem this way:

The structure of the state is secondary to the spirit of human relations. Given human integrity, any honest sys-

*tem is acceptable, but given human rancor and selfishness, even the most sweeping of democracies would become unbearable. If the people themselves lack fairness and honesty, this will come to the surface under any system.*⁵

The mind of man can create democratic institutions, but unless there is a change in the heart of man, it will not work.

We must keep clearly in mind that the drive for freedom is not a drive for democracy. The natural state of man is not democracy. It is anarchy — every man for himself.⁶ The governed want to be free from all constraints. On the other hand, for man who moves into leadership, the natural state is dictatorship. The governors want to control everyone else. By nature, every man is an anarchist and a despot. And we are trying to build democracies starting with these raw materials.

Many have concluded along with President Havel that building democracies primarily involves developing democratic citizens. A military leader of a former Soviet republic said “The biggest problem is erasing the Soviet mind-set that still exists.”⁷ What we conclude is that there is a mindset necessary for a democratic society that is not functioning in a non-democratic society.

Clearly, in order to build democratic societies there must be a change in mindset — a change in mindset on the part of the governors, and a change in mindset on the part of the governed. This does not apply only to the nations of the former Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe, but to the nations of Africa and other regions where democracy has not successfully taken root. Equally, it applies to the United States that from its very beginning was only a partial democracy, and where there are clear signs of slippage in democratic values.

There are two major questions we must address: How will this democratic mindset look? Then, how do we achieve this change in mindset? First of all, how will that democratic mindset look? Specifically, what are the societal values necessary for an effective democracy?

The first characteristic of the democratic mindset is respect for the dignity of each human being. I believe that it is this quality that singularly underlies freedom. When there is a respect for the dignity of each human being, it affects the way we behave toward each other in society. From the point of view of the governors, the non-democratic mind sees the governed as expendable in pursuit of either personal or state goals. In marked contrast, the democratic mind sees the state and its leaders as servants to the individual in helping him to reach his full potential.

The second characteristic necessary in a democratic society is citizen participation. The other side of freedom is responsibility. The strength of democratic societies is active, creative, initiative-taking members of society. This was summarized by President Kennedy’s reminder to his people: “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”⁸ This is the strength of democracy. The role of a democratic government is that of a coordinator for citizen-led efforts to build the nation and its society, as opposed to government trying to perform the complete job itself.

The third characteristic of a democratic society is respect for rule of law. It is submission to mutually agreed upon limits. This applies to governors and governed, to those of majority and minority positions.

For those in the minority politically, the democratic mindset involves submission to the will of the majority. The minority does not attempt to control the majority — to hold the society hostage to its will — but rather uses persuasion to influence majority opinion. There is a primary concern for the common good. It means cooperation with the majority feeling while using persuasion to modify the majority opinion. It means being a constructive dissenter from the majority.

For those in the majority position, the democratic mindset requires a respect for the minority position. This is a respect for those in the minority such that the goal is not to win a battle so that we can have our way, but rather the goal is that which is best for our whole society. It is making sure that my desires do not jeopardize those of others. Essential is a tolerance of other viewpoints. A key goal is creating harmony. It is not to take positions that will hurt a specific group, especially a minority. It is the willingness to compromise on, or even sacrifice, non-essentials to make a group feel included that might otherwise feel disenfranchised. A high priority is submission to the common good and the desire to make sure that no one gets hurt. It is recognition that my well-being is dependent upon the well-being of

my community. It is caring for my neighbour as much as myself. The key to democracy is to make everyone know that they are included—that no one is disenfranchised. The goal is to build a democratic society, not have my own way.

Closely related to this is self-restraint—self-imposed limits on our own behaviour. Abraham Lincoln said:

*The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty...With some, the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labour; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labour.*⁹

Solzhenitsyn said it this way:

*'Human rights' are a fine thing, but how can we ourselves make sure that our rights do not expand at the expense of the rights of others?...If we do not wish to be ruled by a coercive authority, then each of us must rein himself in. No constitutions, laws, or elections will by themselves assure equilibrium in a society, because it is human to persist in the pursuit of one's interests...A stable society is achieved not by balancing opposing forces but by conscious self-limitation.*¹⁰

In summary, the underlying characteristics of a democratic society are: respect for the majesty and dignity of my fellow man, an attitude of sincere concern for my fellow man, self-restraint, the realization that my interests will be best met when the whole society is well.

How does a non-democratic society move to a democratic society? How do we produce democratic values? Democracy, by itself, does not produce these values. Attempts at democracy merely show the need for them. Solzhenitsyn said: “It would be vain to hope that revolution can regenerate human nature.”¹¹

How do we produce within a society the values necessary to sustain democracy? There is a sense in which education, modelling and, later, tradition make an important contribution. However, there is a far more important ingredient. John Adams made the profound statement:

*Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.*¹²

As one of the architects of the American democratic experiment, he represented the conclusion of the Founding Fathers that the moral and spiritual dimension is the essential foundation for this particular democracy and, by extension, all democratic societies.

James Madison, a driving force behind the U.S. Constitution, said:

*We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves...according to the Ten Commandments of God.*¹³

The historian Philip Schaff tersely summarized the need for the spiritual dimension in any nation that would seek democracy:

*Republican institutions in the hands of a virtuous and God-fearing nation are the very best in the world, but in the hands of a corrupt and irreligious people they are the very worst and the most effective weapons of destruction.*¹⁴

The architects of the American experiment concluded that without drawing God in, democracy cannot work. I am thoroughly convinced that obedience to God is an indispensable support for democracy. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, made the profound statement, “If we are not governed by God, then we will be ruled by tyrants.”¹⁵ When men are governed by God, they are of a disposition to be served by leaders. Otherwise, they, by their nature, require

harsh, authoritarian rule in order to be held in check so that they may fit into society. Simply stated, if men want democracy, they must turn to God first. If they are not willing to turn to God first, then democracy will not work.

Phillips Brooks, the nineteenth century historian, said:

*No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude. There is no such thing as an entirely free man conceivable.*¹⁶

Submission to God is necessary in order to handle our freedom — to prevent my freedom from hurting my neighbour and his freedom. John Adams wrote:

*Statesmen may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone which can establish the principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. A patriot must be a religious man.*¹⁷

George Washington, as he announced his impending retirement from public life, gave his best advice for continued democratic development:

*Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.*¹⁸

Some of our best minds have concluded that democracy requires an underpinning of obedience to God. How can the spiritual dimension contribute to the values necessary for a democratic society? Let us consider respect for the dignity of man. Man without God is self-centred — primarily looking out for himself. He does not lift others up, certainly not higher than himself. The dignity of man starts with an understanding of the character of God. God created us as His highest creation, for the purpose of bestowing His love upon us, and interacting with us as close, intimate friends. As God created the first man, He said, “Let Us make man in our image.”¹⁹ God then proceeded to breathe life into our first ancestor — something He did not do with the rest of His creation. Throughout history, God has continually reaffirmed His love for each one of us with words like the following: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.”²⁰ Listen to this prayer inspired by God:

*For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well...All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.*²¹

The person who knows God understands the majesty of man and gives dignity to his fellow man. When I realize that God loves each of my fellow human beings, no matter how imperfect or even ugly some aspects of his personality may be, I must hold him in a high position.

When the God of the universe tells us that He who is enthroned on high came down to earth as a human being, experienced the humiliation of being a man, and died an unjust, tortured death on our behalf, because of His love for us, does that not show the high value that God places upon us? The clear result is that the higher our view of God is, the higher becomes our view of man. The more we love God, the more we revere and love our fellow man.

Then, consider the essential democratic value of sincere concern for other members of our society. Jesus addressed the problem when He commanded, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”²² This sounds difficult enough, but Jesus added an element that makes this even more difficult. Jesus used a word for love that in the original language describes a love for another that is unconditional, not based upon whether the recipient deserves it. This is a pure love, not for anything that can be gained in return. Not surprisingly, this word *agape* does not occur anywhere in Greek literature outside of the teachings of Jesus in the Bible.²³ When Jesus said, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” He was not saying to reduce hostilities with your neighbour for your mutual benefit. He was saying that we are to care about others with pure moti-

vation—for their sakes and for their sakes alone. When Jesus defined the neighbours whom we are to love unconditionally, He referred to the ethnic enemies of the hearers.²⁴ We are to love those whom our society teaches us are unlovable and whom we should hate.

How can we love those with whom we have differences? Let us consider the context of Jesus' remarks. Jesus' full statement was:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”²⁵

This does not say, “Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself.” It says, “Love yourself with God's kind of love, then love your neighbour the same way.” The reason we do not and cannot love others is because we do not and cannot love ourselves. We cannot accept ourselves as a creation of God—sinners, yes, but sinners who can be forgiven through Jesus' death on our behalf. Our inability to accept ourselves and love ourselves makes it impossible to love others. As human beings, we are too insecure to love ourselves. The key to all of this was described by Jesus when He told us to love God first. It is only as we love God and begin to understand and trust Him, that we have confidence in what He has done in creating us and designing a plan for us. Only God can forgive us and, with it, change our nature, giving us the capacity to love ourselves. Once we love Him, we can love ourselves. Then, and only then, can we begin to love others.

Therefore, I am convinced that loving God is the key to developing in our own lives the values necessary for a democratic society. This applies to me and everyone else in my society.

How do we love God as a part of building democratic societies? In order to understand this, we must correctly diagnose the root problem between man and God. God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of an intimate friendship. The block to this friendship with God is ourselves. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. We are not morally perfect. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—excludes us from the presence of Holy God. You can visualize the problem this way. To place a common fieldstone next to a 200-carat diamond would be unthinkable. They are incompatible. Even more so, our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this block caused by our unholiness be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²⁶

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”²⁷

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”²⁸ God has told us, “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”²⁹ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³⁰

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!³¹

As I throw myself upon Jesus, God is able to see me through Jesus as perfect.

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. He is a universal figure, not just for certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.³²

The repentance and forgiveness that allows God to turn individuals into building blocks for democratic societies is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins so we can experience this intimate friendship with God that lasts forever and helps me to be a contributing member of a democratic society? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side to the other and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close friendship with God is Jesus' death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that produces within us the values necessary for a democratic society. God inspired one of His servants to describe it this way:

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.³³

As we allow Jesus to put our selfish motivations to death, He is able to live His life through us. It is He living His life through me that causes me to respect my fellow man, and to love him and want the best for him.

God's solution for producing democratic values applies to everyone in our society. No one—neither you nor I—can live up to our standards as a democratic citizen without the life of Jesus living through us. Therefore, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”³⁴

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As sufficient numbers within our societies drink, our societies will reflect more and more the char-

acteristics of Jesus and, with them, the values necessary for a democratic society.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. However, let me speak to you as a friend. My concern for you as a friend is even deeper. My concern is that expressed by a past President of the General Assembly:

These are great days and what is being decided in them is absolutely historic. But all these things are going to pass, and with them life itself. What, then, is the life that does not pass; what, then, is life eternal? This is the first and last question. I believe that "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent" (John 17:3)...Faith in Jesus Christ is the first and last meaning of our life. I do not care who or what you are; I put only one question to you: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?³⁵

Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon was a signer of the U.N. Charter, primary drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and President of the Thirteenth General Assembly, but of even more significance to him was that each individual should experience life resulting from Jesus. This I also want for you.

Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to man, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to advance the cause of democracy in our nations.

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Leadership for Good Governance

18 May 2000

The past four decades have seen a revolution in the way that nations are governed. Forty years ago, the majority of the nations that are now members of the United Nations did not have self-determination. Many were ruled by colonial masters or Marxist regimes. With the removal of authoritarian rule, the initial attempts at self-government often led to rather undemocratic governments. However, as we moved through the 1980's and the 1990's, there has been a major move toward more democratic governance.

This move has been motivated by a number of factors: most importantly, by increasing awareness on the part of the common people, but also by demands from potential investors, potential donors and lending agencies.

There have been several interesting landmarks along the way. One was the Concluding Statement from the Roundtable of Heads of Government of Commonwealth Africa on Democracy and Good Governance in Africa held in February 1997.¹ An even more monumental one was the decision at the OAU Summit last year that only those would be welcome who came to power through democratic means.² I consider this progression a miracle, considering the undemocratic models upon which the experiment for self-governing was based.

I am impressed. And yet, we face the major challenge of finishing the task. I am convinced that apart from one essential factor, we have reached a limit. The basic nature of man is not that of a democrat. On the one hand, our basic nature is to resist all authority, i.e., to be an anarchist. On the other hand, it is to control everyone else, i.e., to be a dictator. Man is, by his nature, then, at heart an anarchist and a dictator. Therefore, we have would-be dictators trying to rule anarchists.

Our avowed goal is good governance. What is good governance? Secretary-General Annan summarized our goal at the South Summit last month with these words: "Good governance comprises the rule of law, effective State institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and the participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect their lives."³ This is as good a summary as I have heard. However, I believe we can go further. It is with the intent to push our understanding forward that I raise certain ideas with you.

There are two views of government in our world today:

1. The State is all-important and the individual is expendable in the pursuit of the State goals.
2. The individual is God's highest creation and the purpose of government is to serve the individual in reaching his/her full potential.

We would all agree that the second view is the ideal. I am convinced that this is what every human heart desires. And I am convinced that our definition for good governance must move all the way to the second position — *that the purpose of government is to serve the individual in reaching his/her full potential.*

Bringing this down to the level of the individual government official, corresponding to the two views of government are two views of government office:

1. Office is a prize to be won. Power is to be exercised. I am entitled to benefit from the exercise of that power.
2. Office is an opportunity to serve.

I believe that our weakness is that we do not yet see our goal as the second view, either *to serve* or *to help each individual reach his/her full, God-given potential*.

I am convinced that the key to understanding the level to which our view of good governance must be lifted comes from Nelson Mandela. In his autobiography, he relates how the mentor in his life taught him the importance of the attitude of a shepherd.⁴ I am convinced that it is this attitude that allowed him to accomplish the harmony we have seen during a dangerous transition. I am convinced that his attitude of a shepherd spared South Africa much pain, and may even have saved it. Many of his actions displayed the attitude of a shepherd. One that especially impressed me was an occasion when he had to be out of his country, and he appointed his rival as Acting President.⁵ This, in my opinion, is the act of a shepherd, not a politician who is seeking to lift himself up.

Where does the idea of the shepherd come from? You may say that it is natural for an African to display the attributes of a shepherd. Let me remind you that Africa has not systematically produced national leaders with a shepherd mentality.

However, Mandela's perspective is not so strange if one acknowledges that the foundational truth is that there is a God over every nation who is actively working to carry out His purposes for each nation. And that He has created each nation with a purpose and a plan. God, in His mercy, allows human beings the unbelievable privilege of working with Him in the process of fulfilling His plans. God paints the following picture of the Head of Government as shepherd of the people:

*He chose David His servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep He brought him to be the shepherd of His people...And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.*⁶

What is a shepherd? What does the shepherd do for the sheep? The shepherd makes sure that the basic needs of the sheep are met, specifically those needs that the sheep cannot meet for themselves. The shepherd protects the sheep. The shepherd anticipates danger to the sheep and avoids it. The shepherd protects the sheep from every kind of danger. The shepherd has complete responsibility for the safety and well-being of the sheep. The sheep are dependent upon the shepherd for their own well-being. In fulfilling this responsibility to the sheep, the shepherd is a servant of the sheep. The shepherd is not a free person. The shepherd cannot consider himself/herself as superior to the sheep. Literally, the sheep are the master and the shepherd is the servant. The shepherd has responsibility for serving those who cannot take care of themselves in this dangerous world. This is God's picture of what the Head of Government and, by extension, all government officials must do for the people of their nation.

The shepherd has a responsibility before God to govern in such a way that every man, woman and child will be safe and able to enjoy "a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity."⁷ The shepherd, by virtue of his/her position, can see danger that the sheep are unable to perceive. The government official understands a multitude of dangers that the average citizen cannot imagine or perceive. The Head of Government and his team have access to information that allows him to understand the national and international scene as no other person in the nation. God holds the government official accountable to reduce the impact of potential danger upon the sheep. The government official is to act on behalf of the people to protect them and ensure the highest quality of life.

The picture of the government official as a shepherd applies to every nation. When God called Cyrus to become King of Persia, which office he entered in 538 B.C., God used these words: "I am the LORD, ...who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please.'"⁸ God views the Head of Government of every nation as His shepherd and holds each one to this level of accountability.

Wherever our societies have moved away from true knowledge of God, there has been a misunderstanding of public office. This misunderstanding includes the misguided belief that the public official can use the office for personal

benefit. Obviously, there is great danger to the public resulting from this misguided belief. However, there is also great danger to the public official arising from this error.

God makes it very clear that when the government official does not serve the people, God deals with him/her as He described in this warning:

Woe to the shepherds...who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally...I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for My flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue My flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.⁹

The clear statement is that God deals with those who do not properly shepherd His sheep. He makes it clear that no government official who abuses his office can remain for long. God loves the sheep so much that He insists that His shepherds perform their jobs properly.

One lesson we learn from these passages is that when we view government office as God does that we will see it as a stewardship. The shepherd is responsible to make sure that none of the sheep are lost or mistreated. In this case, the shepherd is responsible to the owner of the sheep, who is God Himself. The government official is held accountable by the owner of the sheep—God—for the way he/she, as a steward on behalf of God, takes care of the sheep. God cares so much about the sheep that he deals firmly with those shepherds who abuse their responsibility.

The Head of Government is the chief human shepherd over the nation. By extension, the same principles apply to all government officials.

There are several consequences of viewing the Head of Government as shepherd. One is that the responsibility of the Head of Government is to shepherd the whole flock, not just the sheep that selected him/her as shepherd. The responsibility of the Head of Government is to shepherd the whole flock to pasture. There are shepherds who are placed in office through partisan politics. It may be one segment of the community who selects the shepherd. However, once installed as shepherd, the Head of Government has responsibility for the welfare of the whole flock, including those who initially felt a different shepherd would be preferable. The sheep are the master and the shepherd is the servant to them. The shepherd does not have the right before God to treat differently the sheep who initially opted for a different shepherd.

Another consequence of viewing the government official as shepherd is that every individual in society must have the following attitude toward public service: I have a responsibility for the good of my community. I have a responsibility to my community to accept public responsibility whenever my community chooses. Whenever the sheep select me to fill a public responsibility, I must quickly and gladly accept it. By the same token, once the sheep determine that I have fulfilled that responsibility, I must quickly and gladly accept that as well, and return to private life.

God's attitude toward shepherding is perhaps best expressed in the words of Jesus:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me—just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father—and I lay down My life for the sheep.¹⁰

An important consequence of viewing the government official as shepherd is that office must be viewed as an opportunity to serve my fellow citizens rather than a prize to be won and then used for my own glory. God admonishes leaders to shepherd those whom they oversee with these words:

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.¹¹

You may think that the things I am sharing apply only to Heads of Government. Certainly the decisions of the national leader have the greatest consequences. However, these truths apply to leaders at all levels. They apply to each of us. Each one of us must allow God to prepare us to fill any responsibility, including Head of Government. In the meantime, viewing yourself as a shepherd will affect the way you fulfill your current responsibilities. If God should choose to lift you to a higher position, you will be better prepared to fill that office if your heart attitude is that of a shepherd. God is looking for shepherds to lift to strategic offices.

The practical question is: Can God change a person from one with the capacity to hurt the sheep into one who can be a shepherd of healthy sheep? I am convinced that God is powerful enough to do much more than this. Let me share one example of His power in the life of my wife Elaine. Fourteen years ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her: "You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right." She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, that had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can work in our hearts to make us, who are by nature dictators, into shepherds.

I would like to share with you two examples of God working in the hearts of public officials to make them better shepherds. So as not to betray trust, I will share very cautiously, without identifying anyone. One example is a man who governed for several years during the 1980's as a Marxist dictator. With the close of the Cold War and the opening up of his country to free elections, he was soundly defeated in the first election and removed from office. In the process, God began to work in his life. God caused him to repent before the parliament, certainly sparing him from the consequences of his past abuses. He then focused his life on getting to know God. When the next elections were held in his country, he had so changed that he was elected by popular acclaim to head the nation again. One member of his cabinet told me that there is no comparison between the way he governs now and the way he governed before. I am convinced that as a result of submitting his life to God as his shepherd, he is becoming more of a shepherd himself. This man governs more compassionately as God is becoming the ruler in his personal life. The more he submits to God, the more he will be a shepherd and his sheep will experience God's good governance.

The second man was recently elected President of a strategic nation. This man had been President of his nation two decades ago. His earlier regime was reputed to be extremely corrupt. This time, as President, his efforts to remove corruption from his country are astounding friends and critics alike.¹² What is the difference in his life between his two terms in office? Previous to his return to office, he was imprisoned on charges that were politically motivated. In the process, he submitted his life to God as his Lord. Recently, he said, "Without Jesus, as President I can do nothing. With Him, all things."¹³ It appears that God humbled him in order to remake him into God's instrument in the nation. He described his years in prison as "God's way of slowing me down to hear His message and His words."¹⁴

I am convinced a person cannot exercise shepherd-leadership without submitting his/her own life to God. Thus, I expect each of these Presidents to become a better shepherd to his people as he listens to God.

Listen to the testimony of another African President:

Humility...is one of the most important attributes necessary to become a good leader. When you observe lead-

ers of all levels of society, throughout Africa and I suppose throughout the world, you find them overcome by power, greed and self-interest. Somehow, after they have attained the prominence and positions of trust, they forget the people, their poverty and need. They forget that they could become a great instrument to help their country, and instead they begin to live like little kings and dictators.

Only with a humble spirit, one which recognizes that we who have been given opportunities greater [than most, that we] are in fact servants of God and the people rather than masters, will we be able to help our countries move from Third World status and lead the people to a new day...Please pray that God will give me the strength, wisdom and sense to be a humble servant.¹⁵

This is the heart of a shepherd.

I am convinced this is true if God calls you to be a government official at any level — Head of Government or Ambassador — that He is, in fact, calling you to submit your life to Him.

The crucial question becomes: How does a public official become so intimately linked with God as to become God's shepherd in his nation? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy — without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection — our unholiness — blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings and as government officials. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.¹⁶

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”¹⁷

Thus, Jesus has told us, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”¹⁸ God has told us, “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”¹⁹ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.²⁰

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness

*into us!*²¹

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

*Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.*²²

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result, to operate in partnership with God as His shepherd in the nation, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God that lasts forever and follow Him in being a shepherd-leader? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus' death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to be a true shepherd as God intends. No one—neither you nor I—can become the kind of shepherd God would have us be without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for effective leadership in your nation, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

*If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”*²³

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, the leadership of our nations will be made up of individuals who are able to develop a healthy relationship with their Shepherd, and to become the shepherd-leaders our nations need.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive you as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God's shepherd in our nations.

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The Challenge of Building Multi-Ethnic Democratic Societies

29 September 1994

Clearly, one of the great challenges facing us today is the building of harmonious multi-cultural societies. There is a tremendous drive throughout our world for democracy. We have seen two waves of democratization in the past half century — the first wave peaking during the 1960's comprising the nations newly independent from the colonial powers, and the more recent wave consisting of former Marxist nations. The two waves originated from seemingly different starting points. Presumably, the two types of governmental systems under which these peoples previously lived produced different societal values. However, efforts at democratization by both groups were sidetracked by the same problem — ethnicity.

Wherever we have moved toward participatory government, we have watched this one particular problem rear its ugly head: a tendency to factionalism that threatens to tear apart the nations of our world. This problem is not restricted to the Second and Third Worlds. We have seen the same eruptions in the long-standing Western democracies.^{1,2} There is scarcely a society that is immune from this one problem. Obviously, our inability to create multi-ethnic democracies is not due to colonialism, and our inability is not due to communism. After several decades of experimentation in which several dozen nations have participated, starting with a variety of cultures, and observing their difficulties in overcoming this one particular problem, one might be tempted to conclude that it is impossible to build a multi-ethnic democratic society. This perspective is summarized by one observer in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*:

*The evidence that democracy almost never works in societies that are highly divided along linguistic and cultural lines is overwhelming...Those who seek to promote democracy and at the same time to preserve multi-national entities intact will discover that in many cases these goals cannot be reconciled.*³

Thus, at a time when we should be rejoicing with South Africa, we are apprehensive. If we do not find a solution to this one problem, all of our societies are susceptible to disintegration.

In many cases, the tensions are along ethnic lines but they may follow other lines such as religious, ideological, or clan. Let us approach the problem using an ethnic model, with the conviction that its solution is a pattern for solving other types of division in society.

The roots of the problem sometimes lie in ancient quarrels. However, the new tensions are often among those who have lived together in harmony.^{4,5} On the surface, the current problems seem to be exacerbated by the involuntary placing together of different ethnic groups. History is filled with examples of ethnic groups being conquered by a foreign army and incorporated into multi-ethnic nations, or empires. Most of the Third World consists of ethnic groups that were placed together at the whim of colonial masters. Those same masters often planted the seeds for future ethnic strife. Now, short-sighted politicians have learned that they can inflame ethnic animosity for personal advantage.

Given this reality, can we build multi-ethnic, democratic societies in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries? Or, is there something inherent in democracy that makes it unworkable in multi-ethnic societies? Or, is there some-

thing intrinsic within man that dictates that all multi-ethnic states should be dissolved?

To answer this question, we must first ask another question: Where is this trend toward ethnic nationalism taking us? Sociologists point out that there are 6,000-plus distinct language groups in our world, not including dialects.⁶ The number of distinct people groups is much larger—from 12,000 to 24,000,⁷ and even this does not include all of the bases for division. Unless we can put aside problems of ethnicity and learn to cooperate as multi-ethnic societies, we could degenerate into 6,000 single-ethnic states. This would render states powerless using any criteria, and certainly render the United Nations inoperative. Global cooperation would be impossible. We are talking about a reversion to the tribalism of the past that would nullify all that has been accomplished in the areas of international law, international trade, economic cooperation, environment, etc. As a practical matter, the great majority of those 6,000 states would be land-locked. Clearly, there are many practical advantages to multi-ethnic nations. It is essential that we learn to live harmoniously in multi-ethnic societies.

It is against the backdrop of disillusionment over our difficulty in building multi-cultural democratic societies that I would like to present to you a solution I am convinced can work.

The solution to this problem is not the reshuffling of state borders nor the resettling of large segments of our communities. As one observer has noted:

*Most of the national and ethnic conflicts that remain today cannot be settled by changing the boundaries of states to give each national community a state of its own.*⁸

Such a solution is sterile. Not only is it unacceptable, but it is impractical.

The solution to this problem is not military. General Lewis MacKenzie, former commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that to bring a military solution to that region would require an operation that would “make Desert Storm pale in comparison.”⁹ Furthermore, even if we wanted to, we cannot deploy sufficient forces to insulate all of the factions in our world. There are not enough military personnel to do it. We must ultimately find another solution.

On the surface, the problem underlying the disintegration of multi-ethnic nations is ethnicity. However, I am convinced that the root cause is not ethnic or any other difference. The late Senator George Aiken of Vermont reminded us, “If we were to wake up some morning and find everyone with the same colour skin, by 12 o’clock noon we would find something else to be prejudiced about.”¹⁰ The problem is not ethnic differences. It is selfishness within us that makes us step on other people to boost ourselves.

The former Permanent Representative of Canada, Stephen Lewis, commenting on the Francophone-Anglophone tensions in Canada, with his usual candour, said:

*We have a quite unwarranted reputation as a generous, sympathetic, tolerant society. But it’s just not the case. Canada is simply not the angelic crucible of tolerance we’ve always pretended.*¹¹

I appreciate his honesty because he said what we are often afraid to say, that we are, by nature, intolerant of people who are different from us, and we hurt them. The problem is intolerance.

If we are to form multi-cultural societies where we can work together, appreciating our differences, we must have two things: 1) a way to accept those who are different; 2) a way to heal the wounds from past hurts.

I want to propose a two-part solution to this problem. First, a radical change in man is necessary. One Yugoslav said: “Nationalisms are flourishing everywhere. Hatred, passion of the worst kind. What we need now is new people...wise and tolerant.”¹² We do need new men and women. We need to move from intolerance to tolerance, and from tolerance to compassion. I need the ability to appreciate differences in my brother, to care for his well-being. We need an agent for change that will give us this capacity.

Man, as he stands now, is incapable of tolerance of those who are different. There is a moral blemish within man—within the heart of man. Unless we understand the wickedness in the human heart, we can never deal with the problem. The problem of man’s nature crosses cultural boundaries. President Shevardnadze of Georgia, said it very well:

“Peoples and nations cannot be well when mankind is sick.”¹³ The heart of man is greedy, self-centred, looking out only for his own selfish interests. God says it this way: “There is no one who does good, not even one.”¹⁴ He also said, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.”¹⁵ I must agree with the apostle Paul who said:

*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out...Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*¹⁶

Man is morally blemished and each one of us shares in this problem.

Unless hatred can be replaced by compassion, tolerance and healing are hopeless. How can this be done? Will education do it? Palmiro Togliatti, the former head of the Communist Party in Italy, said:

*We no longer accept the naive and mistaken view that an increase in knowledge and a change in the social structures are enough by themselves to bring about a radical change in man. This view, inherited from the Enlightenment of the 1800's and Marxism of the 1900's, has been refuted by history.*¹⁷

Then what could the answer be? Dag Hammarskjöld made a proposal. Near the end of a lifetime of public service, he concluded:

*I see no hope for a permanent world peace. We have tried hard and failed miserably. Unless there is a spiritual awakening on a worldwide scale, civilization is doomed.*¹⁸

His conclusion was that our grand goals for mankind are thwarted by man's nature, and that they can only be achieved by a spiritual change within the heart of man that will move throughout our world one by one by one. Could the solution be spiritual? General Douglas MacArthur said the following when he accepted the surrender documents at the end of World War II:

*Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual [revival] and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.*¹⁹

Man must be changed radically. And I am convinced that the only agent for radical change in man is Jesus—not religion, but the person of Jesus.²⁰ I would like to consider this with you.

Jesus addressed our problem when He commanded, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”²¹ This sounds difficult enough, but Jesus added an element that makes this even more difficult. Jesus used a word for love that in the original language describes a love for another that is unconditional, not based upon whether the recipient deserves it. This is a pure love, not for anything that can be gained in return. Not surprisingly, this word *agape* does not occur anywhere in Greek literature outside of the teachings of Jesus in the Bible.²² When Jesus said, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” He was not saying to reduce hostilities with your neighbour for your mutual benefit. He was saying that we are to care about others with pure motivation—for their sakes and for their sakes alone. When Jesus defined the neighbours whom we are to love unconditionally, He referred to the ethnic enemies of the hearers.²³ We are to love those whom our society teaches us to hate.

How can we love those with whom we have differences? Let us consider the context of Jesus' remarks. Jesus' full statement was:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”²⁴

This does not say “Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself.” It says, “Love yourself with God’s kind of love, then love your neighbour the same way.” The reason we do not and cannot love others is because we do not and cannot love ourselves. We cannot accept ourselves as a creation of God — sinners, yes, but sinners who can be forgiven through Jesus’ death on our behalf. Our inability to accept ourselves and love ourselves makes it impossible to love others. As human beings, we are too insecure to love ourselves. The key to all of this was described by Jesus when He told us to love God first. It is only as we love God and begin to understand and trust Him, that we have confidence in what He has done in creating us and designing a plan for us. Only God can forgive us and, with it, change our nature, giving us the capacity to love ourselves. Once we love Him, we can love ourselves. Then, and only then, can we begin to love others.

Loving God is the key to the personal reformation necessary to overcome differences and bring people together. God has told us: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”²⁵ This is the change in man that I have been talking about. When we have been changed, we become part of the healing process for our societies.

What I am calling a changed life is more correctly an exchanged life — with Jesus now living my life for me. The apostle Paul described the exchanged life when he said:

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.²⁶

As we allow Jesus to put our selfish motivations to death, He is able to live His life through us. The change in my life occurs as I allow Jesus to live it for me.

Can this really work? Booker T. Washington was a black American educator living in the southern United States during the last half of the nineteenth century, at a time when whites fought hard to keep blacks in bondage. I am impressed that in the midst of this, he said, “I shall never permit myself to stoop so low as to hate any man.”²⁷ He was reminding us what all of us know in our hearts, that when we cannot forgive, when we cannot overcome anger and hatred with love, we are in bondage.

Booker T. Washington’s ability to be free while those who sought to oppress him were in bondage is revealed in his words:

There are several kinds of freedom. There is a freedom that is apparent and one that is real; a superficial freedom, and one that is substantial; a freedom that is temporary and deceptive, and one that is abiding and permanent; one that ministers to the lower appetites and passions, and another that encourages growth in the sweeter things of life...But there is but one kind of freedom that is worth the name, and that is the one embodied in the words spoken by the Great Master: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”²⁸

We all want to be set free from the trap of intolerance. If a black man in the United States in the nineteenth century could be set free, then I believe any one of us could be set free. Booker T. Washington’s liberator is Jesus and He can be ours too. We must allow Him to set us free from the bondage of selfishness, intolerance and hatred that are obstacles to cooperative, constructive societies. We must allow Jesus to make us whole. Jesus is the only one who can change us from the inside.

Not only do we need a way to accept others who are different, but we need a way to heal hurts that may make this impossible. Can the indwelling Jesus really change a person so that he can love one who was once his enemy? On 25 March 1993, something happened in a Northern Ireland prison that convinces me God can do this. Anna Moore, a Roman Catholic, had been convicted for killing 17 Protestants in a bombing. Bobby Corry, a Protestant, had been con-

victed for killing 3 Catholics in a bombing.²⁹ Obviously, the hatred of these two for those of the other's group was so intense that their anger knew no limits. And yet, this couple married. Why? How could two people with this level of hatred against each other's group marry? In personal correspondence, they indicated that they had both invited Jesus to come into their lives to live their lives for them.³⁰ Jesus had so changed their lives that their hatred turned to forgiveness. Mrs. Corry now says, "I believe Bobby and I are proof of how Jesus can heal and bring opposing people together...Jesus is the answer to all torn countries and all divided peoples."³¹ I am convinced that what happened with these two people can serve as a model for rebuilding our societies.

The first element in bringing healing to our societies, then, involves a radical change in man, with God changing him on the inside through Jesus Christ, so that he can accept others who are different, but also forgive those who have hurt him in the past, and love them.

The second element necessary in order for healing to take place is the overarching hand of the One who designed and created each nation. God heals nations. God described His plan for healing to one king:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.³²

"And will heal their land"—this is a healing that comes from outside of man—from God Himself. It is a supernatural phenomenon in response to a principle laid down by the Creator of the universe. If our nations are ever going to experience healing, we will have to bring God into it. We will have to humble ourselves and invoke God's help. We will have to repent before Almighty God and admit our need for His help.

Perhaps, you are asking, "Does God really exert the kind of power in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that could heal nations?" Let me share one example of His power in the life of my wife Elaine. Eight years ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her, "You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right." She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, that had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can give people new hearts and He can heal nations.

God does exert His healing power at the national level. A decade ago, there was an African nation without the strong leadership it had experienced for many decades. Rivalries developed within the cabinet, each with his own backing, and the country seemed destined for bloodshed. In the midst of this, followers of Jesus came into the country. In response to their teaching, God changed hearts, and spiritual rejuvenation occurred throughout the country. During the course of their stay, these spiritual leaders met with the cabinet. There were changed hearts and spiritual renewal within the cabinet as well. A few days later, one powerful minister came to the Prime Minister to apologize for his intentions and to express a desire to cooperate. As a result of changed hearts among the leadership, bloodshed was averted and the nation was saved. The change was so dramatic that when I shared this example, using similarly vague wording, with an audience that included a later Prime Minister of this nation, he came to me afterward and said, "That was my country you were speaking about!"

Healing is possible in our world today but not without the One who designed and created the nations and who rules over the nations of the earth. More than ever, we need God's hand upon our nations to heal our societies.

In summary, I am convinced that healing can only occur in our societies if men and women are changed from the inside by God through Jesus Christ and, furthermore, if God is asked to supernaturally heal our nations.

How can you and I participate in bringing healing to our nations? Clearly, this requires being intimately linked with

God. God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of an intimate friendship. The block to this friendship with God is the very thing we have already discussed—our capacity for evil. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God’s perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked friendship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.³³

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”³⁴

Thus, Jesus has told us, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁵ God has told us, “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”³⁶ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³⁷

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!³⁸

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.³⁹

The repentance and forgiveness that allows God to turn individuals into building blocks for democratic societies is centered in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins so we can experience this intimate friendship with God that lasts forever and helps each of us to be a contributing member of a democratic society? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from

one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close friendship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to love and forgive those who are different. God’s solution for producing multi-ethnic democratic societies applies to everyone in our society. No one—neither you nor I—can perfectly love others, whether the same or different, without the life of Jesus living through us. Therefore, if you are serious about helping to eliminate intolerance in our world, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”⁴⁰

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As sufficient numbers within our societies drink, our societies will reflect more and more the characteristics of Jesus and, with this, the tolerance and compassion necessary for a democratic society.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. However, let me speak to you as a friend. My concern is that expressed by a past President of the General Assembly:

These are great days and what is being decided in them is absolutely historic. But all these things are going to pass, and with them life itself. What, then, is the life that does not pass; what then, is life eternal? This is the first and last question. I believe that “this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent” (John 17:3)...Faith in Jesus Christ is the first and last meaning of our life. I do not care who or what you are; I put only one question to you: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?⁴¹

Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon was a signer of the U.N. Charter, primary drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and President of the 13th General Assembly, but of even more significance to him was that each individual should experience “life” resulting from Jesus. This I also want for you.

Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to man, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to build democratic societies within our nations.

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Developing Leadership for Democratic Nations: Creating Statesmen Rather Than Politicians

21 March 1996

A democracy is a precious achievement for any society. But a democracy is an extremely fragile institution. From the moment that a democracy begins, there are always two competing forces—one to build it up, and one to tear it down. To illustrate the latter, listen to the warning issued by Prof. Alexander Tytler nearly two centuries ago:

*A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the Public Treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the Public Treasury.*¹

In other words, people can abuse a democratic system for their own selfish interests. And the candidates for office exploit this, to the detriment of democracy.

The reality is that man is selfish by nature. It is the nature of man to focus on his desires, and rarely to be more concerned with the greater societal good. The nature of man blinds him to the reality that the healthier is the society in its totality, the better off he will be. Such a person will vote for the candidate that will give him the greatest personal benefits.

It takes a strong leader to guide a society made up of such people. It takes a strong leader to even try to move a people in an unpopular direction. Then, when you factor in that democracy consists of frequent re-issuing of the mandate from the people to lead, i.e., elections, it is a further temptation for the leader to be more concerned about re-election, therefore, with what will make the people happy, than with what is best for the society. It is in this way that man's selfish nature applied to those who gain power hurts our societies. This combination of man's selfish human nature driving the electorate to choose officials who will give it what it wants, and driving the leader to focus on his political future leads to the destruction of the democratic society. Thus, the tendency for the deterioration of a democratic society is a very powerful one. It is this that caused Prof. Tytler to conclude: "A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government."² To state the problem clearly: man desires democracy, but his very nature destroys democracy.

When you couple this with the fact that our world is moving at an ever-increasing speed—more rapidly than the ability of our leaders to anticipate, or even react—we have a serious problem. Leadership today appears preoccupied with reacting to crises rather than exerting visionary leadership. We are more focused on damage control. Leadership is reactive when it needs to be proactive.

I would like to consider the problem from the point of view of the responsibility and challenge facing leaders in democratic societies. The true leader must serve his people and meet their needs, although he must distinguish between what they want and what they really need. I mean this in the sense described by the former President of Columbia University when he said:

*Our world is made up of three kinds of people: the few who make things happen, the many who watch things happen, and the great majority who have no idea what is happening.*³

Clearly, no responsible leader can leave it to the latter group to determine national policy. And yet, in a democratic society, it is this very group who must approve the leader's performance.

It was the pondering of this dilemma that caused Edmund Burke, the political thinker of eighteenth-century England, to conclude:

*The great difference between the real statesman and the pretender is that the one sees into the future, while the other regards only the present; the one lives by the day, and acts on expediency; the other acts on enduring principles and for immortality.*⁴

According to Burke, there are two characteristics that distinguish the statesman from the common politician:

1. The statesman has the capacity to think long-range.
2. The statesman operates on enduring principles.

Although Burke's analysis was made two centuries ago, I am convinced it is just as relevant today. It is these two characteristics necessary for statesmen that I would like to think through with you.

Let us consider the first principle: The statesman has the capacity to think long-range. According to Burke, the statesman envisions where the nation must go. He acts as if he believes a plan for his nation exists, a plan that is a guide for his actions. The statesman operates with the conviction that there is a plan that transcends the particular leader. I would submit to you that the statesman operates as if there is a plan that is authored by someone greater than himself, someone with ideas more significant than his own. Implicit is the conviction that this plan is knowable. The statesman's major effort is to discern that plan and to implement it. He is more concerned with what is best for the nation than his own political future. The implication is that he sees the steps necessary to get there, even what obstacles may get in the way and how to overcome them. He has a high view of his own role, and he has a deep sense of personal responsibility.

Clarke adds the following insight:

*A politician thinks of the next election, a statesman of the next generation. A politician looks for the success of his party; a statesman for that of his country. The statesman wishes to steer, while the politician is satisfied to drift.*⁵

Men and women in high office recognize the need for visionary leadership. Winston Churchill quipped, "The nation will find it very hard to look up to the leaders who are keeping their ears to the ground."⁶ Morrow added:

*The difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician sees which way the people are going and tries to stay ahead of them, whereas the statesman sees what is best and right and does that even if no one follows.*⁷

His words, sadly, strike very close to home. The statesman must exert visionary leadership!

While we are looking at this characteristic—the capacity to think long-range—we must ultimately ask the questions: Where does this characteristic come from? How can we build this characteristic into our leaders? I have argued in other places that God has a specific plan for each nation.⁸ For the sake of time, I will not repeat those arguments here. Rather, I would like to focus more on how the leader fits into those plans. As a reminder of God's plans for our nations, listen to God's words to one nation two and a half millennia ago: "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."⁹ While His plans are specific for each nation,

the intent is the same for all nations: well-being. There is a plan for each nation for each era that is established by the Master Designer of our nations.

It is one thing to be convinced of the existence of a plan. It is another to know the plan. Many leaders operate as if they see such a plan. However, history judges whether the individual was a statesman or a politician. Knowing God's plan requires knowing the Author of the plan. God made this very clear to us when He said:

*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*¹⁰

Trying to think noble thoughts does not give us the mind of God. Knowing God's plan can only be gained by Him pouring His mind into us as a result of our living our lives in dependence upon Him.

Can a Head of State discern the mind of God with regard to his nation? Abraham Lincoln, while President, said:

*I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above. I frequently see my way clear to a decision when I have no sufficient facts upon which to found it. But I cannot recall one instance in which I have followed my own judgment, founded upon such a decision, where the results were unsatisfactory, whereas, in almost every instance where I have yielded to the views of others, I have had occasion to regret it. I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.*¹¹

Lincoln added further insight on another occasion:

*If it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected to my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me...It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it!*¹²

Not only can God give His mind to leaders, but the leader can seek God's mind with confidence. However, the key to Lincoln's certainty was his commitment to follow God's plan once it was revealed to him.

The statesman sees a long-range plan, operates according to it, and measures the performance of his administration against it.

The second characteristic of the statesman according to Burke is: The statesman operates "on enduring principles and for immortality." I understand Burke to say that the statesman operates according to high principles that can withstand the judgment not only of the electorate, but of God. The statesman accepts that there are ground rules by which the government official must operate. To the statesman, not only is the goal important, but the way he achieves that goal is just as important. The statesman, although he has compelling goals, operates as if he does not have to achieve these goals by his own strength. He does not have to take ethical shortcuts to ensure success. He has a strong code of ethics.

What are these enduring principles? I would submit to you that they include qualities such as: integrity, justice, diligence, and sacrificial service on behalf of others. Dwight Eisenhower said:

*The supreme quality for a leader is unquestionably integrity...His teachings and actions must square with each other. The first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose.*¹³

Again, these values are best achieved when there is obedience to God. George Washington, in his farewell address, gave his best advice for the well-being of the nation on whose behalf he had sacrificed so much:

And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever

*may be conceded to the influence of refined education,...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.*¹⁴

High principles must be based upon reverence for God. As an example, God Himself gave the following instructions:

*Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.*¹⁵

Obedience to God in the life of the leader will lead to the administration of justice, as well as a concern for others, including the weakest members of society—those who can never pay him back politically. Gibbons summarized the relationship when he said a century ago:

*Every philosopher and statesman who has discussed the subject of human governments, has acknowledged that there can be no stable society without justice, no justice without morality, no morality without religion, no religion without God.*¹⁶

In these brief remarks, I have argued that these two key characteristics of a statesman can best be built into the life of a leader through dependence upon God. The fundamental question is: Can a leader provide visionary leadership without dependence upon God? Can a leader know God's plan without seeking God? Lincoln said:

*I should be the veriest shallow and self-conceited blockhead upon the footstool, if, in my discharge of the duties which are put upon me in this place, I should hope to get along without the wisdom which comes from God and not from men.*¹⁷

Lincoln was saying, "I need to get my instructions from the ultimate ruler over my nation." With these words, he acknowledged that the uniquely effective plan for his nation can only be obtained by dependence upon God. He gives us insight that is essential for all statesmen in all cultures in all eras.

My observation is that the leader who sees the existence of a long-range plan makes a far greater impact. The leader generally acknowledged to have been the wisest, King Solomon, speaking under God's inspiration, said: "Without a vision, the people perish."¹⁸ He recognized the truth that we need a framework as a guide for our actions. Given that framework, we can order all of our activities and those of all who are responsible to us. For the person who knows his God, no challenge is insurmountable. One Prime Minister, inspired by God, said, "The people who know their God will display strength and take action."¹⁹

In contrast, the person who does not see the existence of a long-range plan, generally sees less significance to his actions. I think you can see the impossibility of anyone who would deny the reality of the Master Planner being able to envision a plan. Listen to the words of one skeptic: "Man,...his origins, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms."²⁰ With this perspective, there can be no long-range planning with any sense of conviction. The one who cannot see God cannot possibly comprehend His plan. The failure of Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot as leaders started with a failed perspective that denied God.

I am not saying that every acknowledged statesman lived his life in dependence upon God. However, I am firmly convinced that the one who desires to become a statesman can best achieve that goal by living in dependence upon God. Gladstone shared with us his insights:

*During the many years in the Cabinet I was brought in contact with some sixty master minds, and not more than perhaps three or four of whom were in sympathy with the skeptical movements of the day.*²¹

His observation was that, although it may seem fashionable to express independence from God, the outstanding public servants were men of faith in God.

God clarified the wisdom He provides to His children as they walk in dependence upon Him:

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it...However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" —but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.²²

I believe leaders realize their need for God more than any other segment of society, because leadership, as we enter the twenty-first century, is beyond the capability of the unaided human mind. Jesus elaborated on this when He told His closest followers:

Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.²³

Kings have always been driven to try to understand the mysteries of God. And yet, I submit to you that statesmen throughout the centuries have realized that the simple follower of Jesus Christ understands what the one who walks in his own strength can never understand.

God has given the following insight:

There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God...The authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.²⁴

Leaders are servants of God. They are servants of God just as much as any clergymen. As such, the servant must acknowledge his master.

To be called to be a leader is to be called by God to be a statesman, which in turn is a call to live in dependence upon God. The statesman recognizes himself as a servant inadequate to fulfill the responsibilities by himself. He is servant first of all to God and second of all to the people.

Lincoln bluntly stated, "Faith in God is indispensable to successful statesmanship."²⁵ He who served during the greatest crisis to the constitution and the national integrity in the history of the United States was convinced that a statesman cannot be other than a man of God. If there is any area within the sphere of human activity where one-dimensional thinking is unacceptable, it is, first and foremost, in the piloting of nations.

The leader must place himself in dependence upon God. The leader must lead his people in humbling themselves before Almighty God, their Master. This is a challenge to the Head of Government of any nation. I believe that the challenge to leadership was clearly expressed at the time of Jesus:

Many even among the leaders believed in [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.²⁶

"They loved praise from men more than praise from God." This is the trap for leadership. It ensnares the politician and must be resisted by the statesman. The leader must be willing to deal with his own ego. We must be willing to humble ourselves.

Statesmen, as Burke has defined them, are not always popular. They do not always become Heads of Government. However, I am convinced that they do make a contribution. Consider William Wilberforce. In 1780, he entered the British Parliament at age 21, the youngest Member, a gifted orator and a talented politician, a rising star in British politics. Many felt he could have been Prime Minister. However, five years after he entered Parliament, he was drawn to God. He described it this way: "It was not so much the fear of punishment by which I was affected, as a sense of my

great sinfulness in having so long neglected the unspeakable mercies of my God and Saviour.”²⁷ Wilberforce’s goals changed. Up until this point, he described his goals as follows: “The first years I was in Parliament, I did nothing—nothing that is to any purpose. My own distinction was my darling object.”²⁸ This is nothing less than the honest admission of a politician! However, based upon his change of heart and his new relationship with God, he wrote two years later, “God Almighty has set before me two great objects—the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.”²⁹ He had a vision. And these two goals drove him until he died 46 years later.

Wilberforce worked tirelessly toward two changes in England: a spiritual change, i.e., the change of heart toward God; and social changes, including abolition of slavery and other reforms, based upon the application of Biblical principles and justice. He drew several others into the endeavours with him. The spiritual renewal spread throughout England led by many other people and gradually penetrated every level of society, including government. He sacrificed his own political career in his politically unpopular campaign to abolish slavery. However, with time, the changes came. In 1807, the slave trade was abolished. In 1833, days before Wilberforce died, Parliament voted to abolish slavery.

He never became Head of Government, but I submit to you that he made a far greater contribution than any Prime Minister. By Burke’s definition and my understanding, he was a statesman of the first order. The basis for his vision, his diligence and his accomplishments was his faith in God. Without that faith, he would not have made the contribution that he did. And who knows how the history of slavery would have been affected.

We need statesmen, as Burke has defined them, at every level of government. This includes public administration. My challenge to you is: Are we allowing God to make us the statesmen that our nations need? Or, are we allowing petty, selfish goals to stand in the way?

Lincoln admonished his people:

*It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.*³⁰

He used the word repentance—which means to let our hearts break with the things that break the heart of God. We must allow our hearts to break over our disregard of God. We must allow our hearts to break over our busyness and our preoccupation with our own agenda rather than with God’s. We must do this as individuals and as nations.

How can you and I have this intimate relationship with God where He can reveal His mind and His plans to us? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate friendship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this friendship with God. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God’s perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked friendship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood,

*shed on the cross.*³¹

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”³²

Thus, Jesus has told us, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³³ God has told us, “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”³⁴ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*³⁵

*God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!*³⁶

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

*Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.*³⁷

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate friendship with God, and therefore to be able to receive instruction from Him, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate friendship with God that lasts forever and helps each of us to understand the mind of God, as we fulfill the responsibilities He has given us on this earth? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close friendship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to walk intimately with God. God’s solution for a leadership guided by God applies to everyone. No one—neither you nor I—can have access to the mind of God without the life of Jesus living through us. Therefore, if you are serious about helping our nations to enjoy all the benefits God intends for us, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his

innermost being shall flow rivers of living water."³⁸

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As sufficient numbers within our societies drink, our societies will be made up of individuals who are making decisions more in agreement with God's plan.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to man, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to be useful in the service of our nations.

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Peacebuilding in a Fractured World

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We have watched nation after nation self-destruct. Generally, as we have watched from outside, we have sensed the foolishness of wasted lives and resources. The suffering of these nations seems needless. And yet, the passions involved overcome the rational mind.

There has been a terrible toll on human life in our world. When one looks at the twentieth century, we conclude that more than 1% of everyone who lived during that century died from mass murder and genocide.^{1,2} In too many nations, nearly every family has been touched by lives stolen unjustly. How does one forgive this? How do we start the process of rebuilding our societies?

Those in leadership are not immune. Leaders who are committed to serving the people sacrificially experience genocidal attacks and assassination attempts upon themselves and their families. This has happened to several personal friends of ours. Can anything be more unjust than this kind of behaviour? How do we overcome the scars of such senseless killing?

We in the international community have only slowly recognized the need for peacekeeping intervention in our world. In the process, there have been many failures. Hence, repeatedly we have uttered the words “Never again,”³ only to demonstrate a reluctance to become involved when the next genocide occurs. In the process, we have learned it is not enough to enforce the end to the conflict, but we must also act to ensure a lasting peace. In many of the conflicts, one or more of the parties have had little regard for the accepted values of a healthy society. We in the international community are beginning to appreciate the need for peacebuilding efforts and that these must include instilling the missing values.

There are seven essential values for a healthy society:⁴

1. *High sense of worth for the individual.*
2. *Governors as servants of the people.*
3. *Participatory.* Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.
4. *Inclusion.* No individual or group should feel they cannot participate in the national dream.
5. *Justice.*
6. *Healing of wounds from injustice.* A healthy society must be a self-healing society because wounds are always being inflicted, either intentionally or inadvertently.
7. *The attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.*

All of these intrinsic values must be instilled into a society seeking health. I would like to focus with you on one of these values — the healing of wounds.

Attempts to achieve healing have included a balance between justice and overlooking the offence for the sake of societal harmony. Unless there is true healing, there are wounds that remain, resulting in buried anger and hostility, all waiting to erupt at an inopportune moment. When we think of the senseless killing, raping, and maiming, the possibility of forgiving and living side-by-side with the known perpetrators seems humanly impossible.

When we speak of forgiveness and healing, we cannot think of some abstract healing at a societal level. Practically speaking, healing is only secondarily a societal problem. Primarily, it is an individual issue. We know that forgiveness must be achieved at the individual level. Insofar as we fail at the individual level, we fail to achieve healing. A society must be healed one person at a time. True healing requires that the scars and the offences that stand between people be removed out of the way. As noble as are the efforts of the Truth Commission,⁵ I fear that they may not withstand the test of future challenges, and that we must go deeper.

Since government's responsibility includes maintaining an orderly society, government must take seriously the healing of these wounds. And yet, the normal tools at the disposal of government fail in this area.

How does healing take place? As we move more deeply into this subject, let me interject that as a scientist, I was greatly influenced by the philosophy that one should state his conclusions so strongly that they stimulate further work on the topic.⁶ This is the approach I will take here. In the spirit of inter-faith dialogue, I look forward to discussing these ideas further with you in person.

In order for healing to take place, there must be two components: the capacity to forgive, and the power to love those who have wronged us. Let us begin by looking at these from the individual level and then move toward healing at the societal level.

I believe we can best understand the healing process by examining examples of healing. A decade ago, Karla Fay Tucker was executed for killing two people using a pickaxe. A look at the childhood of Miss Tucker reveals deep emotional scars that contributed to her behaviour.⁷ However, instead of blaming others, she took full responsibility for her actions. She admitted her guilt, and repented of her terrible act.^{7,8} At her execution, Miss Tucker said to the families of the two victims: "I am so sorry. I hope God will give you peace with this."⁸ To others who were present, she said:

*Everybody has been so good to me. I love all of you very much. I am going to be face to face with Jesus now...I will see you all when you get there. I will wait for you.*⁸

There is no hint of the emotional scars that led to her murderous behaviour. She had no anger toward her parents who influenced her to become the person who committed this terrible act. There is no sign of anger toward those who refused to commute her sentence or toward those who wanted her executed. She no longer seemed to have the emotional scars that led to her evil behaviour. She moved from anger to sympathy to forgiveness. And she moved from hatred to compassion. Furthermore, while awaiting her execution, she spent her energy on helping the other prisoners. She moved from being a destructive force in society to a constructive one. She obviously had experienced emotional healing.

Nearly as significant is that Ronald Carlson, the brother of one of her victims, forgave Miss Tucker of her terrible act and actively worked to keep the government from putting her to death. His anger and hostility moved to forgiveness and compassion for Miss Tucker.⁹ Mr. Carlson obviously experienced healing from his anger over the cruel, senseless killing of his sister.

Both Karla Faye Tucker and Ronald Carlson experienced needed healing. How could these two individuals be healed of their anger and hatred? The *New York Times* reported that both of these individuals had become followers of Jesus Christ.⁸ It caused Miss Tucker to feel some of the pain that she had inflicted upon her victims and their survivors. It caused her to forgive herself.¹⁰ It caused her to begin to care about other people. Similarly, it caused Mr. Carlson to forgive Miss Tucker for inflicting an emotional wound that no human being could possibly heal. From hating Miss Tucker, Mr. Carlson was able to reach a point where he cared about her well-being.

From this example, we see two essential ingredients in healing of emotional wounds: repentance and forgiveness. Repentance is being honest about ourselves, our actions and our hatred. It acknowledges the hurt we have inflicted upon the other party. Forgiveness is recognizing that we are all imperfect, that we all have the capacity to be a Karla

Faye Tucker, and that compared to the holiness of God, we are all sinners and on the same level of righteousness with the murderer. Forgiveness is recognizing the destructive force of hatred—not only on others, but also upon ourselves. Note that repentance and forgiveness both help to build healthy relationships.

I am convinced the healing that Karla Faye Tucker and Ronald Carlson experienced could only have been achieved through Jesus Christ—a healing in the heart that no religious teaching by itself, no philosophy, no psychotherapeutic approach could have achieved.

Let us consider a second example. Two individuals caught up in the pain in Northern Ireland were imprisoned with life sentences for their role in sectarian killing. Both were deeply wounded emotionally as a result of the inter-communal hatred and violence in Northern Ireland. Anna Moore, a Roman Catholic, hated Protestants so passionately that she participated in a bombing that killed 17 Protestants. On the other side of the conflict, Bobby Corry, a Protestant, hated Catholics just as much—so much that he participated in a bombing that killed 3 Catholics.¹¹ Obviously, the hatred of these two for those of the other's group was so intense that their anger knew no limits. They were both so emotionally wounded that the courts determined they could never be allowed into society again. And yet, on 25 March 1993, something so astounding happened to these two that the *New York Times* reported it. They married each other. Why? How could two people with this level of hatred against each other's group marry? They both invited Jesus to come into their lives to live their lives for them.^{12,13} In the process, Jesus had so healed their emotional scars that their hatred turned to forgiveness and acceptance, then finally to the capacity to love unconditionally. Mrs. Corry now says: "I believe Bobby and I are proof of how Jesus can heal and bring opposing people together....Jesus is the answer to all torn countries and all divided peoples."^{12,13} This, I am convinced, is of relevance to the issue we are discussing. The emotional wounds that these two individuals felt for decades are gone. They were healed of the anger and hatred that seemed impossible to take away. As the result of the healing, they are now able to enter healthy relationships that were impossible before. Subsequently, they have been allowed to re-enter society.¹⁴

The lesson we learn here is that God can heal an individual of hatred and replace it with a love for those he/she once hated. An important element in bringing healing to our societies, then, involves a radical change in man, with God healing him on the inside through Jesus Christ, so that he can accept others who are different, but also forgive those who have hurt him in the past, and love them.

Building from the individual-level to the community-level, let us consider a third example. In the midst of the genocidal bloodshed in Rwanda, a Hutu paramilitary group came to one village and ordered everyone to gather. They ordered the Hutus and Tutsis to separate into two groups. Knowing the intentions of the paramilitary, the villagers refused. With one voice, they said: "There is no Hutu and no Tutsi. We are one in Christ."¹⁵ Confused, the paramilitary group retreated from the village, apparently for further instructions from their superior. Later, they returned to the village, and ordered everyone to gather again. This time, they killed all of the villagers.

My initial shock was soon replaced by hope. What impresses me is that while some Hutus were killing Tutsis, here were Hutus willing to die for Tutsis. This is the deepest love we can imagine. The Hutus and Tutsis in this village were able to overcome any scars inflicted within their society. I am convinced it was their deep love for Jesus Christ that turned distrust and fear into love for their brothers and sisters of a different ethnic group. I am convinced that God performed a unique healing within each one in that village so that they were each able to love those whom society had taught them to hate.

Can Jesus Christ really take away the scars and wounds that divide people? Booker T. Washington was a black American educator living in the southern United States during the last half of the nineteenth century, at a time when whites fought hard to keep blacks in bondage. I don't need to remind you of the injustice that blacks experienced during that time in American history. If anyone should have experienced emotional wounds, it should have been a black man in the southern United States during that period. I am impressed that in the midst of this, Booker T. Washington said: "I shall never permit myself to stoop so low as to hate any man."¹⁶ He was reminding us what all of us know in our hearts, that when we cannot forgive, when we cannot overcome anger and hatred with love, we are in bondage. When we experience anger and hatred and hostility, who gets hurt the most? We do!

Booker T. Washington's ability to be free from the bondage of emotional scars while those who sought to oppress him continued in their bondage is revealed in his words:

There are several kinds of freedom. There is a freedom that is apparent and one that is real; a superficial freedom, and one that is substantial; a freedom that is temporary and deceptive, and one that is abiding and permanent; one that ministers to the lower appetites and passions, and another that encourages growth in the sweeter things of life....But there is but one kind of freedom that is worth the name, and that is the one embodied in the words spoken by the Great Master: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."¹⁷

—obviously, quoting the words of Jesus. We all want to be healed from the scars of injustice. If a black man in the United States in the nineteenth century could be healed from scars of injustice, then I believe any one of us can be healed. Booker T. Washington's healer is Jesus. I believe that what he learned applies to all of us. I believe that each one of us needs to allow Jesus to heal us so that we can in turn help others to experience healing. We must allow Him to heal us from the bondage of selfishness, intolerance and hatred that are obstacles to creating cooperative, constructive societies. We must allow Jesus to make us whole. Jesus is the only one who can change us from the inside.

God portrayed Jesus as the unique source for the healing of our emotional wounds seven centuries before He came to earth, placing these words in the mouth of Jesus:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve...—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.¹⁸

Jesus—God—is here describing that an important part of His purpose for coming is to bring us healing not only spiritually but also from emotional wounds, as a part of our being whole and healthy human beings. It is to this passage that Jesus referred at the beginning of His ministry on this earth when He said: "Today as you listen, this scripture has been fulfilled."¹⁹

Jesus addressed our problem of forgiving and loving those who have hurt us when He commanded: "Love your neighbour as yourself."²⁰ This sounds difficult enough, but Jesus added an element that makes this even more difficult. Jesus used a word for *love* that in the original language describes a love for another that is unconditional, not based upon whether the recipient deserves it. This is a pure love, not for anything that can be gained in return. Not surprisingly, this word *agape* does not occur anywhere in Greek literature outside of the teachings of Jesus in the Bible.²¹ When Jesus said "Love your neighbour as yourself," He was not saying to reduce hostilities with your neighbour for your mutual benefit. He was saying that we are to care about others with pure motivation—for their sakes and for their sakes alone. When Jesus defined the neighbours whom we are to love unconditionally, He referred to the ethnic enemies of the hearers.²² We are to love those whom our societies teach us to hate.

How can we love those who have hurt us? Let us consider the context of Jesus' remarks. Jesus' full statement was:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind." This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."²³

This does not say "Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself." It says "Love yourself with God's kind of love, then love your neighbour the same way." The reason we cannot love others is because we cannot love ourselves. We cannot accept ourselves as a creation of God—sinners, yes, but sinners who can be forgiven through Jesus' death on our behalf. Our inability to accept ourselves and love ourselves makes it impossible to love others. As human beings, we are too wounded to love ourselves. The key to all of this was described by Jesus when He told us to love God first. It is only as we love God and begin to understand and trust Him, that we have confidence in what He has done in creating us and designing a plan for us. Only God can forgive us and, with it, change our nature, giving us the capacity to love ourselves. Once we love Him, we can love ourselves. Then, and only then, can we begin to love others.

Loving God is the key to the personal reformation necessary to overcome our wounds and heal our societies. God has told us: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”²⁴ This is the change in man that I have been talking about. When we have been changed, we become part of the healing process for our societies.

We have been considering the power of forgiveness in the healing process. However, there is an even more powerful concept and it is the concept of *forbearance*,²⁵ which means to forgive the person who doesn’t even ask to be forgiven. Because of the power of God in our lives, we are asked to forbear when they do not even recognize or care that they have hurt us.

In addition, God through Jesus can give us the power to love those who are unlovable. Jesus gave us this promise: “I assure you: ‘The one who believes in Me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.’”²⁶ Jesus promised us unbelievable power—power even beyond that which He demonstrated. And loving those who are unlovable requires nothing less!

I am convinced that God is powerful enough to accomplish this, and that He shares this capacity with us, His children. Let me share one example of His power in the life of my wife Elaine. Two decades ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God’s intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her: “You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right.” She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, that had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can work in our hearts to make us into agents for bringing forgiveness and healing to our societies.

I need this kind of power in my life in order to be a force for lifting the dignity of human beings rather than one who steps on them, even inadvertently, to advance myself. For me, this is summarized in the words of the Apostle Paul when he said “I have been crucified with Christ; and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”²⁷ It is by voluntarily giving up my personal goals to God and allowing Jesus to live my life for me that I have the ability to lift my brothers and sisters.

I am convinced that our only hope lies in allowing God to make us new from the inside, and to give us the power to love others who have hurt us and are seemingly unlovable. I am convinced that the only force that can change our hearts from the self-centredness that ultimately can lead to damaging our nations, into hearts that would be willing to sacrifice our personal goals for the sake of restoring our nations is God Himself working within our lives and our hearts. And I am convinced that as God changes the hearts of our countrymen, one-by-one, that our societies can be transformed, and health restored to our nations.

I believe that you and I must lead our people in receiving this healing. And we must help in leading those around us into this healing. How can you and I have the intimate relationship with God that allows us to become healed and a force for healing within our societies? God created each of us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings, whether as private citizens or government officials. Our unholiness is incompatible with God’s perfect holiness. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely

why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²⁸

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”²⁹

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁰ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”³¹ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³²

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!³³

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.³⁴

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in partnership with God as His servant in our nations, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire over the Falls. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow over the Falls carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering

a close relationship with God is Jesus' death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to see God's hand at work in our nations and to help achieve His purposes. No one—neither you nor I—can become the agent God would use to bring healing to our nations without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for the healing of our nations, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him. ³⁵

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, there will be a growing corps of individuals who are able to begin partnering with God to build healthy nations.

For this reason, I invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive You as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God's agents for healing our fractured societies.

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34. Mohandas K. Gandhi, in *The Modern Review*, October 1941, quoted in Mohandas K. Gandhi (Anand T. Hingorani, ed.), *The Message of Jesus Christ* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1971), p. 111.
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God's Purpose for the Head of Government

As we begin the third millennium A.D., the challenges facing the Head of Government are continually magnified. Clearly, the responsibility for forging the destiny of a people is beyond the capability of any human being. The destiny of a nation is clearly beyond our control in an interdependent world with natural forces that are outside of our control. It is in this context that I am convinced it is necessary to recognize that there is someone bigger than we are who holds the destiny of our nation in His hands—Almighty God. Then, it is essential to understand where we fit into His leadership over our nations. I am convinced that once we understand God's purpose for the Head of Government, it sets us free to function within our human limitations.

God revealed His purpose for the Head of Government to two powerful rulers who headed early empires. During a six-century period leading up to the birth of Christ, the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires in succession dominated the known world. God revealed His purpose to Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylonia, and Cyrus, King of Persia. There is common truth to these two that I am convinced extrapolates and applies to every Head of Government today.

God said the following to Cyrus, King of Persia:

*I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please"....This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of...."so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name....I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me."*¹

There are a series of significant truths here. Let us look at some of them quickly.

I am the Lord....I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God. God reminds us that He is the God of the Universe. The clear statement is that He is in charge.

I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus. As God Almighty, He focuses His attention on the Head of Government. He cares sufficiently for the Head of Government, and He is able to give the Head of Government individual attention. He then proceeds to give a direct message to the Head of Government, a message that clarifies the importance of the Head of Government. Clearly, the Head of Government is important to God.

He is My shepherd. God describes the Head of Government as His shepherd. The role of the shepherd is to protect and guide the sheep. The shepherd is concerned for the safety and well-being of the sheep. The Head of Government is God's human proxy to shepherd His people, the people of that specific nation.

And will accomplish all that I please. God oversees the life of the Head of Government to insure that he/she accomplishes God's purposes.

This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus. God describes Cyrus as His anointed. The word *anointed* has

the connotation of being commissioned by God, set aside for a divine purpose, consecrated. This is significant since at the time God picked up Cyrus, he did not acknowledge God.

Whose right hand I take hold of. God holds the Head of Government by his right hand. This emphasizes the moment-by-moment guidance that God provides to the Head of Government. This does not imply that the Head of Government is incapable of rejecting that guidance. However, there are times when, for the sake of God's overriding purpose, He will overrule the Head of Government and cause him/her to make a decision he/she was not disposed to make.

So that you may know that I am the Lord. This is one of two *so that* statements that describe God's purpose. God's first objective in the life of the Head of Government is that he/she will know that God is the sovereign Lord over his/her life and his/her nation. The good things that God has described to this point, that He does for the Head of Government, are for the purpose of causing the Head of Government to know that God is the sovereign Lord over his/her life, over his/her nation, and over the universe. God's first and foremost purpose as He works through the life of the Head of Government is that the Head of Government will know that there is God who works in his/her life.

The God of Israel. This does not mean that the God we are discussing is exclusively linked with a geographical region or a political State, but rather that He is the God over every nation and that He chose to reveal Himself to mankind through the descendants of one godly man named Israel. Cyrus was not an Israeli. Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar ruled empires that touched the people Israel. However, I believe the truths stated here for Heads of Government are universal.

Who summons you by name....I summon you by name. God summoned Cyrus by name. God summons the Head of Government by name. The implication is that God summons the individual to the office of Head of Government. No matter how you gain office from a human point of view, God claims that He called you specifically and placed you in office. Although you may have done your best to achieve the office, you did not put yourself into office. God intends for the Head of Government to know — be sure of — that God summons him/her specifically. The power of this passage is increased when one realizes that God delivered this message to Cyrus approximately 710 B.C. Cyrus actually entered office 538 B.C. This makes this passage even more powerful, because it tells us that God knows us before we are born and can orchestrate our lives beginning with our conception until we literally serve as His shepherd over His people, the people living in our nations.

And bestow on you a title of honour. God, in His sovereignty, picks up an individual and is the one to lift him/her up to the highest position in the land.

Though you do not acknowledge Me. God picks up people and places them in the office of Head of Government based not upon what they are today, but based upon what He sees them becoming. This does not mean that God does not care about their attitude toward Him. He insists that they obey Him.

I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me. God works through and on behalf of the Head of Government. He does this unconditionally to accomplish His great purpose which follows: *so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.* He does this as a demonstration of His grace. Here, the God of the universe is patient with our slowness to understand Him and His ways. The way God works through and on behalf of the Head of Government is also an indication of the significance of the office from God's perspective.

So that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me. This is the second *so that* statement which describes God's purpose. God's second objective for Cyrus as Head of Government is that as a result of God working through his/her life, all men and women throughout the world will know that He is the sovereign Lord. Considering that Cyrus ruled the whole known world at the time, we may reasonably extrapolate that God's second objective for the Head of Government is that as a result of God working through his/her life, all men and women living in the region administered by a particular Head of Government will know that He is the sovereign Lord.

The office of Head of Government is so important in God's overall work on this earth that He sovereignly picks an individual, even before he/she is born, lifts him/her up, and places him/her in office. He does this with two overpowering objectives:

1. *So that you may know that I am the Lord,*
2. *So that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.*

These two purposes are graphically illustrated in the life of Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylon. Listen to Nebuchadnezzar's description of how God worked in his life. Note that Nebuchadnezzar wrote about himself in the third person, as if he were an external observer:

[From] King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world:

May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are His signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; His dominion endures from generation to generation.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

"In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

"Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.

"The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.'

"This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you."

Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air—you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

"You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times

pass by for him.'

"This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."

All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes."

Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified Him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;

His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing.

He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have you done?"

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendour were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.²

Nebuchadnezzar vividly demonstrated for us in his life the two purposes that God described in the life of Cyrus. Nebuchadnezzar related how he ignored the work of God in his life. Even when God supernaturally revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that He would discipline him apparently for his pride with regard to God, Nebuchadnezzar ignored this and did not change his attitude. However, God proceeded to work in Nebuchadnezzar's life so that he acknowledged God—*so that you may know that I am the Lord*. As a result, God gained Nebuchadnezzar's attention. Nebuchadnezzar changed his attitude toward God to the point that he publicly reported his experience to the whole civilized world. Thus, we can say that as a result of God's working in Nebuchadnezzar's life, God's second purpose was achieved—*so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me*.

Given this truth, let me pose some questions for personal reflection: What should my response be? If God will pick me up, place me in a position of responsibility whether I acknowledge Him or not, and intervene in my decisions when necessary to *accomplish all that I (God) please*, wouldn't it be better to voluntarily cooperate with Him rather than forcing Him to drag me along, and possibly discipline me, as a stubborn child? What changes do I need in my life to be God's instrument in my nation and the world? What should be my attitude toward gaining the office of Head of Government and clinging to it? Where am I in the spectrum depicted in the life of Nebuchadnezzar: proud with regard to God, or being broken and humbled by God, or acknowledging His work in my life and depending upon Him in the exercise of this office?

The crucial question becomes: How does the Head of Government become so intimately linked with God as to become His instrument in the life of his nation? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to government officials. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.³

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”⁴

Thus, Jesus has told us, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”⁵ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”⁶ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.⁷

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!⁸

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.⁹

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in harmony with God in the governmental decision-making process, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God that lasts forever and fulfill God's purpose through our leadership? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

As clever as we think we are, God is the only who can heal our relationship with Him. It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity for a restored relationship with God. No one—neither you nor I—can have our relationships restored without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kinds of relationship with God necessary for effective leadership in your nation, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”¹⁰

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, the leadership of our nations will be made up of individuals who are able to develop a healthy relationship with their Master, and to work as a team for the best for our nation.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to fulfill God's purpose for our lives within our nations.

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Bible*, Isaiah 44:24,28-45:1,3,4-6.
2. *Ibid.*, Daniel 4.
3. *Ibid.*, Colossians 1:15-20.
4. Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Nonviolence in Peace and War* (1948), 2.166.
5. *Bible*, John 14:6.
6. *Ibid.*, Acts 4:12.
7. *Ibid.*, Colossians 1:21-22.
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9. Mohandas K. Gandhi, in *The Modern Review*, October 1941, quoted in Mohandas K. Gandhi (Anand T. Hingorani, ed.), *The Message of Jesus Christ* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1971), p. 111.
10. *Bible*, New American Standard Bible, John 7:37-38.

Exclusion — Must It Accompany Globalization?

2 May 2001

We are all deeply concerned with the problem of poverty eradication. There are many facets to this problem that must be addressed. Today, I would like to address one aspect—exclusion. Globalization, perhaps more than any other issue, has forced us to look at exclusion. While we are considering exclusion, I would like to look at it in its broader context. I am convinced that lack of inclusion may be one of the most significant factors in preventing our nations from reaching their full potential. Almost every nation has a significant segment of the population that feels excluded.

Phenomenon of exclusion. Exclusion means to be left out. To understand the full significance of exclusion and the urgency of dealing with this issue, we must allow ourselves to feel the pain of exclusion. Exclusion conveys the feeling of being pushed outside and left to look in at everyone else who is enjoying a life that we cannot possibly have. It is realizing that the majority of the people of the world have something that we can never have. It is the feeling of not being able to participate in determining my own destiny. It is the deep emotional pain of being deprived of something that belongs to us as human beings. Within the heart of each person deprived is the feeling that an injustice is being perpetrated.

Exclusion may take on several different forms. There is social exclusion. There is political exclusion. And there is economic exclusion. Economic exclusion is relatively easy to quantify. If you mean by economic exclusion, the number left out due to per capita income of less than \$1 per day, then 20% of our global population is left out.¹ If you mean the number left out due to per capita income of less than \$2 per day, then fully one-half of our global population is left out.² The economic impact of this exclusion is serious. However, the extent of this exclusion is far deeper than economic. There are serious social ramifications that accompany this exclusion. There are generally consequences for health, education, and employment opportunities.^{3,4}

Just as devastating as economic exclusion are political, social and other forms of exclusion. In too many cases, minority ethnic groups feel like their voice cannot be heard in the public arena. They feel like they are prevented from participating in determining their own destiny. They feel like they are second-rate members of society. Others are pushed out of their homes to become refugees or internally displaced persons. Still others are excluded on the basis of social strata so that they cannot fully participate.

Not only is exclusion a reality, but it is increasing. Focusing on economic exclusion, we are frequently reminded that the ratio of income of the world's wealthiest 20% to the poorest 20% is 74:1.5 This differential is 2.5 times greater than it was in 1960. During the 40 years considered the four decades of development, the standard of living of the poorest in our world has declined.

The human being is more than an economic being and his needs are more than physical. I am concerned with the emotional consequences of exclusion. The reality is that life is getting more difficult for those on the lower rungs of our societies. It is alarming to me that the number excluded is increasing. I see increasing levels of hopelessness and despair in our world as a result of being prevented from reaching the full potential for which God created us. Ultimately, I view exclusion from the point of view of a father, not an economist. I am convinced that every father

wants to help his children reach their full potential. I am convinced that every father wants his children to grow up healthy, to receive an education, and to find employment that will allow him/her to live a satisfying life. I am convinced that as long as there is hope that his children can eventually live a better life, a person will strive to improve life for his family even if he must give up many of his own personal aspirations. If he does not have this hope, frustration sets in, leading to hopelessness and despair.

Consequences of hopelessness. There are several behavioural consequences of hopelessness. Among them are suicide and terrorism. Suicide is self-destructive behaviour. The suicide rate is a *tip-of-the-iceberg* indicator of hopelessness, because, fortunately, our cultures do not encourage suicide as a way out. For every person who commits suicide, there are thousands more who have given up on life. I interpret increasing suicide rate⁶ to indicate increasing despair, and that is alarming.

Terrorism is becoming a greater fear as technology increases.^{7,8} Terrorism, to me, reflects an anger that lashes out indiscriminately at those whom one does not know, but whom one surmises are responsible for the inner pain. I am convinced that terrorism generally results from feelings of exclusion. I am convinced that most of the fear of terrorism could be avoided if we would endeavour to make everyone feel included. Most anti-terrorism efforts are aimed at protecting a way of life, not getting at the root cause. I am convinced that the answer to terrorism is not more treaties and better law enforcement. It is inclusion.

The same is true at the national level. I am convinced we could do much more to include all nations in the family of nations. The worst thing we can do is to make our fellow man feel pushed out, whether at the individual or national level.

It is important that we recognize that suicide and terrorism are not limited to those whom we would define as economically excluded. Thus, I am convinced that political, social and other forms of exclusion are just as important as economic, if not more so, in making us feel left out. And affluence does not overcome these forms of exclusion, bringing satisfaction to life. Thus, our solution must include provision for these dimensions of exclusion.

From a development point of view, endemic hopelessness is crippling. Once an individual loses hope, apathy often sets in. Once apathy sets in, our drive to contribute to building up our families, our communities, and our nations reduces. The individual is the engine for driving the development of our nations. It is not government nor transnational corporations nor foreign investments. Our preoccupation must be with keeping the individual healthy and strong. The simple truth is that when we knowingly exclude segments of the population in our nations, we forcibly prevent them from contributing.

Suicide, terrorism, suicide bombings, apathy — pragmatically, this is a time bomb waiting to explode. I am convinced that unless we reverse the tide of increasing exclusion, this will make governing our nations increasingly more difficult.

The significance of exclusion. Each life touched by hopelessness is a wasted life. When we fail to view each person as a special and unique creation of God, that is unacceptable. God said, as He was creating mankind, “Let Us make man in Our image.”⁹ God told us, through the mouth of Jesus, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”¹⁰ We need to see that a human life is an unbelievable gift and privilege, and the waste of a single life is an unbelievable tragedy. We have a collective responsibility to help every man, woman and child to reach his/her God-given potential.

Source of exclusion. I would like to address four areas of responsibility for lifting the consequences of exclusion. Those of us in the developed world have a special responsibility. The profit motive largely drives the international economic order. You know the statistics better than I do. Twenty percent of the world's population controls more than 80% of the world's wealth¹¹—and this percentage is steadily increasing. A stark example is that three individuals have a net worth larger than the combined GDP of the 41 poorest nations with their 550 million people.¹² As a further example, the combined wealth of the world's two hundred richest people equals the combined annual income of the world's poorest 2.5 billion people¹³—40% of the global population. There is no rational or moral justification for such a disparity.

You can understand the greed in a purely First World context. In the United States, the ratio of the salary of top executives to that of production workers has risen from 42:1 to 419:1 over the past 20 years.¹⁴ There are CEO's who

earn in excess of 100 million dollars per year¹⁵—amounts they cannot practically spend. I view this as an expression of runaway greed. The greed is not aimed toward the South. Clearly, the economically weaker are at the mercy of the stronger whether they are in the North or the South. However, with this kind of attitude, what hope do those in the South have? The fundamental issue is not disdain for the South on the part of those from the North. It is unbridled greed, the *have-nots* being at the mercy of the *haves*.

The foreign policy of the developed nations is largely driven by business considerations. Thus, many of the unfriendly actions taken by the developed nations, e.g., protectionism, are driven by the business community.

The first area that needs to operate differently, then, is the business and financial community of the developed nations.

The same greed that pervades the developed nations pervades the developing nations as well, and to the detriment of the nation's people. You know that in many developing nations, a handful of individuals dominate the economy.¹⁶ There are examples of a few families owning the majority of the land in a nation. One-quarter of the world's 200 wealthiest are from the South—all billionaires.¹⁷ The disparities in wealth within the South are often more offensive than they are in the North. Many times that wealth is accumulated off the backs of their brothers who are barely surviving. It is nothing more than the same greed that drives the CEO of a Western corporation to demand a salary that he cannot possibly spend.

The second area that needs to operate differently, then, is the developing societies. The sad reality is that changing the roles of the excluded and the included would not affect the situation because of our selfish, greedy nature. Likewise, replacing the CEO's of transnational corporations with executives from the South would not improve the situation. The problem is with our intrinsic nature.

One recent commentator, after enumerating many of the disadvantages faced by the developing world in competing economically, concluded with this: "But as serious as these disadvantages are, the greatest disadvantage has been the poor quality of government."¹⁸ The temptation to which many who enter government of Third World nations succumb is to use their position for personal benefit, rather than serving the people. There have been too many examples in the Third World of the head of the nation being the wealthiest person in the nation.^{19,20}

There are two views of government in our world today:

1. The State is all-important and the individual is expendable in the pursuit of the State goals.
2. The individual is God's highest creation and the purpose of government is to serve the individual in reaching his/her full potential.

These two paradigms translate into two views of government office:

1. Office is a prize to be won. Power is to be exercised. I am entitled to benefit from the exercise of that power.
2. Office is an opportunity to serve my fellow man.

We each want to think that this error could not happen in our own nation or that it could not be serious. However, it is real. Two years ago, while I was conducting a workshop among political leaders in an emerging democracy, we approached the issue of governing officials as servants of the people. One political leader asked me in front of the whole workshop group: "Are there any examples in history of governing officials actually serving the people?" He, as a politician, could not imagine that a governing official would ever serve the people. This error contributes to feelings of exclusion, politically as well as economically. Government officials, starting with the head of the nation, must see their role as that of a shepherd, serving the whole flock, not just the sheep of a certain color or the sheep that placed him/her in office.

There are several areas where the government must help its citizens in order to give them an economic opportunity in a global market: property rights; law and order; instill confidence within the foreign business community in the stability of the nation; develop a creative and realistic plan to foster economic competitiveness taking into account the uniquenesses offered by the nation and its people. I am convinced that every national planner should start with Lee

Kuan Yew's recent book *From Third World to First*²¹ to stimulate their thinking.

To visualize how governments hurt themselves and their people, consider the following examples. Hernando de Soto, the Latin American development expert, points out that if one wants to build a home on State-owned land in his nation, it requires 207 procedural steps at 52 government offices.²² Further, a recent study of regulations affecting the certification of new businesses in 75 nations found that government obstacles slow the approval process to 63 business days on the average.²³ Often, these multiple steps require bribes to facilitate their expeditious processing. If we are serious about participating in strength in the global economy, we must stop hindering business initiative.

The third area that must change involves transforming our view of government into the servant of the people.

I submit to you that all three areas contribute to the problem of exclusion: the developed world, the developing societies and, in addition, government officials in the developing world. The common problem is greed, pure and simple. The major source of our hopelessness is greed.

There is a fourth contributing element to the hopelessness so prevalent in our societies — that is, the weakening of our source of hope. We do irreparable damage to our people in the process of creating secular States. The damage is done by coercing our people to focus on the material and to forget their spiritual nature. I agree that there must be separation of religion and State. However, there can be no separation of the individual member of society and his Creator. We must still be linked to the source of our life.

One of the most significant things we can do for those at the bottom rungs of our world, while working to improve economic conditions, is to help them to cling to the source of their hope. We must instill the confidence that God loves them, that He is in charge and that He is currently acting to improve the situation for them and their children. We must remind them that God has told us: “For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”²⁴ Then, we must model for them a hope in God. We must make sure that we do not speak hypocritically. We must be very sensitive to the pain that they feel.

Globalization. Considering the problems that we have just looked at, how should we view globalization? The fundamental problem is not directly related to globalization. Globalization merely exacerbates the problem that already exists. Globalization has the capacity to be a force for good in our world, as Secretary-General Annan²⁵ and many from the South²⁶ have argued. It also has the capacity to unleash damage upon our people. However, let us see clearly that globalization is not the culprit. It merely turns loose unbridled greed. Do we need globalization? Yes, because we need partnerships in this already inter-connected world. Do we need to be afraid of transnational corporations? I feel we can learn a lot from Lee Kuan Yew who in 1965, when Singapore was a Third World nation that could not deal with transnational corporations from a position of power, was able to work with them to advantage.²⁷

Solution. The major problem underlying exclusion is man's selfishness that causes him to look out for himself at the expense of his fellow man. The problem is fundamentally a moral one. And the solution requires a change in heart. Four decades of development have not changed the heart of man that causes him to take for himself without regard for his neighbour. However, let us be honest — millennia of human existence have not changed this selfish heart of man. The solution is not a South-North confrontation. Exclusion will not ultimately be solved by confrontation, but rather by a stronger cooperation than we have hitherto known. I am convinced that the only force that can change the human heart into a heart of compassion is Almighty God. We each need God's help in fulfilling our responsibility to reduce hopeless and despair, whether we are a member of the developed world, or we are a Third World elite or Third World peasant.

I am convinced that the only way to cooperatively share the resources that God has given us collectively is through God-based partnerships. Within the U.N., we recognize the need for partnerships. However, I want to explore with you the only foundation that I am convinced can make this partnership work.

I would like to read for you God's instruction for economic cooperation. God instructed a group of His followers to respond to the needs of another group, that they did not know directly. God, speaking through His servant, started by giving the example of a third group:

Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they

urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints...They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will....²⁸

This group did not give out of an abundance, but because others had a need. After using this group as a positive example for his hearers, God's servant then turns to the hearers:

And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.²⁹

And here is the key:

At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality....³⁰

The idea is that if I have more than I need now, I should use it to lift up the brother who is temporarily down so that he may become strong. Then, later on, he may be strong at a time when I am down and he will then be in a position to lift me up. This immediately makes good sense. However, I must overcome my human selfishness to apply such a principle.

This instruction was written to fellow believers who shared mutual commitments, and trusted each other because of a shared commitment to God. These fellow believers:

1. Gave to each other as unto God.
2. Could be trusted to use any aid constructively.
3. Would reciprocate later.
4. Had a sufficiently deep love of their fellow human beings.
5. Viewed their excess as a gift from God for the purpose of giving to their brothers and sisters in need.

Let me remind you that these two groups represented different cultures and did not know each other, but they placed themselves under the same Master.

A special trust relationship is certainly necessary in order for this partnership to work. I view it as a God-based Brotherhood. It is a covenant relationship, where there are clear expectations, which must be based on something deeper and stronger than a simple promise or even a contract. I am arguing that this must be based upon a mutual submission to God.

In this God-based Brotherhood, the donors have a serious responsibility. For example, the United States, with 5% of the world's population, holds access to 33% of the world's assets.³¹ The consequence of what I have shared is that the citizens of the United States must view themselves as stewards of resources that belong to the global community, that what they hold is not for their own personal consumption. We must see this from God's perspective. God has taught us: "From everyone who has been given much shall much be required."³²

I am convinced that the kinds of development partnerships we have been talking about at the U.N. for years can only be achieved if there is a commitment on the part of the donors and on the part of the recipients to a God-based Brotherhood.

Let me illustrate a fundamental principle by which this God-based partnership must work. God, as Jesus, instructed us:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest

*commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself.*³³

God is telling us to love our neighbour as our self. Clearly, we cannot love our neighbour unless we love our self first. I am convinced that runaway greed is a reflection of a discontented person who is unable to love himself. John D. Rockefeller, one of the wealthiest men a century ago, was asked how much money a person needs to make him happy. He is purported to have answered “A little more than he has.” These are not the words of a contented person. We must learn to love our self. But we cannot love our self unless we love God first. It is only when we begin to love God that we can see our self as a special creation of God and begin to accept our self and love our self as God does. Then, and only then, can we begin to see our neighbour, with all his blemishes, as a beautiful creation of God, and love him.

Can these principles work on a global scale? They have never been fully put to the test. They have been attempted on a smaller scale many times, with fascinating results. I am convinced that many of these principles contributed to the success of the Marshall Plan. Let me caution that we as a race have slipped so far in the past half century that apart from the spiritual rejuvenation I am talking about, there could be no Marshall Plan today. Considering that the cultural differences between the North and the South are generally greater than within the North, the obstacles are even greater. However, I am fully convinced that the God-based partnership can work if we all commit ourselves to implement it.

Furthermore, I am convinced that the same principles that can work for the removal of economic exclusion will also affect political, social, and other forms of exclusion.

Knowing what I know now, I am convinced that the best thing that we can each do to remove exclusion and, with it, to alleviate poverty is to encourage everyone within our sphere of influence to submit their lives to Almighty God: whether from North or South, elite or peasant. We must ask God for the power to love these people while they are still unlovely and encourage them to submit their lives to God as their Master.

How do we submit to God? The crucial question becomes: How we become so intimately linked with God as to become His instrument for eliminating exclusion in our world? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by the selfishness we have been talking about. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings and as government officials. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

*Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*³⁴

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”³⁵

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁶

God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”³⁷ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*³⁸

*God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!*³⁹

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

*Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.*⁴⁰

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in partnership with God as His servant in our world, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God that lasts forever and follow Him in healing the exclusion of such a high percentage of mankind? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up — near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus' death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to be a healer and a restorer of hope. No one — neither you nor I — can become the kind of servant-leader God would use in this process without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for the healing of our nations, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

*If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”*⁴¹

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, the leadership of our nations will be made up of individuals who are able to develop a healthy relationship with their Shepherd, and to become the healing influence necessary to

eliminate exclusion.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive you as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God's agents for restoring the hope of our people.

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The Leader's Ultimate Responsibility: Leading Our Nations into God's Blessing

I am fully convinced that we as a global population have never experienced the full blessing that God our Creator intended for us. Your nation and my nation are no exception. I am convinced that our peoples have never experienced the full blessing that God has for them. My heart is broken over the pain suffered by the peoples of our nations. My goal is to show that God's full blessing is within the grasp of your people.

God painted two pictures of life for one particular nation, as He instructed that nation. The first picture is:

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands...You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country...The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land He is giving you...The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground.¹

The second picture God painted is:

However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees...You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds...The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies...You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you...A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labour produce, and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days. The sights you see will drive you mad...You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations...All these curses will come upon you. They will pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the Lord your God and observe the commands and decrees He gave you.²

Let me ask you a question: Which picture would you like to have describe your nation? Obviously, we would like the first picture. A second question is: Which picture best describes your nation today? I am sure that the answer to this question is as painful to you as it is to me. I am convinced we have largely missed God's blessing for your nation and mine. As a result, we are experiencing unnecessary suffering. From a practical, development point of view, if we are working against God and His plans, no amount of money, no amount of effort will overcome the suffering we are bringing upon ourselves.

God describes the quality of life He intends for every man, woman and child with these words: "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."³ Jesus described that quality of life this way: "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."⁴ God speaking through the

Apostle Paul describes the quality of life He intends for each person with these words: “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”⁵ God reiterates His desire to pour blessing upon nations with these words:

*“Test Me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty. “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.*⁶

God makes it very clear that He can give blessing, or He can withhold blessing or He can even give a curse.

*Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. So He subjected them to bitter labour; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains.*⁷

*He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there. He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs.*⁸

God blesses nations that walk in obedience to Him and God withholds blessing and even curses nations that refuse to walk in obedience to Him. This is a universal principle that applies to all nations. History confirms that this principle from God is true. Dr. Billy Graham reminded us: “No nation has ever fallen in the history of the world that was right with God.”⁹ Daniel Webster pointed out to the American people in the mid-nineteenth century:

*If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we or our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.*¹⁰

John Adams, the second President of the United States, proclaimed: “The safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and the blessing of Almighty God.”¹¹ These principles are true for every nation, including your nation.

Therefore, what must we do? I would submit to you that it is to repent. Abraham Lincoln, as President, admonished his people:

*It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.*¹²

He used the word repentance—which means to let our hearts break with the things that break the heart of God. We must allow our hearts to break over our disregard of God. We must allow our hearts to break over our busyness and our preoccupation with our own agenda rather than with God’s. We must do this as individuals and as a nation. Brokenness means taking responsibility for our own lack of blessing rather than blaming others. Yes, there is injustice in our world. However, God makes it clear that His blessing is not conditional upon outside forces, only our own heart attitude. Furthermore, God makes it clear that His blessing upon any nation can overcome any injustice within the international community.

I believe Solzhenitsyn has identified the specific conditions for moving God’s hand when he said:

And what about those glorious forces of glasnost and perestroika? Among these fashionable words we look in vain for the concept of purification...Of every four troubadours of today's glasnost, three are former toadies of Brezhnevism, and who among them has uttered a word of personal repentance instead of cursing the faceless "period of stagnation"?...West Germany was suffused with the feeling of repentance before the coming of their economic boom. But in our country no one has even begun to repent...That is a recipe for warped development.¹³

Solzhenitsyn is calling for repentance. The only repentance that works is a humbling of ourselves before God. It is a grieving with God for the things we have done that have broken His heart, and an overwhelming desire to change our behaviour so that it is in line with God's standard for us.

Why is repentance necessary? God has told us in His Word: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"¹⁴ Repentance is necessary whenever we have not walked in justice, in love toward our fellow man, and in humility before our God.

I believe the problems we face in our nations are so severe that we must each humble ourselves before God. The problems we are experiencing within our nations are not simply the fault of past regimes. Vaclav Havel, while President of the Czech and Slovak Republic, seemed to recognize this very well when he appealed to his people immediately after taking office:

All of us have grown used to the totalitarian system and accepted it as an unchangeable fact, and thereby actually helped keep it going. None of us are only its victims; we are all also responsible for it...We must accept this heritage as something we have inflicted on ourselves.¹⁵

We must each take responsibility for the conditions in which we find our nations. Only then can we truly repent before God and ask for His hand of blessing upon our nations.

Nehemiah was both a prophet and a political leader of Israel in the fifth century B.C. Listen to his prayer to Almighty God:

O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands, let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer Your servant is praying before You day and night for Your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against You. We have acted very wickedly toward You. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws You gave Your servant Moses. Remember the instruction You gave Your servant Moses, saying, "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me and obey My commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for My Name."¹⁶

It is this very principle that caused Thomas Jefferson to exclaim with regard to the United States: "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just."¹⁷ Brokenness means humbling ourselves before God. We must allow ourselves to be broken by God. God told one king:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.¹⁸

We must each lead our people in humbling ourselves before God and turning away from every disobedience toward Him. Then, and only then, can our nations be healed by God. No nation can achieve its full potential unless its people are right with God. Your nation and my nation are no exception. We need healing for our lands!

Because leaders have the immense responsibility for the well-being of their people, they must lead their people in walking rightly with God. I would like to give three examples of leaders of nations who displayed the attitude neces-

sary to lead their people into God's blessing. In the eighth century B.C., God sent a prophet to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, warning of God's impending judgment. The leader took God seriously. We are told:

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from His fierce anger so that we will not perish.¹⁹

History records that God withdrew His intended punishment because of their repentance.²⁰

Because God's intent is for us to walk in humble dependence upon Him, He warns us in advance when our ways are leading to His judgment. He delights in our repentance in response to His warnings. When we repent, He is quick to forgive us. God has told us:

If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.²¹

Early in the last decade of the twentieth century, one African President, on the occasion of his inaugural ceremony, stood before his people and demonstrated for them the attitude God requires for any nation to receive God's blessing:

We repent from all our wicked ways of idolatry, witchcraft, the occult, immorality, injustice and corruption, and all other sins that have violated Your righteous laws. We turn away from all these and renounce it all in Jesus' name.²²

One Caribbean Prime Minister in the same decade made a most remarkable appeal to her people to return to God:

We must also acknowledge that we cannot reject God, despise His will, and get away with it. When we reject God, or simply pay Him lip service as we so often do, we must expect to pay the price...We are paying the price for failing to make God supreme, and for exalting ourselves and our own selfish ends instead...As a people, then, we must return truly to God...If this nation is to prosper, if we are to have a stable society, we must as a people turn back to God.²³

She was correct in stating: "I, as leader of the government of this nation, am on solid ground in playing my part in calling our people back to God." The appeal is correct and if that nation heeds her appeal, I am convinced it will experience blessing beyond human explanation—blessing that can only come from God's good and powerful hand.

Do you love your nation enough that you are willing to humble yourself before God so that He may pour His blessing out upon your people? On the other hand, would you allow your heart to be filled with pride and stand in the way of God pouring out the blessing that He desires so much to give and for which your people crave? Let us paraphrase the prayer of Nehemiah for your nation:

O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands, let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer Your servant is praying before You day and night for Your servants, the people of [...INSERT NAME OF MY NATION]. I confess the sins we people of [...INSERT NAME OF MY NATION], including myself and my father's house, have committed against You. We have acted very wickedly toward You. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees

and laws You gave through Your servants and through Your Word. Remember the instruction You gave through Your servants, saying, "If you are unfaithful, I will curse you, but if you return to Me and obey My commands, then I will pour blessing upon the people of [...INSERT NAME OF MY NATION] and heal [...INSERT NAME OF MY NATION]."24

Will you join me in praying this prayer for your nation? If you cannot pray this prayer, how can we move into the kind of relationship with God where you can come to Him on behalf of your nation? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate friendship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this friendship with God. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked friendship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²⁵

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, "a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."²⁶

Thus, Jesus has told us "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."²⁷ God has told us "There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."²⁸ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.²⁹

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!³⁰

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.³¹

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate friendship with God, and therefore to be able to approach Him on behalf of our people, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate friendship with God that lasts forever and helps each of us to understand the mind of God, as we fulfill the responsibilities He has given us on this earth? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close friendship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to walk intimately with God. God’s solution for a leadership guided by God applies to everyone. No one—neither you nor I—can have access to the mind of God without the life of Jesus living through us. Therefore, if you are serious about helping your nation to enjoy all the benefits God intends for you and your people, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”³²

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our nations, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As sufficient numbers within our nations drink, our nations will be made up of individuals who are walking with God and making decisions more in agreement with God’s plan.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to man, but it will move you into the place where you can go to the God of your nation on behalf of your people, expecting God to heal your nation and to bring His intended blessing to your people.

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Maximizing the Contribution of Women to Society

3 April 1997

It is obvious that no society can achieve its maximum strength unless each individual makes his or her maximum contribution. There is one group that exhibits feelings of disenfranchisement in every region of the world—and this is women. Women all over the world feel that they are second-rate and that only men can reach their full potential. This discrimination begins while the baby is still in the womb, so that a female baby is often considered of less value and the pregnancy terminated. This discrimination continues throughout the life of a woman. This discrimination is confirmed by tradition, by educational institutions, by the legal system,¹ within the family, and, sadly, even by religion in many cases.² As a result, women are often at a disadvantage in terms of education,³ job opportunities, and economically.

Added to this, there are sufficient numbers of men who want to place women into sexual slavery. This takes the form of rape,^{4,5} incest, involuntary marriages,⁶ selling daughters into prostitution, and a variety of other forms of sexual slavery.^{7,8} In times of war, women are freely raped. In this regard, at best, women are viewed as the spoils of war. At worst, women are the means by which one group of men humiliate another. All of this is dehumanizing to women.

That we should have to enact a *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* is a sad commentary on our world. If we are ever going to have healthy societies, we must give to women the dignity God gave them, and help to remove the shackles that they feel. We men are a large part of the problem. It is we men as a group that make women feel second-rate. Therefore, we men must take the initiative to change the way we view women and treat them. There are several issues we must deal with.

First, what is men's view of women? Women are viewed by men as beings who have something that men want—generally, affection. At the same time, men are afraid that women will not voluntarily give this precious gift and they, therefore, attempt to deprive women of their right to voluntarily give this gift—or to withhold it. The irony is that it is the tenderness of women that adds to our lives, and yet it is their tenderness that we abuse in insisting on our own way. Moreover, we men have too often attempted to get our way with women by manipulation, deceit and, regrettably, even physical force. The justifiable resentment on the part of women has led to a gender war. This war between the genders is difficult to break down in the warmest of male-female relationships. As a result, both men and women have scars that are passed down from generation to generation.

Men blind themselves to the fact that women have many strengths. We men fail to see the many beautiful characteristics that are unique to women. We fail to listen to the cry of their hearts.⁹ Instead, we are preoccupied with winning the gender war. Let me ask you two questions: Can women reach their full potential in a male-dominated world? NO! This is obvious. However, consider the second question: Can men reach their full potential in a male-dominated world? NO! Men who insist on dominating women, thereby preventing women from reaching their full potential, hurt their own selves. As a result, men live empty lives. Women experience a second-rate existence. How sad! Men live empty lives and women experience a second-rate existence. Is this not blindness?

The second issue is: What is God's view of women? God created women to be different from men, with charac-

teristics that make women unique and that enrich all of our lives—male and female alike. The characteristics that He built into women, including those under the category of nurturing, i.e., tenderness and sensitivity to human needs, are tremendous strengths when properly understood. As a result, women possess a wisdom that men do not have.

We learn the most about God's view of women through Jesus' interaction with women. His actions have such great impact because He is God who came in human form. Thus, through the life of Jesus, we can see God's perspective in action. We do not have to guess how the God of the universe wants women to be treated, because we have seen Him do it. Jesus gave women dignity and worth. He treated women with gentleness, taking into account their nature. The very God of the universe did not look down on women. He did not take advantage of their sexuality as men often try to do. He did not take advantage of their nurturing nature as men continually try to do.

We gain great insight into God's view of women from Jesus' first appearance to His followers after His resurrection from death to life. Earlier that very morning, Mary came to the tomb out of devotion to her Lord. When she discovered His body missing from the tomb, she told Peter and John, chief among the apostles. They came to the tomb, studied the situation and left. It was only after they left that Jesus appeared to Mary.¹⁰ Jesus refused to reveal Himself to the chief among His apostles, but rather to this woman. This was a deliberate, calculated act on the part of the God of the universe. Not only are woman just as important to Him as men, but in some cases He chooses women instead of men. This is to be expected. Often, when God wishes to reveal Himself to a person or to reveal a message for a group of people, He does it through a woman. He uses women as the bridge between Himself and humanity just as often as men.

God, in His sovereignty, distributes spiritual gifts to those whom He indwells through their submitting their lives to Him. These spiritual gifts involve supernatural ability that no human could exercise in his or her own strength. These gifts are distributed regardless of gender, based only upon the tender heart of the recipient and the sovereignty of God.¹¹ In His kingdom, women are highly lifted up.

God has both male and female characteristics. As such, no individual from either gender can fully comprehend the revealed mind of God. We men need the participation of women to understand the world God created. Women's insights and judgments need to be included in every decision. This became obvious to me a number of years ago when the Administrator of UNDP organized an afternoon workshop in the ECOSOC Chamber. He selected 6 or 7 experts on development to speak for 5 minutes each. When I came home that evening, I told my wife Elaine that the best speaker was a woman. She had the best ideas and the best sensitivity to the problems of the developing world. And why not? Into whom has God built a nurturing nature? Consequently, I am convinced that no decision that affects others should be made by males alone.

God has told us through His servant:

*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*¹²

Does this mean that when we are all in Christ that there are no differences between women and men? Thank goodness, "No!" It means that neither one, with all the wonderful differences, is more important than the other.

The third issue is: What is God's view of the relationship between men and women? From God's view, there are several types of relationship between men and women. The central one is marriage. God has made it clear that the natural state for a woman or a man is to be in a marriage relationship. God describes, in part, the marriage relationship this way: "Those whom God has yoked together let no man pull apart."¹³ God used the analogy of two oxen working in a yoke together. Marriage is a yoking. The natural state is for a man and a woman to be yoked together. The yoking involves two and only two people, and this yoking is permanent. A married couple consists of one man and one woman who are yoked together for a lifetime.

When two oxen are yoked together, which one is the more important? Neither! Relatively speaking, how much may be accomplished by a pair of oxen? More than the sum of their individual abilities. Their value is based upon how much may be accomplished together, not individually. Their value as individuals is their ability to work together in the

yoke. This is also true for a woman and a man who are yoked together in marriage.

This perspective affects my attitudes toward my wife. If I see myself in the yoke together with my wife, I will do everything I can to help her become as strong as she can. I will serve her in doing this. I will do everything I can to protect her. I will encourage her. I will help her overcome the damage to her self-worth inflicted multiple times per day by a society that does not give her the honour she deserves, and that degrades and dehumanizes her.

If marriage is properly understood, every other male-female relationship comes into focus. Given that God's plan is for each man to be yoked for a lifetime to one woman, the possibility of a sexual relationship with another woman is out. Therefore, in my interaction with every woman other than my wife, I must be respectful, giving her the dignity she deserves as a fellow human being, in part without regard to her gender, but in part being sensitive to her nature as a woman.

Clearly, there is a disparity between God's view of women and man's view of women. The lower one's view of God, the lower that person's view of women. Where Jesus has not adequately impacted a society, women are often the possession of men to do with as they please.^{14,15,16}

The important question is: How can we lift women to God's view? How can we make men's view of women the same as God's view? First, men must see women as God sees women. This means that we men must have God's mind. God taught us through the Apostle Paul:

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.¹⁷

We men must let Jesus live His life through us. We men cannot afford to continue to function in our selfish ways. We men must be able to treat women as God treats them. We need wisdom and power—wisdom to know the right way to treat women, and the power to actually do this. We men need God's power in our lives to overcome our selfish nature that hurts the women in our lives. Whenever I interact with a woman, I must continually ask: "How would Jesus treat this lady if He were interacting with her instead of me?" For example, with regard to my wife, God has told me through His Word:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy...Each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself.¹⁸

I want to love my wife in this way. And I am asking God to give me the power to overcome my own selfishness to be able to do this. I need God to give me the capacity to truly care about the women with whom I interact, always concerned for their best.

One female cadet who resigned from a military training academy after months of dehumanizing harassment from males said: "Those who did not [treat me as an equal] should take a long look at how they view their girlfriends, wives, mothers, sisters and daughters."¹⁹

Men, let us hear the hearts of the women in our lives and let God change us into the men that these women need!

If we men are honest with ourselves over the way we have treated the women in our lives, we must repent.²⁰ We men need to apologize to the women in our lives for the way we have hurt them. About one year ago, I began to realize the pain I had inflicted upon Elaine during the first 32 years of our married life as I selfishly pursued my own goals, largely ignoring her dreams and aspirations for her life. This realization caused me much agony. It caused me to weep. It caused me to ask for God's help in changing to become the yokemate that Elaine needs and deserves.

For those women here who have had the experiences I have been speaking about: I ask you to accept my apology on behalf of the men in your life who have hurt you. I ask you to forgive us for the way we men have taken away your dignity. I ask you to forgive us men for treating you in such a way that you are not thankful to be a woman. I ask you to forgive us men for treating you in such a way that you do not feel treasured and safe within our societies. You don't deserve what we men have done to you. We want to help you to heal from the damage we have inflicted upon you. Would you forgive us?

In order for women to be set free to reach the full potential for which God created them, men are not the only ones who must see women as God sees them. Women must also see themselves as God sees them. There is far more to women than their nurturing nature. However, let us consider the strength of this characteristic. One commentator shared this profound perspective: “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.”²¹ One of the most influential people in all of history is Suzanna Wesley. She was, in my mind, the person most responsible for preventing England from experiencing the same bloodshed as neighbouring France in the eighteenth century. She did this by training her two sons, John and Charles, who spearheaded the spiritual awakening that served as the foundation for the social, economic and political reforms.²² It was her nurturing of her sons that she used to change England.

Women must see their nurturing nature as God sees it rather than viewing it as the reason that men often step on them. Unless women are able to accept themselves as the special creations of God that they are, women will reject this beautiful aspect of their personalities.

Then, in order to be truly set free, we need healing from the scars resulting from the gender war. Women need healing from the scars inflicted by various men over the course of their lives. For many of us men, there must be emotional healing from scars from childhood or from earlier failed marriages. We all need to be healed from these scars in order to be able to participate fully in healthy relationships now.

My own precious wife, Elaine, was abused sadistically from the time she was 5 years old by a man who had never been healed of his scars resulting from the gender war. The abuse to my wife was so traumatic that she was not able to face it until the past few years. During the last year, I have seen God begin a dramatic healing from these scars, a healing that no human being could accomplish. God has told us: “I am the Lord who heals you.”²³ Not only does this mean spiritually and physically, but it also means emotionally. I have seen God perform a miracle in Elaine that has begun to take away the trauma from those painful memories and has made it possible for her to feel more secure in our relationship. Because it is deeply personal, I will leave the details of this healing for Elaine to explain to you in person. I am sure some of you will be able to identify with Elaine’s experience.

In summary, how can we men be changed? And, how can women be changed and, in turn, change others? The answer is the same for both. By God alone. We must both—men and women—see women through God’s eyes. We both must allow God to change our attitudes toward women. And then we must both allow God to heal us. Thus, I am convinced that women will never be able to reach their full potential—to fully participate and contribute—unless we men walk in dependence upon God in accepting women as the special creation of God that they are and give them the dignity and respect they deserve; and unless women walk in dependence upon God and can truly thank Him for the beautiful uniquenesses that He has poured into them. The result is healing—personally, and of our relationships.

How can you and I have this intimate relationship with God where, men and women alike, we can see women as God sees them and where we can experience the healing that will allow us to participate in healthy relationships? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate friendship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this friendship with God. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God’s perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

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Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”²⁶ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”²⁷ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*²⁸

*God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!*²⁹

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The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate friendship with God, and therefore to truly care about others, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate friendship with God that lasts forever and helps each of us to care about each other and to be healed of the scars inflicted by the gender war? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up — near Niagara Falls. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close friendship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to walk intimately with God. God’s solution for the suffering and pain caused by male selfishness applies to everyone. No one — neither you nor I — can truly care about our wife or husband without the life of Jesus living through us. Therefore, if you are serious about improving the plight of women, and at the same time healing the scars of the gender war, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

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As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As sufficient numbers within our societies drink, our societies will be made up of individuals who have a healthy love and appreciation of themselves, and who can love others in the same way, regardless of gender.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to lift the status of women. The beautiful result is that our relationship with God is the basis for our relationships between men and women. And our marriage relationship is a picture of our relationship with God. Both relationships reinforce each other.

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The Kingdom of Implodia: An Allegory

In the Kingdom of Implodia, there are two groups of children — one who by virtue of birth are destined to become princes, the other servants. From birth, the two groups of children are treated differently. Within the princely class is instilled the idea that they will be the rulers of the kingdom, within the other that they will be servants responding to the commands and demands of the princes. This is instilled by every means — not only through education, but also through tradition. The culture itself supports this very idea. There are even elements within the legal structure that enforce this division. The economic structure of the kingdom enforces this division. The princes control the economy of the kingdom so that a member of the servant class cannot earn a living without doing so in dependence upon the princes. The religious leaders, which are almost always of the princely class, strengthen this stratification through teaching that God created two classes — rulers and servants, and that God has ordained the princes to rule over the servant class. This stratification is enforced physically as needed. Not only are the princes in many cases physically stronger than the servants, but they have various means of physical domination. In some corners of the kingdom, unprovoked beatings are inflicted for no apparent reason other than to maintain domination.

The servant class is almost completely dependent upon the princely class for its very existence. Not only is there an economic bondage, but there is an emotional dependence. The servant class is so much dependent upon approval from the princely class that they often dress just to please the princely class. They dress in ways that are unnatural, uncomfortable, and are personally degrading, detrimental to whatever dignity they have left. The servants often feel as if they are nothing more than the personal property of the princely class. The net effect of the system is to devalue and dehumanize the servants, to take away their dignity so that they cannot see themselves reaching the same potential as the ruling class. Thus, if a member of the servant class should succeed in breaking free of some of the constraints, that individual is not really free, in his mind or in the minds of the princely class, to be able to reach the same level as members of the princely class.

Members of the princely class, in their dealings with the servant class, have a double standard. The princes expect the servants to keep their commitments to them, whereas the princes feel less obligation to keep their commitments to the servants.

Whenever those from the princely class and the servant class are given the same aptitude tests, the servants always do as well as the princely class, although the tests are largely designed by princes and contain a bias toward the princely educational and cultural training. Many objective members of the princely class confide that the servants display a superior practical wisdom to the princes and could do a better job of ruling the Kingdom. However, the princes cling to their positions and perks so tenaciously that the servants have never been given a chance.

The servants cannot enjoy the things that seem to make the princes happy. The servants know in their hearts they deserve to enjoy the same benefits as the princes. The servants know in their hearts that they are as good as the princes. However, they have no way to achieve equality, because the princes do not want to share with them, but rather to dictate and control. Thus, there are underlying feelings of hostility in the hearts of the servants toward the princes. Whenever the servants bring their grievances to the princes, the princes pretend to listen sympathetically, giving hope

to the servants that there will an improvement in their condition. They say sweet words like: “We need each other. You are just as important to the Kingdom of Implodia as we are.” However, the princes avoid making any significant changes. They only try to placate the servants, giving up as little as is necessary to avoid open revolt, and trying to keep all the benefits for themselves alone. Consequently, there is a continual state of tension between the two classes. The servants are filled with strong resentment, sometimes anger and hatred. Both classes distrust each other. Both classes cooperate with each other as little as they can. This battle has existed since the beginning of the kingdom. As a result, the quality of life for all citizens of Implodia is steadily declining. Because of this silent war, in the history of the kingdom, no Implodian has ever been truly happy, whether prince or servant.

Relationships Essential for Maximizing the Effectiveness of the Head of Government and His Cabinet

17 July 1997

I am convinced that leadership of nations cannot be exerted by any human being alone. The affairs of nations are far too complex. I am convinced they are beyond the ability of the unaided human being. Those who commit themselves to serve in the leadership of nations accept a humanly impossible task and, with it, the potential for significant stress. I am convinced that effective leadership can only be exerted as a team. I am convinced that a leader's effectiveness is dependent upon the strength of five relationships.

The first of these relationships is with our **spouse**. I am convinced that the primary relationship for any man or woman is his or her spouse,¹ and that every other human relationship flows out of the strength of this one. This is certainly true for the leader.² God describes the marriage relationship this way: "Those whom God has yoked together let no man pull apart."³ God uses the analogy of two oxen working together in a yoke. God's perspective is that marriage is the yoking of two individuals together for a lifetime. The goal of the yoking is to accomplish more as a team than could be expected by two individuals working separately. As such, what is accomplished as a team is more important than what is accomplished individually. As two oxen in a yoke, the two spouses share the load, taking the excess load off of each other. Although one member of the yoked team formally holds the office, they both carry the load together.

What do two people do for each other in marriage? In our marriage partner, we have the security of unconditional love. We have the confidence that our spouse is the closest and most faithful friend we have. We have the confidence that our spouse cares about us deeply and that she acts toward me with my well-being in mind. In a healthy marriage, each one believes in the other. They encourage each other to function at their best.

The leader needs someone he or she can trust, someone who cares about you, someone who will tell you the truth even if it hurts, someone who is more concerned about you than what they can gain from your remaining in office. It is a principle that iron sharpens iron.⁴ This applies, in my mind, first and foremost to the marriage relationship. My spouse may be the only one who tells me the truth when it is painful and when I need to hear it. Our spouse helps us to remember that we are still a mortal human being.

Our spouse provides us with a reliable, faithful friend. My wife stabilizes my life. These are exactly the things that the leader needs in the midst of the political storm. Politics is fickle and the life of the politician is one without security. My wife provides security in the political storm. The strength of the marriage relationship allows the leader to devote his most creative energy to serving the nation. Marriage is the yoking of two individuals to strengthen both.

Furthermore, leadership involves comprehending God's plan for a nation. And yet, the totality of God includes both male and female traits. Thus, to fully comprehend God's mind and His plans, they must be viewed from both male and female perspectives. No male or female alone can perfectly understand the complete scope of God's mind on an issue. Thus, I am convinced that no decision that affects others should be made by a male alone or a female alone. The

healthy marriage relationship provides the pattern for other constructive male-female cooperation that is necessary in office. At the same time, the secure marriage provides the solid foundation upon which those other healthy male-female cooperative relationships can be safely built.⁵

Not only is the marriage relationship the most important human relationship that we will ever be a part of, but it is a model for all other relationships. There are three God-ordained institutions: marriage and family; religious institution; government. God describes the parallel between two of these institutions this way:

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.⁶

God requires effectiveness in the marriage relationship—the first God-ordained institution—as the basis for effective leadership in the second God-ordained institution. And I am convinced that this requirement also holds for effective leadership in the third God-ordained institution—government. I am convinced that no leader can ignore this relationship—his or her marriage—and expect the other relationships to prosper. Effective leadership stems from spouse and family selflessly giving the leader to the people to serve them.

This truth carries over to the second essential relationship in the life of the leader—our **children**. At the end of our lives, the only things that will matter will be the relationships we have with our family—our children as well as our spouse. Too many people who pour themselves out for big goals during their lifetime die lonely people. We need the love and support that only the family can give during times of weakness. During times of our personal weakness, we will discover that most of our relationships were conditional—based on what they could gain by being associated with us. Our relationships with our family are unconditional. They are the most forgiving and the most satisfying we can have.

Furthermore, leadership in future generations often comes out of leadership families. Examples are numerous. During recent history, we have the Nehru family. Investing in our children is a good strategic investment in the future of our nation. If I want to see good leadership for my nation in the next generation, the best investment I can make is pouring my life into my children.

The third fundamental relationship in the life of the leader is with the **cabinet**. The cabinet is the team charged with assisting the Head of Government in providing leadership for the policies and programmes of the government. The cabinet must be selected with this in mind, and the cabinet must be viewed this way by the Head of Government.

Frequently, the cabinet is chosen not with the goal of selecting the best person available for the job, nor for qualities of trust, integrity, for ability to work together, but rather for political expediency. The result is that the effectiveness of a cabinet is often hampered by infighting, by ego, by individual policy goals so that the leadership does not operate as a team. However, I am convinced that the cabinet must be selected not only for technical ability, but for capacity to work together as a team and to serve the best interests of the nation. And then the Head of Government must continually work at developing these attitudes.

The fourth crucial relationship in the life of the leader is with the **opposition**. A difference of opinion does not mean an adversarial relationship. We learn much more from our critics than from our supporters and allies. A healthy democracy requires dialogue with the broadest segments of a society. In fact, the leader is charged by God with unifying the nation and moving the whole ship ahead, not just the majority component. A true understanding of democracy does not require that we be adversaries with those of differing views, especially politically. The Head of Government has been given the mandate to give direction to the government, not to strangle all others or to stifle those with differing perspectives. The Head of Government must see the opposition precisely as that: those who see the problem and/or the solution in a different way. It is sad that we could make such a person into a personal enemy and, from

there, into an enemy of the State.

Recently, I was heartened to see Nelson Mandela apply this principle. When he had to be out of his country, he appointed his rival Mangosuthu Buthelezi as Acting President.⁷ I am convinced that too much energy is wasted in the polarizing of the political camps. After all, it is not our party that is so important; it is our nation. And I am convinced that no nation can achieve the quality of life God intends for it until this principle is applied.

A commitment to the important relationships with cabinet and opposition requires that I recognize that I do not have all knowledge. This is humbling but it is realistic.

I have described four ideal relationships. Each relationship involves imperfect human beings entering into that relationship, bringing their imperfections into it. By definition, no relationship can be ideal. Each one of these relationships presents a test to us. Relationships show us just how fragile we are as human beings. Men and women are judged by society to be leaders based upon their perceived ability to solve problems. Leaders are expected to manage every problem they face. What looks like a strength from that point of view becomes a weakness in building relationships, because, in sharp contrast, relationship building requires making ourselves vulnerable—taking risks, willing to be hurt. Relationships require two independent agents entering a relationship of their own free will. It means allowing for variables that we cannot control. This is hard for heads of nations who tend to try to bring everything under control.

The automobile provides an analogy to a relationship. In both cases, there is continual wear and tear that requires constant attention, repair, adjustment, and fine tuning. Likewise, relationships need continual forgiving. Relationships need continual healing. Often relationships have experienced so much wear and tear that they need major restoration, including restoration in confidence in the other person. This is where relationships often fall apart. Sometimes, those who were close become estranged—in marriage, in parent-child relationships, in cabinet relationships, and in relationships with those of the opposition.

It is precisely at this point that the fifth relationship is essential—with **God**. I would go so far as to say that it is only because of this relationship that the other four relationships can work optimally. It is this relationship that makes all other relationships possible. Because relationships are at risk in the life of the Head of Government more than with any other individual, our relationship with God is more crucial in the life of the Head of Government than for perhaps any other individual.

God is our source of life, our source of peace, our guide through the difficulties of decision-making. God describes Himself as “a friend that sticks closer than a brother.”⁸ He describes Himself as the source of life in the deepest sense. Jesus told us: “I came that you might have life, and might have it abundantly.”⁹ He is the one who provides the qualities that are necessary in the life of the leader more than anyone else in society. God has described the qualities that only He can provide with these words: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”¹⁰ He is our haven in the storm. God has told us:

*“No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me,” declares the Lord.*¹¹

He is our essential guide. He has created each nation with a purpose and a plan, and He reveals His mind to those who walk with Him and are committed to His purposes. God tells us: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”¹² This relationship is especially important in the life of the leader. I have discussed this relationship elsewhere¹³ and would refer you there for a deeper consideration of this all-important relationship. It is because of the strength and security of this relationship that we can take risks and make ourselves vulnerable in other relationships.

God is our healer. He heals us physically. He heals us emotionally. He heals us spiritually. And He heals the relationships that we are a part of. It is because of what God did in Elaine’s life that I am convinced God can heal anything. Eleven years ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to

other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her "You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right." She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, that had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can give people new hearts and He can heal relationships.

I have described the ideal relationship between a husband and wife—the marriage relationship as God intended it. I am not condemning anyone who is not a part of such a marriage relationship. In fact, I am convinced it is a miracle that any marriage can survive. In my case, if it were not for my relationship with God, I am sure my marriage would have failed a long time ago. Even with the relationships that Elaine and I each have with God, He has healed our marriage relationship from scars that we carried into it and that blocked the heart-to-heart relationship we dreamed of. God heals marriage relationships. For many of us, this is our only hope. We all have scars from damaged relationships from the past that make healthy relationships today difficult. God is the only one who can heal those scars, allowing us to enter into healthy relationships now or to re-enter relationships. For those of us who have been especially scarred, God gives us the hope to participate in healthy relationships again.

God's healing of marriage relationships is a beautiful model for His healing of all other human relationships. For example, the Head of Government can never select for his cabinet a perfectly harmonious team made up of cooperative individuals. That would be inconsistent with the strong personalities that must make up the leadership team. We need God's help in molding a strong cabinet team. More than a decade ago, there was an African nation without the strong leadership it had experienced for many decades. Rivalries developed within the cabinet, each with his own backing, and the country seemed destined for bloodshed. In the midst of this, followers of Jesus came into the country. In response to their teaching, God changed hearts, and spiritual rejuvenation occurred throughout the country. During the course of their stay, these spiritual leaders met with the cabinet. There were changed hearts and spiritual renewal within the cabinet as well. A few days later, one powerful cabinet minister who had the loyalty of the military came to the Prime Minister to apologize for his intentions and to express a desire to cooperate. As a result of changed hearts among the leadership, bloodshed was averted and the nation was saved. The change was so dramatic that when I shared this example, using similarly vague wording, with an audience that included a later Prime Minister of this nation, he came to me afterward and proudly said "That was my country you were speaking about!"

God has given us this important principle for teamwork:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity...And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.¹⁴

Along with this principle, God gives us the power to carry it out. As we apply His healing power, we can experience this kind of teamwork. It can come no other way.

You may scoff when I suggest that those in the opposition should be among our best friends and most cherished advisers. Here again, it is our walk with God that strengthens this essential relationship. God has told us: "As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."¹⁵ Jesus commanded us: "Love your enemies."¹⁶ This is an apparent contradiction, because if you love a person, he will not be your enemy. Rather, I would render this command: "Love the one who would make himself your enemy" or "Love the one who would expect to be your enemy." When God told us to love those who are different, He told us how with these words from the mouth of Jesus:

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."*¹⁷

We can only have a meaningful relationship with those who are different when we love ourselves the way God does, and we can only do this when we have an intimate relationship with God first. Here again, the key to a relationship with those in the opposition is our relationship with God. God has told us: "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him."¹⁸

The key to relationships is to recognize that we need other people in our lives. Not long ago, someone asked me this question: What was Jesus' priority — success or relationships? The answer is clear to anyone who has done even a little reading in the Four Gospels — it is relationships. Everything else is secondary. We need to be yoked with other people — our spouse, our children, the cabinet, the opposition. And in order to be properly yoked with other people, we need to be properly yoked with God. Jesus told us:

*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*¹⁹

Jesus is calling us to get into the yoke first with Him, and then every other yoke will be easier.

How can you and I have the intimate relationship with God that serves as the foundation for all other relationships? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy — without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection — our unholiness — blocks this relationship with God. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

*Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*²⁰

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, "a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."²¹

Thus, Jesus has told us "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."²² God has told us "There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."²³ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now

He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.²⁴

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!²⁵

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.²⁶

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result healthy relationships with others, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God that lasts forever and helps each of us to care about each other and to be healed of the scars inflicted by conflicts in relationships? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd, “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

After we see God heal this relationship, then we can believe Him to heal any relationship. As clever as we think we are, God is the only who can heal our human relationships. It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity for restored relationships, starting with God. No one—neither you nor I—can have our relationships restored without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kinds of relationships necessary for effective leadership in your nation, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”²⁷

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, the leadership of our nations will be made up of individuals who are able to develop healthy relationships with others, and to work as a team for the best for our nation.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to

*give me a close relationship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You.
Amen.*

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to increase our impact upon our nations. The beautiful result is that our relationship with God is the basis for our relationships with others. At the same time, our human relationships become a mirror of our relationship with God.

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Improving the Quality of Life for Our People

1 October 1993

One of the most urgent needs facing us today is improving the quality of life for our people. With greater awareness of how people in other societies live and with the global push toward greater democracy, it is imperative that we satisfy the need for improved quality of life for our people. The electoral process itself requires satisfying the populace. The need to focus on quality of life stems from the flawed strategy for development of the past three decades. Typically, our strategy has been to lift the level of the national economy, with the assumption there would be a trickle down to the individual. Our failure has been obvious to everyone. Even in nations where G.D.P. per capita has increased, for the poorest segment of society, the per capita income has frequently decreased and, with it, the quality of life. Furthermore, where per capita income has increased, there is often little correlation with personal satisfaction, i.e., quality of life. As a stark example, the nations with the highest Human Development Index — the U.N.'s attempt to measure quality of life — have among the highest suicide rates in the world.¹ Why? Economic prosperity, education and health care do not equate with quality of life. What is the quality of life mankind is yearning for?

Ultimately, our goals for development for our people must centre around quality of life. My argument is that the only effective development focuses upon the individual and spreads secondarily to society. My proposal involves changing the individual himself as the first step, and then allowing the changed individual to improve society.

I want to focus on two goals: quality of life; and one that I will demonstrate is closely linked with it — replacing human self-centredness by a concern for others. I will demonstrate there is one change that can achieve both of these objectives. I will bring the spiritual dimension into my proposal. In doing so, I have two perspectives: there is one God for all mankind; and secondly, Jesus is not for one religion or a restricted region of the world, but for all people.

I am convinced that our ability to satisfy our people is dependent upon our definition of quality of life. I am convinced that the quality of life we must seek for every person, and that must be the goal for effective development, is the quality of life to which Jesus referred when He said: “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”² I am convinced that Jesus spoke of a quality of life that is the aspiration of every individual. We must recognize that quality of life is so important to God that He came to earth in human form to bring it to us.

When Jesus said, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly,” His clear statement is that there is a difference between existence and life — between survival and life. Elsewhere, God referred to “the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.”³ He is telling us that what we naturally receive as we set foot on this earth is empty. It is the barest of existence. This empty way of life will satisfy neither king nor peasant. It is not what God ultimately intends for us. On one occasion, Jesus said: “You have no life in yourselves.”⁴ By ourselves, we do not have the life God intends for us. And it has nothing to do with income, education or health care.

Jesus used the Greek word for life, *zoe* (pronounced zō ē). *Zoe* means more than physical life. It means to be alive not only physically, but also, and especially, spiritually. It means the fullest possible life. Furthermore, this *zoe* is not interrupted by the death of this body. Therefore, *zoe* is eternal in duration.

Thus, when Jesus said, “you have no life in yourselves,” He meant that by ourselves, we do not have *zoe* — we do

not have the life God intended us to have.

Jesus shed more light on this *zoe* when He told one leader:

*I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again—born anew from above...I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at My saying “You must be born again—born anew from above.”*⁵

Jesus is telling us that we have two natures—our physical nature, and our spiritual nature. Each of these must be brought alive in kind. We receive physical life from our parents at what we commonly call *birth*. Physical life gives rise to physical life. Likewise, spiritual life gives rise to spiritual life. However, only the Spirit of God can give us spiritual life—make our spirit alive. We gain *zoe* when our spiritual nature comes alive through a second birth process, with God doing it. It can only happen as we go to God, asking Him to make our spirit alive.

The person with his physical nature alive, but not his spiritual nature, is not fully alive. He is simply existing. He has the empty way of life. He is missing the full purpose for which God created him.

There are several facets to *zoe* that add to quality of life. One is the assurance of eternal life. Jesus said: “Whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”⁶ The value of knowing that one has a relationship with God which can never be broken, even by death, cannot be overestimated. This individual can cope with daily life with an eternal perspective.

Furthermore, the individual who is spiritually alive has God living within him. Jesus clarified this:

*Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him...and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*⁷

Yes, the person with *zoe* literally has God living within him! Can there be any wonder that *zoe* is so special to all who possess it?!

There are several direct benefits of God’s indwelling presence within the life of the person with *zoe*. God has told us: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”⁸ The person who is alive spiritually has love. He has the capacity to love himself and others with God’s kind of love, rather than our selfish, human kind of love. It means to care for others with their best interests in mind.

The spiritually alive person has joy. I am convinced that this is the only true joy or happiness. Anything else is a weak shadow of the joy and happiness that accompanies *zoe*.

The person who is spiritually alive has peace. The peace that he has is a contentment knowing that God has everything related to his life under control. The individual with spiritual life is a happy, contented person, not based on external circumstances. However, his contentment is not in the sense of an opiate as Marx misunderstood. His contentment is based upon his knowledge of the character of God as being loving and powerful. For example, God has told us: “We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God.”⁹

The most valuable thing I have ever received is the *zoe* I have been talking about. I lived the first two decades of my life without *zoe*. When I compare the quality of my life during those years without *zoe* and now with *zoe* for the past three decades, there is no comparison. I would not trade the quality of life I have through *zoe* for anything.

Further, as the individual with spiritual life walks with God and understands His purposes, his convictions about what needs to be done are strong and he works energetically to improve the world around him. He is also contented because he has the power of almighty God at his disposal for changing his world. God inspired the apostle Paul to say “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”¹⁰ Jesus told His followers and tells us today: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”¹¹ This unbelievable resource accompanies *zoe*.

Contentment is just one of the crucial ways in which giving *zoe* to an individual as the first step in development

radically increases the effectiveness of development with quality of life as its objective. The one who has this life has a measure of contentment. The one who does not have this life is a frustrated individual. I am convinced that development which ignores this truth will fail. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn understood the importance of spiritual life in development when he said, “We have placed too much hope in political and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life”¹²—our *zoe*.

Looking at the issue from a strictly pragmatic point of view, if you were able to provide a person with education, health care, food, clean water, and a measure of economic prosperity, but not with *zoe*, he would not be contented, and that discontent would cause him to undo much of the good created around him by his society. On the other hand, if he has *zoe*, even before his society is able to provide him with the economic, health, and educational benefits, he will be contented and he will both work toward those improvements and he will cooperate with the efforts of his society to bring about those improvements. Let us face the truth: We have not achieved as much with our development efforts as we expected. And I am convinced this is because we have ignored that which the human heart desires most—*zoe*.

Interestingly, quality of life itself leads to better material life on this earth. Thus, quality of life plays a two-pronged role in effective development: 1) quality of life is itself the most important goal in development; 2) quality of life is the most important facilitator of development. My thesis is that the impact of quality of life on development is greater than the impact of development on quality of life.

Some of you will ask, “But what about separation of Church and State?” The real issue is not separation of Church and State, but rather it is the attempt to separate a people from their God, who has their destiny in His hands. The worst harm government can do is to make a people dependent upon itself rather than God. Part of the problem is due to a lack of understanding of government’s proper role in a society. Development is not the responsibility of government but rather it is to provide the infrastructure, in the broadest sense, where development can take place and where each person can reach his full potential. Government, especially the leadership, must be careful not to seek saviour status among the people, depriving them of what they can do for themselves. Successful development depends not so much on what government does for a person but rather upon what society can help the person achieve for himself.

Thus, the individual with *zoe* is satisfied in a way that the non-believer can never be and is a directed individual actively involved in the building of his society.

There is a second way that giving individuals *zoe* facilitates development of society and leads to quality of life—changed individuals. Dag Hammarskjöld correctly diagnosed the need for changed individuals to build the world we desire when he said: “I see no hope for a permanent world peace. We have tried hard and failed miserably. Unless there is a spiritual awakening on a worldwide scale, civilization is doomed.”¹³ He concluded that man is selfish, caring primarily for himself to the detriment of the community. Hammarskjöld concluded that the needed change in man must have at its root a spiritual change, and that this must spread one by one throughout our societies.

What is this change that Hammarskjöld was speaking of? I am convinced that the only agent capable of changing selfish human nature is Jesus. God summarized this change when He told us, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”¹⁴ A second result of *zoe* is that God is able to change us from the inside.

To illustrate this truth, I would like to trace two American families back to the eighteenth century. Max Jukes was an atheist who married a godless woman. Out of 650 descendants who were traced, 310 died as paupers; 150 became criminals—7 of them murderers; 100 were known to be drunkards; and more than half of the women were prostitutes. The descendants of Max Jukes cost the United States government more than \$1.25 million in nineteenth-century dollars.

Jonathan Edwards was a contemporary of Max Jukes. He was a committed follower of Jesus Christ who gave God first place in his life. He married a young lady who loved God. Out of 1,394 descendants who were traced, 295 graduated from university, of whom 13 became university presidents; 65 became professors; 30 were judges; 100 were lawyers—one the dean of an outstanding law school; 56 practiced as physicians—one the dean of a medical school; 75 became officers in the military; 100 were well-known preachers. Another 80 held some form of public office, of whom three were mayors of large cities; three were elected as United States Senators; three as state governors; and others were sent as ambassadors. One was the Comptroller of the U.S. Treasury, and another was Vice President of the United States.

Not one of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards cost the U.S. government a dollar.¹⁵ What was the difference? I submit to you that it is the person of Jesus Christ. It is the Jesus about whom God said, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”¹⁶ I cannot be sure that each of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards’ 1,394 descendants exhibited the same faith as they did. However, clearly many did, and as a result, God’s hand of blessing was upon that family.

What I am calling a changed life is more correctly an exchanged life — with Jesus now living my life for me. The apostle Paul described the exchanged life when he said:

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*¹⁷

As we allow Jesus to put our selfish motivations to death, He is able to live His life through us. The change in my life occurs as I allow Jesus to live it for me. Let me demonstrate to you that God really does exert the kind of power in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries necessary to change lives and societies. Seven years ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of cancer at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Further, the cancer had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Was this to be the end for my beloved wife? We did not believe it was God’s intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her, “You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right.” She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her trunk for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, that had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. God clearly performed a miracle! I am convinced that God’s supernatural hand can transform lives and fulfill His plan.

Let us consider the lives of two individuals who would be considered useless to society. One, a criminal from Colombia, was sentenced to 30 years in a foreign prison that has the highest suicide rate in Latin America. That sentence signalled the end for him. However, while in prison, his life was transformed by a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Jesus changed his life. This changed his relationships with the other prisoners and with the prison officials. Miraculously, because of the transformation of his life, a decision was made to release him.

A second individual was a university student whose parents were Venezuelan and British. He was studying in the United Kingdom, but he could best be described as an angry, young man. He was so rebellious that he was of little use to society or to his family. He also experienced the same inner transformation from Jesus. As a result, he felt a burden to return to Venezuela to help in a practical way.

Outside the city of Cali, Colombia, in the clay foothills were pirate villages inhabited by people fleeing the countryside to escape civil war. The inhabitants of the pirate villages would go down into the cities to rob or to work for a few days. Then, they would return to consume their earnings on alcohol and other forms of dissipation. Conditions were very bad.

The university student stopped in Colombia on his way back to Venezuela. There he met the former criminal. Together, they moved into a pirate village with a desire to improve it, but with no budget. They explained to the inhabitants the personal relationship they each had with Jesus Christ. Many embraced Jesus, and their lives were gradually changed. The goals of the new believers changed. The men became responsible. They worked more regularly. They stopped wasting their money on drinking and other dissipation. Instead, they bought food, milk, shoes and clothing for their families. Together, these two men plus the new believers set up a school in their village. They worked to improve the health in the village. The changes in this pirate village were so dramatic that it attracted the attention of the media. Dramatic social change was brought about by no money.¹⁸ Let me repeat: Dramatic social change was brought about by no money.

What was the key? God transformed the lives of these two useless members of society and then, through them, He transformed the lives of others around them. Together, these individuals transformed their society — and with no money. Their changed lives led to improvement in quality of life for those around them.

Thus, I am convinced that we cannot achieve our dreams for our fellow man by simply changing the structures around man. I am convinced that we must change individuals first and then allow them to change society.

In summary, I am convinced that providing individuals with *zoe* achieves the two most important goals of development—it gives us quality of life, and it changes our selfish human nature so that we can care about and work for the good of the community, that in turn adds to quality of life.

The crucial question is: How does an individual gain *zoe* and with it have his life changed by Jesus? In order to understand this, we must correctly diagnose the root problem between man and God. The block to our friendship with God is ourselves. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. We are not morally perfect. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Think of the problem this way. To place a common field stone next to a 200-carat diamond would be unthinkable. They are incompatible. Even more so, our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this block caused by our unholiness be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us that Jesus “Is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.”¹⁹

*Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*²⁰

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”²¹

As a self-sufficient young scientist, I found this truth extremely difficult to accept. Someone helped me greatly by telling me about a small town that had only one judge. This judge had a teenage son who was arrested for disobeying the traffic laws. When the son was brought before the judge, this presented a dilemma for the judge. Wanting to be a just judge, when he heard the evidence, he knew he must declare his son was guilty. But being a loving father, he knew his son did not have the resources to pay the penalty that must be exacted. How did he resolve this dilemma? After declaring his son guilty and assessing the fine, the judge took off his robe, stood before the bench and paid his son's fine for him. This clarified for me what God did when He came as Jesus to pay the penalty for us so that we could then come into that relationship with God.

Thus, Jesus has told us, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”²² God has told us, “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”²³ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*²⁴

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness

*into us!*²⁵

Hammarskjöld described it this way: “Forgiveness is the answer to the child’s dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is again made clean.”²⁶ Jesus’ death accomplished forgiveness for us.

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. He is a universal figure, not just for certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

*Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.*²⁷

The repentance and forgiveness that allows God to turn individuals into building blocks for better societies is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

Our spiritual nature comes alive only as we come to God, asking Him to forgive our sins through the sacrifice Jesus made, and to make us alive spiritually. We must come to God, receive *zoe*, and allow Him to change us by His indwelling presence.

Those of you with whom I am sharing these ideas constitute one of the most motivated groups with regard to development. It is we who must take the lead in applying these ideas. It is we who must especially listen to the words of Jesus: “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’”²⁸ We must come to Jesus first, drink, and let His life spread through us to our societies. If these principles for achieving quality of life are going to work, they must start with you and me, and spread from us to our societies.

Let me speak to you as a friend. My concern for you is that expressed by a past President of the General Assembly:

*These are great days and what is being decided in them is absolutely historic. But all these things are going to pass, and with them life itself. What, then, is the life that does not pass; what, then, is life eternal? This is the first and last question. I believe that “this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent” (John 17:3)...Faith in Jesus Christ is the first and last meaning of our life. I do not care who or what you are; I put only one question to you: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?*²⁹

Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon was a signer of the U.N. Charter, primary drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and President of the Thirteenth General Assembly, but of even more significance to him was that each individual should experience *zoe* resulting from Jesus. This I also want for you.

Jesus invites us with these words: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in.”³⁰ Jesus invites us to allow Him into our lives. As we respond, He forgives us and, literally, the Spirit of God comes to live within us. He has revolutionized my life. I am convinced He will revolutionize your life. As we do this one by one, it will transform our societies into places where each individual can reach his or her full potential.

Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Let us not waste this opportunity to bring quality of life to the peoples of our world. I challenge you to join me in

embracing Jesus and humbling ourselves before Almighty God so that we, individually and as a global community, may experience the full blessings He has for us.

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God's Special Work in the Lives of the Head of Government and the Cabinet

16 April 1998

God has created each man, woman and child out of love. Because of that love, He works on behalf of each one whether they acknowledge Him or not.¹ As a further expression of that love, God does a special work in the life of the Head of Government because of the office in which he/she serves and because of the impact their decisions make on God's plan for a people.

God has told us that He is the Head of Government and that all officials, no matter how they gained office from a human perspective, are His servants. God has told us:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God...The authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.²

God referred to Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylon, as "My servant."³ Government officials report to God and serve at His pleasure. They are just as much His servants as are clergymen. As would be expected from our Master — our employer, He is concerned about our work. He is actively involved in the projects for which we have responsibility. He gives us tremendous latitude, considering the consequences of the decisions of Heads of Government upon His people. As necessary, He intervenes in our projects to make sure that they are properly performed. This is understandable when one sees that it is the individual in society, whom the Head of Government serves, as God's ultimate concern.

God intervenes in the affairs of nations in several ways. God tells us that He "guides the nations."⁴ God "foils the plans of the nations"⁵ that are opposed to His purposes. He obviously does this to keep us from self-destructing. God "chastens the nations"⁶ as we get badly off course. This is counterbalanced by the fact that as we respond to His correction, God supernaturally heals nations. God told one king:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.⁷

When we say that God intervenes in the affairs of nations, often we mean that God intervenes in the actions of the Head of Government.

God intervenes directly in the office of Head of Government. God has told us that He "sets up kings and deposes them."⁸ God intervenes directly to protect them and keep them in office. The same is true of ministers. One of the instructive examples is of God installing Saul as King, then turning His back on a disobedient Saul and assigning David to that office. From the time David was appointed to office until Saul finally relinquished the office was several years.

During those intervening years, Saul was preoccupied with killing his successor in an effort to maintain the office for himself. King David's testimony as Saul attempted to kill him is instructive:

I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills His purpose for me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me...God sends His love and His faithfulness.⁹

King David understood the character of God. He knew that God had appointed him to the office and that he was safe in God's hands. King David's knowledge of the truth that God "sets up kings and deposes them"¹⁰ also applied to his behaviour toward Saul. When David had the opportunity to kill Saul on two occasions, he said:

The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.¹¹

and:

Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the Lord lives, ...the Lord Himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed.¹²

David had the proper perspective on the office to which God had appointed him. It was this perspective that allowed the following to be said of David after he served in office:

David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.¹³

God intervenes in the decisions of Heads of Government. He does this in several ways. God changes the hearts of unbelieving leaders to do His will. God influences the decision-making of Heads of Government, even though they deny Him and have no intention of doing His will. One Head of Government, inspired by God, said:

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases.¹⁴

Unbelieving Heads of Government find themselves making decisions that they did not expect to make. Clearly, unbelieving Heads of Government do make godless decisions that hurt the people they are called to serve. However, God places a limit on the pain they can inflict. Sometimes, God allows this pain to bring a generally godless nation to the realization of their own error.¹⁵

The decisions of unbelieving Heads of Government can be influenced by God in response to the prayers of faithful believers in society. We are told:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.¹⁶

Here, the purpose of the decisions and work of the Head of Government with regard to the members of society whom he serves are stated with these words:

In order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

In response to the prayers of His faithful believers and with the goal of well-being of creation in mind, God can influence the decisions of heads of nations.

In addition to God's direct intervention in the decisions of Heads of Government, God communicates directly to heads of nations. He does this in several ways. God speaks to heads of nations through prophets that He sends to them. This seems to be a very common way, as there are dozens of documented examples. Daniel, Prime Minister under King Darius of the Medo-Persian empire and a high-ranking official under Nebuchadnezzar II, commented on the work of the prophets in the office of Head of Government, as he spoke to God:

We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.¹⁷

In the eighth century B.C., King Shalmaneser IV^{18,19} of Assyria led his people in repenting before God after the prophet Jonah came with a message of God's anger and impending judgment.²⁰

God speaks to heads of nations through visions and dreams. Two remarkable examples are the visions God used to inform Nebuchadnezzar II of future events. The first was the description of how his kingdom, the Babylonian Empire, fit into a sequence of four dominant kingdoms over the ensuing six centuries.²¹ The second was the description of events in Nebuchadnezzar II's own life forcing him to repent before God and be responsive as God's unsubmitive servant.²² In the case of these two examples, God sent a prophet to help the Head of Government understand God's message to him.

God speaks to heads of nations through signs and wonders, i.e., in other miraculous ways. One prominent example is God arresting the attention of Belshazzar, the last King of Babylon, with the appearance of the hand writing on the wall.²³ Another well-known example is the 10 signs or plagues that God gave to Pharaoh Amenhotep II²⁴ of Egypt in the sixteenth century B.C.²⁵

When necessary, God speaks directly and audibly to unbelieving heads of nations. A repentant Nebuchadnezzar describes how God spoke to him while he was rebelling.²⁶

Furthermore, God speaks to Heads of Government through His instruction book to Heads of Government—the Bible. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, this is the norm for God's communication to the Head of Government. In the Bible, we have the full weight of God's revelation. We have been given everything we need for living our personal lives and our public lives through this handbook from God. God has told us:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.²⁷

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.²⁸

Although sending prophets to Heads of Government has been a very common way for God to communicate, God prefers to speak heart-to-heart with the Head of Government, or more correctly, Spirit-to-spirit. He uses His Word as the primary vehicle, with our own spirit within us confirming the truth of God's Word to a specific situation. This can only work when we have an intimate relationship with God and His Spirit dwells within us. The danger of relying on prophets is that there are true prophets and there are false prophets.²⁹ False prophets are those who come claiming direct instruction from God. The false prophet can use this claim in an attempt to exert leverage over the Head of Government. God strongly prefers to be able to communicate Spirit-to-spirit with the Head of Government to avoid that kind of deception and resulting error. God's plan is for each Head of Government to develop such an intimate relationship with God that God can speak equally to the Head of Government and to the prophet. The prophet is then not needed as the primary communication channel.

Abraham Lincoln, while President, testified to God's ability to speak to him:

I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above. I frequently see my way clear to a decision when I have no sufficient facts upon which to found it. But I cannot recall one instance in which I have followed my own judgment, founded upon such a decision, where the results were unsatisfactory, whereas, in almost every instance where I have yielded to the views of others, I have had occasion to regret it. I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.³⁰

Lincoln added further insight on another occasion:

If it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected to my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me...It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it!³¹

Not only can God give His mind to leaders, but the leader can seek God's mind with confidence. However, the key to Lincoln's certainty was his commitment to follow God's plan once it was revealed to him.

God's special work in the life of the Head of Government causes me to be in awe of God. God uses Heads of Government even if they do not acknowledge Him. God spoke this way of Cyrus, King of Persia:

I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please"...This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right I take hold of..."I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me."³²

Interestingly, God said this of Cyrus 150 years before he entered office. If there is any doubt in your mind that God "sets up kings and deposes them,"³³ this should dispel that doubt!

Another aspect of God's special work in the Head of Government may cause you to be in awe of Him. Jesus told His disciples after an exciting time of ministry:

I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.³⁴

According to Jesus, leaders desire to understand the mysteries of God. From the words of Jesus and from my personal observations, I am convinced that God causes leaders to see problems from a viewpoint that no other human being does, except possibly prophets. He works in their hearts in such a way that they perceive, beyond human understanding, that God is at work. God works in their hearts in such a way that they sense their own inadequacy to understand the responsibilities of their office without the guidance and wisdom that only God can provide. And God gives them the internal sense that He is there to meet that need in the heart of the Head of Government.

God loves every person. However, because of the responsibility placed upon the Head of Government, He invests great energy into the lives and decisions of the Head of Government. In a similar way, He invests in the lives and actions of all government officials.

God works through Heads of Government, even when they reject Him. He will work in your life even if you reject Him. However, if God is doing this amazing work in your life, wouldn't you prefer to work with Him rather than against Him, requiring Him to overcome your stubbornness? Wouldn't you like to cooperate with Him rather than being dragged along as a belligerent servant? How does a government official cooperate with God so that God may guide him, speak to him, influence his decisions?

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped [seized], ...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth.³⁵

The first step is recognizing that we are servants and that we were placed in office by the Master of our nation for the purpose of serving our Master and accomplishing His purposes.

God gave many instructions that apply here:

Before Me every knee will bow.³⁶

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.³⁷

It is important that we submit to Him willingly and quickly so that He does not need to be harsh with us. He has told us:

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.³⁸

How do Heads of Government and, in fact, all government officials fully become God's instrument in the life of their nation? I already described to you how God can influence the decisions of the Head of Government through the prayers of faithful believers:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.³⁹

However, we learn more about the mechanism that God uses in the life of the Head of Government as we move further into this passage:

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.⁴⁰

There are two important truths in this passage. First, God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This applies to every member of society. This is God's purpose in changing certain decisions of the Head of Government. The clear warning to the Head of Government is: Don't interfere with God moving "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

The second truth is the clear message that the Head of Government will become an effective instrument of God in office as he is "saved" and "comes to the knowledge of the truth." It is as the Head of Government is "saved" and "comes to the knowledge of the truth," that God is able to work most effectively in His heart and cause Him to make the decisions that God ultimately desires.

The question, then, becomes: How does the Head of Government become "saved" and "come to the knowledge of the truth?"

God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy — without moral imperfection. However, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, with our selfishness. Our moral imperfection — our unholiness — blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to government officials. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences

are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.⁴¹

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”⁴²

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”⁴³ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”⁴⁴ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.⁴⁵

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!⁴⁶

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.⁴⁷

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in harmony with God in the governmental decision-making process, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God that lasts forever and allows each of us to receive instructions from our Master? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd,

“How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd, “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

As clever as we think we are, God is the only who can heal our relationship with Him. It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity for a restored relationship with God. No one—neither you nor I—can have our relationships restored without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kinds of relationship with God necessary for effective leadership in your nation, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”⁴⁸

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, the leadership of our nations will be made up of individuals who are able to develop healthy relationships with their Master, and to work as a team for the best for our nation.

For this reason, I can invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to increase our impact upon our nations.

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Overcoming the Obstacles to Economic Reform

27 February 1992

The move from centrally planned economies to market economies is one of the great challenges facing our world today. It has been rightly said that this move involves such radical and fundamental changes that it should not be described as reform but rather as transformation. This transformation involves more than just Eastern and Central European nations. Former Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar pointed out that more than 80 nations are currently participating in this transformation to some degree.¹ Not only does the success or failure of this effort affect the economic well-being of the people in the nations involved, but just as importantly, prospects for enduring democracy in these nations appear to ride on the success of this effort.²

This transformation affects far more than the residents of the nations involved. The economies of the nations of the world are so interdependent that each of us is affected. Obviously, the developed world is affected because of its responsibility for assistance to the nations undergoing these changes. The developing world will be affected if needed aid is redirected to Eastern Europe.^{3,4,5,6} This is compounded by the aid to the Third World already lost from Eastern European donors.⁷

But possibly there is even more at stake than the global economy. Mr. Gorbachev,⁸ in his Nobel address, and later Mr. Shevardnadze,⁹ suggested that if these reforms do not succeed among their people, global peace will be imperilled.

Clearly, this is a challenge of immense proportions—one that affects us all. I am anxious that we bring every resource to bear on this effort. Clearly, there are significant economic problems associated with the move from centrally planned to market economies. However, I am convinced that the most formidable obstacles are not economic, but rather social, and that ultimately the success or failure of economic transformation depends upon whether or not we successfully resolve these obstacles. Let me illustrate.

Russian President Yeltsin, when he announced his economic reforms in October, said, “It will not be possible to undergo reforms painlessly. The most difficult will be the first step, there will be a certain decline in the standard of living.”¹⁰ This immediate drop in the standard of living is a common result in the nations embarking upon this course. A Czechoslovakian economist pointed out that the standard of living in his nation will not reach the pre-reform level of 1989 until late 1993 or early 1994, at the earliest.¹¹ Economists in Poland, which initially took one of the more aggressive approaches toward the transformation, are predicting that the standard of living will reach the level of 1989 between 1994 and 1998.¹² Jeffrey Sachs, the Harvard economist who has advised both Poland and Russia, said, “There are good reasons to believe it will be harder in Russia from many points of view.”¹³ The expectation is that the pain will be severe and long in Russia.

Economic conditions will certainly become worse before they become better. Clearly, the residents of these nations will experience pain significantly worse than that which caused them to embark upon these reforms in the first place. This will be true for all of Eastern Europe, especially the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, but to some extent for the residents of each of the nations embarking upon this experiment.

Facing this valley of pain, with all its uncertainty, is already causing a division within the populace between those

whose idealism drives them to believe that they can have a better life beyond that valley, and those who believe the old and known is better, and at least secure. There are those who are longing for a return to the authoritarian system.^{14,15}

The personal pain will result in a serious challenge to social stability. The protests we have seen may be just the beginning. Anders Aslund, a Swedish economist who has been a key adviser to the Russian government, said:

*The most risky period will be when people realize they are still not better off...In a half year's time, when things are still difficult, that will be the most risky time.*¹⁶

Olzhas Suleimenov, the Kazak writer, warned the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in one of its last sessions that "empty pots can be more threatening to democracy than tanks."¹⁷

It was this realization that caused the Soviet Union in 1990 to back away from the aggressive approach followed by Poland. President Gorbachev's personal economic adviser at the time stated that the Soviet people would not be able to implement the same approach as the Polish people because of the lack of the same "social consensus" that existed in Poland.¹⁸ Two years later, the Polish leaders are realizing that even their nation may not have the social strength to withstand the severity of the pain.^{19,20}

Those providing national leadership must now maintain the approval of the populace. The irony is that the electorate must give their government leaders a mandate to take steps that will bring them severe personal pain for the next several years.

The question, then, in this economic transformation is, "How much additional pain can the people absorb, and for how long, before the people stop supporting the government?" President Yeltsin correctly diagnosed the need when he told his people, "Don't lose hope. This is what is most important today."²¹ I agree! The key ingredient is hope. Former Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, in his statement to ECOSOC in 1982, described the necessity of hope in overcoming economic difficulties:

*The intense difficulties that very many people in the developing countries have to face every day of their lives can be tolerated so long as there is hope for the future. We should not underestimate the dangers that arise from depriving people of hope over long periods...I am personally convinced that the social and political tensions...will lead...to greater political instability.*²²

Referring to the deteriorating economic situation, he pointed out that once hope is lost there is danger of anarchy and violence. Although the context was different, the principle applies to the problem of economic reform. One writer said, "Man can live about 40 days without food, about 3 days without water, about 8 minutes without air...but only about 1 second without hope."²³

In addition to hope, the foundation necessary for this transformation includes personal responsibility, integrity, a positive attitude about the creation of wealth, compassion for my neighbour with regard to his needs, a code of ethics, a way to deal with the myriad of problems beyond our control. Clearly, many of these are social rather than economic, but unless these are properly addressed, the economic goals will fail.

Let me touch briefly on some of these. Farmers, anticipating rising prices, are withholding grain supplies this winter, hoping to make greater profits later, even though this forces consumers to go hungry.²⁴ There are reports of raising prices of food in grocery stores beyond the capacity of consumers to buy, in an effort to maximize profits. We are told of bread available but drying out on the shelves and of people having to leave meat in the stores because it is unaffordable.

Humanitarian aid, that has been committed and is necessary in supporting weakened systems while making the transition, is not being delivered, in part, because of corruption that convinces donors the aid will not reach the intended destination.^{25,26,27}

There are integrity issues at the leadership level. Jeffrey Sachs, the Harvard economist, complains that Russia's programme is being undercut by Parliament which refuses to take politically unpopular steps.²⁸ The approval of the electorate now becomes an important motivation. The temptation is for leaders to plan the hard steps of economic

reform not with the long-range best interests of the populace in mind, but rather with re-election in mind.

Perhaps, nowhere is integrity of more concern than in privatization. There is the fear and accusations of public assets being distributed inequitably for reasons of patronage or buying favour for the regime.²⁹

No economic system can function without a moral base. However, a market economy is unequivocally dependent upon a morality on the part of the people participating in it.^{30,31,32} Unless there is a concern for one's neighbour that comes from the heart, it cannot work. Just look at what happens in other market economies when the moral foundation breaks down. You have people like Ivan Boesky and Michael Milken who believe it is all right to take whatever they can at anyone else's expense. If you have very many people like this, the whole system collapses. Thus, a market economy requires a strong moral base.

What is the solution to these challenges? For example, where does hope come from? I would submit to you that if hope is based on nothing more than the wisdom and integrity of the government's economic planners, we do not have a basis for confidence. My dictionary defines hope as, "a desire for some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable."³³ However, this is little more than wishful thinking. None of us would consider this to be a satisfactory driving force. Considering the problem at hand, hope must be confidence that life is going to get better—that the period of economic decline is going to be brief, that the people can survive it, and that soon conditions will be so much better that the temporary sacrifice will be worth it.

I would submit to you that hope is strongest when it is based on the character of Almighty God, with the conviction that He is ultimately the One in charge. To me, hope can only be solid confidence based upon the character of God.

Let us quickly refresh our understanding of God's power, His love for all peoples, and the significance of each of our nations in His eternal plan. God created our world and each individual in it. He reigns over the affairs of men and nations. God Himself stated, "It is I who made the earth, and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens...I am the Lord and there is no other."³⁴ God has a design and a plan—for good, out of love. Thus, God has told us, "Come and see the works of God, who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men...He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations."³⁵ God told one nation, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."³⁶ Because He is all-loving and all-powerful, this has great significance. He has a plan for good that results in hope. Out of love, He wants us to have hope. This is why one king could say to God, "No one whose hope is in You will ever be put to shame."³⁷ The basis for hope is God ruling in power, backed up by His character. One man summarized the situation by saying, "He is at peace whose God is sovereign."³⁸ This hope based upon God is necessary for effective economic transformation.

Several of the requirements for effective economic transformation indicate the need for a strong value system. Where do moral values come from? I do not believe I need to belabour the point that faith in God is the unique foundation for values—for integrity. This conclusion is not a matter of faith. Sociologists, political observers, and historians agree.

George Washington challenged his young nation, whose future was uncertain, as he left office:

And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education,...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.³⁹

Historians Will and Ariel Durant concluded, "There is not a significant example in history...of a society successfully maintaining a moral life without the aid of religion."⁴⁰

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French socio-political observer, concluded after four years of studying the American experiment firsthand:

Thus, while the law allows the American people to do everything, there are things which religion prevents them from imagining and forbids them to dare...Despotism may be able to do without faith, but freedom cannot. Religion is much more needed in the republic...than in the monarchy...and in democratic republics most of all. How could society escape destruction if, when political ties are relaxed, moral ties are not tightened? And what

*can be done with a people master of itself if it is not subject to God?*⁴¹

Hope and integrity are our greatest need in economic transformation. Faith in God is the basis for providing both. If this is true, then the history of Eastern and Central Europe over the past few decades indicates an urgent need. Furthermore, we would expect the severity of the challenge in achieving economic transformation in individual nations to be related to the degree of spiritual suppression that has been experienced.

With regard to Russia, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn said:

*The strength or weakness of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialization...If a nation's spiritual energies have been exhausted, it will not be saved from collapse by the most perfect government structure or by any industrial development: a tree with a rotten core cannot stand. This is so because, of all the possible freedoms, the one that will inevitably come to the fore will be the freedom to be unscrupulous...And that is why the destruction of our souls over three-quarters of a century is the most terrifying thing of all.*⁴²

Patriarch Aleksy II of the Russian Orthodox Church said recently:

*Dozens of years of militant atheism created a spiritual vacuum in our people.*⁴³

*Millions of people [were] brought up without God, without faith, and often without love...In our country there is a growing moral lapse.*⁴⁴

President Havel of Czechoslovakia made the same analysis of his people immediately after taking office:

*We live in a spoiled moral environment. We have become morally ill...We have learned not to believe in anything, not to care about each other...The concepts of love, friendship, mercy, humility or forgiveness lost their depth and dimension.*⁴⁵

Pravda conducted a survey in 1989 demonstrating that 54% of Russian people feel the need for more spiritual life.⁴⁶ Man is not simply an economic being. He is a spiritual being as well. Blaise Pascal, the French physicist of three centuries ago said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing, but only by God the creator, made known through Jesus Christ."⁴⁷ No amount of suppression can eliminate this most basic need.

If the underlying problem is a spiritual vacuum, then the solution involves filling that vacuum. Patriarch Aleksy II declared that the spiritual and moral rebirth of the nation is "the basis for the revival of all other aspects of our life."⁴⁸ Mr. Gorbachev also recognized that the solution is at least in part spiritual when he said, "The moral values that religion generated and embodied for centuries can help in the work of renewal in our country too."⁴⁹ Spiritual and secular leaders acknowledge that the spiritual vacuum must be filled in order for the necessary social, economic and political reforms.

With regard to the economic problems themselves, there is general agreement on many of the steps that need to be taken—privatization being a clear exception. However, there is disagreement among respected experts on the sequence, timing and intensity of the steps to be taken.⁵⁰ Let me mention in passing that even here I am convinced that seeking the mind of God, the Master Planner, can help. God has told us:

*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*⁵¹

*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain.*⁵²

In addition, there are many other problems in economic reform that are beyond our control. However, as we depend upon God, I believe even these will be resolved. Even though crucial problems may be beyond our control, they are not beyond God's control. I believe Solzhenitsyn has identified the specific conditions for moving God's hand when he said:

And what about those glorious forces of glasnost and perestroika? Among these fashionable words we look in vain for the concept of purification...Of every four troubadours of today's glasnost, three are former toadies of Brezhnevism, and who among them has uttered a word of personal repentance instead of cursing the faceless "period of stagnation"?...West Germany was suffused with the feeling of repentance before the coming of their economic boom. But in our country no one has even begun to repent...That is a recipe for warped development.⁵³

Solzhenitsyn is calling for repentance. By repentance, is he seeking a catharsis that will close the door on the past? If this is the case, it will not work. The only repentance that works is a humbling of ourselves before God. It is a grieving with God for the things we have done that have broken His heart, and an overwhelming desire to change our behaviour so that it is in line with God's standard for us.

Why is repentance necessary? From God's Word: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"⁵⁴ Repentance is necessary whenever we have not walked in justice, in love toward our fellow man, and in humility before our God.

How could Solzhenitsyn equate repentance with economic prosperity? Because God does! Listen to God's message three and a half millennia ago to a people who were about to form a nation:

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today,...The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground...However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you.⁵⁵

There is a natural law expressed here established by the God who created and oversees our world—a law that Solzhenitsyn appeals to. God summarized the principle this way:

Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.⁵⁶

My fear is that there are nations and leaders embarking upon economic reform who would rebel against God's Word and ignore His counsel. But listen to what happens when we repent:

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains.⁵⁷

When we repent, God always delights in drawing us to Himself and giving us blessings.

Early in the development of the above nation, God told the people:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.⁵⁸

God delights in forgiving us. He delights in pouring abundance upon us. What is the key to God-induced blessing? It is repentance—humbling ourselves before God and turning from our rebelliousness against Him.

Later, God reminded this same people:

*Test Me in this, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it...Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land.*⁵⁹

Thus, to talk about economic improvement without concern for the hand of God is sheer folly. The greatest obstacle of all to economic reform is a lack of absolute dependence upon Almighty God—a lack of dependence upon Him for His hand of blessing—to give us the hope to work and think beyond the moment, to give us compassion for our neighbour during times of economic pain, to give us integrity as we work together to build the economic base of our community, our nation and, in a very real sense, our world. I am convinced that whether we consider Russia or Albania or any other nation, national repentance could do more for economic transformation than unlimited aid from the West.

I believe the problems are so severe that we must each humble ourselves before God. The economic problems we are experiencing are not only the fault of past totalitarian leaders. President Havel of Czechoslovakia seemed to recognize this very well when he appealed to his people immediately after taking office:

*All of us have grown used to the totalitarian system and accepted it as an unchangeable fact, and thereby actually helped keep it going. None of us are only its victims; we are all also responsible for it...We must accept this heritage as something we have inflicted on ourselves.*⁶⁰

We must each take responsibility—whether we are from the East, the West, or the South. Only then can we truly repent before God and ask for His hand of blessing upon our societies.

I invite you to join me in repenting before Almighty God that will lead to effective economic transformation. If we reject God's admonition now, I am convinced we are inviting unnecessary suffering. But how do we do this? It all starts with us as individuals. When we talk about repentance, we are talking about growing closer to God.

The block to our friendship with God is ourselves. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. We are not morally perfect. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Think of the problem this way. To place a common field stone next to a 200-carat diamond would be unthinkable. They are incompatible. Even more so, our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this block caused by our unholiness be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it.

That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us that Jesus “is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.”⁶¹

*Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*⁶²

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”⁶³

As a self-sufficient young scientist, I found this truth extremely difficult to accept. Someone helped me greatly by telling me about a small town that had only one judge. This judge had a teenage son who was arrested for disobeying the traffic laws. When the son was brought before the judge, this presented a dilemma for the judge. Wanting to be a just judge, when he heard the evidence, he knew he must declare his son was guilty. But being a loving father, he knew his son did not have the resources to pay the penalty that must be exacted. How did he resolve this dilemma? After declaring his son guilty and assessing the fine, the judge took off his robe, stood before the bench and paid his son's fine for him. This clarified for me what God did when He came as Jesus to pay the penalty for us so that we could then come into that relationship with God.

Thus, Jesus has told us, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."⁶⁴ God has told us, "There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."⁶⁵ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to man whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate friendship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.⁶⁶

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!⁶⁷

Dag Hammarskjöld described it this way: "Forgiveness is the answer to the child's dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is again made clean."⁶⁸ Jesus' death accomplished forgiveness for us.

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. He is a universal figure, not just for certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.⁶⁹

The repentance and forgiveness that allows God to turn individuals into building blocks for effective economic transformation and that unleashes His hand of blessing is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not leave here today thinking we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

In the process of coming to God and being changed by Him, there is great personal benefit to the individual. Jesus explained to a leader who came to Him:

I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again—born anew from above...I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at My saying "You must be born again—born anew from above."⁷⁰

God created us with two natures—a physical nature and a spiritual nature. Our physical nature is what we know most about. It comes alive at a certain point in time, which we refer to as "birth." However, our spiritual nature is just as important. In order to be fully alive as God intended, our spiritual nature must come alive also. It is through our spiritual nature coming alive that God can change us and that He can guide us. Our spiritual nature comes alive only as we come to God, asking Him to forgive our sins through the sacrifice Jesus made, and to make us alive spiritually.

Jesus invites us with these words: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in."⁷¹ Jesus invites us to allow Him into our lives. As we respond, He forgives us and, literally,

the Spirit of God comes to live within us. He has revolutionized my life. I am convinced He will revolutionize your life. As we do this one by one, it will create societies with hope and the values to sustain economic transformation. It will bring God's hand of blessing to our world.

Some of you may come from societies where knowledge of God has been suppressed. You may have to join me in repenting by faith. Do not look to the Western world for leadership in this process. By and large, Western society has strayed from the foundation that made it strong and prosperous in the first place. It is headed not only for the natural consequences of its denial of God's law, but also for the supernatural consequences — God's judgment. Billy Graham said, "If God doesn't bring judgment on the United States, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah."⁷² I bring these ideas to you as a friend because I do not want you to experience the pain that I believe is coming to my country.

Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Designer of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. I ask You to change me and, with me, the world. Thank You. Amen.

Let us not waste this opportunity to bring well-being to the peoples of our world. I challenge you to join me in embracing Jesus and humbling ourselves before Almighty God so that we, individually and as a global community, may experience the full blessings He has for us.

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The Leader's Greatest Challenge

21 May 1992

We frequently consider problems with global consequences in the halls of the United Nations. However, the most important challenge that you and I face is not the deterioration of the environment. It is not the AIDS epidemic. It is even more important than resolving the many conflicts around the world. It is our own lives.

Just because an individual may be alert and responding to external stimuli does not mean he or she is experiencing life. I understand that when two individuals of one particular nationality meet and one asks the other how he is, a common response is, "I am alive," to which the questioner asks "Is it life or is it existence?" This is the question I would like to consider with you: "Is it life or is it existence?"

In the midst of pouring ourselves out on behalf of others, how do we have *life*? Where does life come from? I would like to take this opportunity to deal with this personal issue. I feel I have a moral responsibility to you to do this. My rationale is the following: Let us suppose that there was a virus just as deadly as the HIV virus, and more contagious, so that eventually everyone would contract it and die from it. Let us suppose that I, working in my research laboratory, found a cure for this deadly disease. If I were then to knowingly hide the cure for this disease, what would you think of me?

Likewise, God has made available to us the key to life. During my early decades on this earth, I missed the life I am talking about, and I am anxious that you do not make the same mistake I did. When Jesus was born, an angel announced to shepherds outside of Bethlehem: "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem!"¹ This is a three-part message. The first two parts of this message are: it is the most joyful news ever announced; and it is for everyone.

What is that special news that is so universal? It is the words of Jesus when He said, "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."² Why did Jesus say this? His clear statement is that there is a difference between existence and life. Elsewhere, God referred to "the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers."³ He is telling us that what we naturally receive as we set foot on this earth is empty. It is the barest of existence. It is not what He ultimately intends for us. On one occasion, Jesus said: "You have no life in yourselves."⁴ By ourselves, we do not have the life God intends for us.

Jesus used the Greek word for life, *zoe* (pronounced zōē). *Zoe* means more than physical life. It means to be alive not only physically, but also, and especially, spiritually. It means the fullest possible life. Furthermore, this *zoe* is not interrupted by the death of this body. Therefore, *zoe* is eternal in duration.

Thus, when Jesus said, "you have no life in yourselves," He meant that by ourselves, we do not have *zoe*—we do not have the life God intended us to have. This existence without *zoe* is readily evident in those around us. H. G. Wells, at the age of 61, said, "I have no peace. All life is at the end of the tether."⁵ Lord Byron summarized his turbulent life as he wrote the following lines on his 36th birthday, three months before he died:

My days are in the yellow leaf,

*The flowers and fruits of love are gone:
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone.*⁶

Thoreau, obviously looking inside himself, wrote, “The mass of men live lives of quiet desperation.”⁷ Ralph Barton, one of our top cartoonists, left this note pinned to his pillow before taking his own life:

*I have had few difficulties, many friends, great successes; I have gone from wife to wife, and from house to house, visited great countries of the world, but I am fed up with inventing devices to fill up 24 hours of the day.*⁸

The lack of *zoe* is not limited to writers and artists. Public servants experience this equally. Prince Konoye, Japan’s Prime Minister during the early part of World War II, was later charged with war crimes by the Allied powers. To escape prosecution, he committed suicide, leaving by his deathbed a copy of Oscar Wilde’s *De Profundis*, with the words underlined: “Terrible as what the world did to me, what I did to myself was far more terrible still.”⁹

Carl Jung diagnosed the situation properly when he refers to “a neurosis of emptiness” where “life turns dead on our hands.”¹⁰ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, “We have placed too much hope in political and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life”¹¹—our *zoe*.

How do we obtain *zoe*—the rich life God intended us to have? Pouring ourselves out on behalf of others will not bring us *zoe*. This is clear from the words of Dr. James Simpson, one of the early developers of anesthesia:

*When benevolence shall have run its course, when there shall be no sick to heal, no disease to cure, when all I have been engaged about comes to a dead stop—what is to fill this heart and thought and powers of mine?*¹²

He is saying, “I myself am empty.”

But how do we obtain *zoe*? On one occasion, a ruler came to Jesus and asked Him, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life—*zoe*?” Jesus responded:

If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments... “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”^{13a}

The ruler responded to Jesus: “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?”^{13b}

We learn two important principles from this exchange. First, we instinctively know within ourselves whether or not we have the *zoe*. Even though this ruler had done everything he thought Jesus was telling him to do and God required of him, he knew in his heart that he did not have *zoe*. We know instinctively whether or not we have *zoe*. No one needs to tell us.

Second, we cannot gain *zoe* by living a good life—by living the best we possibly can in our own strength. Being a good person cannot be equated with *zoe*.

Then, how do we get *zoe*? Jesus told one leader

*I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again—born anew from above...I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at My saying “You must be born again—born anew from above.”*¹⁴

Jesus is telling us that we have two natures—our physical nature, and our spiritual nature. Each of these must be brought alive in kind. We receive physical life from our parents at what we commonly call *birth*. Physical life gives

rise to physical life. Likewise, spiritual life gives rise to spiritual life. However, only the Spirit of God can give us spiritual life—make our spirit alive. We gain *zoe* when our spiritual nature comes alive through a second birth process, with God doing it.

How do we receive *zoe* from God? Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.”¹⁵ Jesus went on to say:

*I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.*¹⁶

This is where the third part of the angel’s message to the shepherds fits in: “I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem!”¹⁷ Yes, the coming of Jesus is the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone. But the key is Jesus as Saviour. A Saviour? From what?

God gave the father of John the Baptist these words for his son with regard to Jesus:

*You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.*¹⁸

Jesus would provide “salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.” Jesus, then, is the Saviour for our sins.

The need for forgiveness is described by God:

*High and low, rich and poor, all around the world—listen to my words...Not one...though rich as kings, can ransom his own brother from the penalty of sin! For God’s forgiveness does not come that way. For a soul is far too precious to be ransomed by mere earthly wealth. There is not enough of it in all the earth to buy eternal life for just one soul, to keep it out of hell.*¹⁹

We are all morally blemished, i.e., sinners, and therefore separated from God. If you have said there are some areas of your life that you can handle without God, you qualify as a sinner. God has told us:

*Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.*²⁰

God described it this way: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”²¹ We fall short of God’s character. We fall short of God’s goal for us. God is perfectly holy. We are less than holy. And yet, God desires an intimate friendship with us. The most valuable thing in all of life is to walk closely with the Creator, Master Planner and Protector of my life—and with this, to experience *zoe*.

God has told us, “The wages of sin is death.”²² This is the opposite of *zoe*. The result of our spiritual death, and consequent absence of *zoe*, is mere existence instead of the life God intends for us. Also, our eternal destiny is at stake, because spiritual death at the end of our physical life sets us on an unalterable course of separation from God.

How does forgiveness happen? God has told us, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”²³ Dag Hammarskjöld commented:

*Forgiveness breaks the chain of causality because he who “forgives” you—out of love—takes upon himself the consequences of what you have done. Forgiveness, therefore, always entails a sacrifice.*²⁴

God provided that forgiveness by coming as Jesus. God has told us that Jesus “is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.”²⁵

Jesus is the image of the invisible God...By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, vis-

ible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²⁶

Could Jesus bring forgiveness? Recall that God referred to Jesus continually as the Saviour: “I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Saviour — yes, the Messiah, the Lord — has been born tonight in Bethlehem!”²⁷ And, Jesus would provide “salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.”²⁸ An angel, before Jesus was born, gave these instructions from God: “You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”²⁹ The name *Jesus* means “Jehovah is salvation” or “Jehovah is the Saviour.”³⁰

John the Baptist, a prophet who preceded Jesus, exclaimed in reference to Jesus when he first saw Him: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”³¹ The lamb was a sacrificial offering for sin. It was to be unblemished. It was to be offered frequently because it was largely symbolic and had no permanent power. However, Jesus’ death was to be a permanent solution for our sin. Jesus said He had come “to give His life as a ransom for many.”³²

Jesus said to a paralyzed man: “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” However, when critical observers began to accuse Jesus of blasphemy, Jesus continued, “So that you may know that I have authority on earth to forgive sins...Get up, take your mat and go home.”³³ Jesus’ healing of this man demonstrated His capacity to forgive sin.

Jesus is our Saviour and God’s provision for forgiveness. The result of Jesus’ death on our behalf is forgiveness. God tells us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³⁴

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!³⁵

The miracle of forgiveness is described by Dag Hammarskjöld: “Forgiveness is the answer to the child’s dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is again made clean.”³⁶

Forgiveness leads to *zoe*. Thus, forgiveness is all important. Furthermore, forgiveness and *zoe* come only through this Saviour — the unique Saviour. Thus, Jesus has told us, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁷ This is a very powerful statement by Jesus. Two gigantic claims by Jesus here are, “I am the life or *zoe*” and, “I am the only pathway to that *zoe*.” Jesus is the source of life, and the doorway to it. Elsewhere, God has told us, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”³⁸

During the first decades of my life I did not have *zoe*. Arrogantly, I said I don’t need God. Arrogantly, I said I am good enough for God and that He will accept me the way I am. I said I didn’t need Jesus’ death on behalf of my sins. During that time, I was preoccupied with my own pursuits. I was personally attracted to the study of the brain because I was convinced that the greatest problem facing man was to understand himself — and I was convinced that this could only be accomplished by understanding our brain which largely makes us what we are. I found the study of the brain to be exciting and challenging. My colleagues and I recorded the electrical activity of single brain cells in cats and monkeys. We were able to gain great insight into the way the brain controls skilled movements.

But just as I was beginning my study of the brain, I began an even more important adventure — the most important adventure of my life. I was raised to be self-sufficient — supposedly a virtue, but along with it went arrogance with regard to God. Hence, I ridiculed the idea that I was a sinner, and that Jesus had to die to pay the penalty for my sin, and sadly, I ridiculed anyone bearing that message. Then, God brought Elaine into my life. While courting her, God

used her to teach me about forgiveness and *zoe*. I saw qualities in her life and in the lives of her friends that I had never seen before. This was the *zoe*. The argument of her life was very persuasive.

Slowly, I began to realize that Jesus wasn't just a man, even a good man or a prophet, but that He was God who came to earth for the purpose of bringing us into a personal relationship with Him, and giving us *zoe*. Finally, after a year, one evening, I felt Jesus drawing me to Himself. I could resist no longer, even though I had a number of intellectual questions. I accepted God's offer of forgiveness for my sins and became a child of His. Over a period of time, I began to experience God's peace in my life and the sense that He had His hand on my life. With God's Spirit within my life, many of the doubts that had plagued me were answered more clearly than when I only looked from outside and criticized.

Even though I had become an expert in brain function, science alone had not made me a complete person—had not given me *zoe*. I am still convinced that understanding the brain is one of the great challenges facing mankind, but I am convinced that the greatest challenge is to know the God who created us, and to experience the life that He has for us.

When I look back, I can say that *zoe* is the most valuable thing I have. There is no comparison between the quality of life I have now and what I experienced before I accepted Jesus' forgiveness. This life—the *zoe*—is so valuable that it is worth sacrificing anything to have it. Solzhenitsyn, speaking of his experience in prison through one of his characters, said, "I nourished my soul there, and I say without hesitation: 'Bless you, prison, for having been in my life.'"³⁹ To him, it was so valuable to have *zoe* that it was worth spending all those years in the gulag. Can you imagine?

One Muslim said:

*In trusting my life to Christ...I found that there is a unique relationship between God and the believer—a personal relationship of love and fellowship that brings the highest fulfillment and meaning to life.*⁴⁰

What this person is describing is *zoe*.

One day as Elaine and I were taking a train to the United Nations, a blind man boarded the train. I felt constrained to ask him if he would like me to pray for him that God would give him his eyesight. His answer shocked me. He said, "No! It was only after I became blind that I came to know God. I would rather stay blind and keep the relationship I have with God." I am convinced that his understanding of God is incorrect. But the important point is that *zoe* is so important to him that he would rather remain blind and have *zoe* than have his sight and not have *zoe*. Jesus described it this way: "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."⁴¹ More than anything else, I want you to experience the *zoe* that I have experienced.

Zoe provides several benefits. One is the ability to face death without fear. This is beautifully demonstrated in the letter that a Russian soldier wrote to God while inside a foxhole during World War II:

*Hear me, O God. Never in the whole of my lifetime have I spoken to You, but just now I feel like sending You my greetings. You know from childhood on they have always told me You are not. I, like a fool, believed them. I have never contemplated Your creation, and yet tonight, gazing up out of my shell-hole I marvelled at the shimmering stars above me and suddenly knew the cruelty of the lie. Will You, my God, reach Your hand out to me, I wonder?...Is it not strange that light should come upon me and I see You amid this night of hell?...I'm glad that I have learned to know You. At midnight, we are scheduled to attack, but You are looking on and I am not afraid. The Signal. Well, I guess I must be going. I have been happy with You...As You well know, the fighting will be cruel and even tonight I may come knocking at Your door. Although I have not been a friend to You before, still will You let me enter now when I do come? Why I am crying, O God my Lord—You see what happens to me. Tonight my eyes were opened. Farewell, my God. I am going and I am not likely to come back. Strange is it not, but death I fear no longer.*⁴²

And he did not come back. But he has *zoe*.

Power is available as a result of *zoe*. Jesus said:

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser...Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me...I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.^{43a}

This is a clear description of *zoe* and its source—the life of Jesus being lived in us and flowing out through us. Jesus went on to describe the result of this relationship with Himself: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”^{43b} As I walk with God, His power is at my disposal. Nowhere is this of greater value than in my role as a father and as a grandfather. I cannot be with my children every moment to protect them, and even if I could, I am limited in my power to do so. What gives me great peace is having God’s power at my disposal.

I am anxious for you to experience the *zoe* that Elaine and I have experienced. Six years ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of cancer at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Further, the cancer had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Was this to be the end for my beloved wife? We did not believe it was God’s intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her, “You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right.” She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her trunk for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, that had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. God clearly performed a miracle! Our purpose in accepting *zoe* should never be miracles. However, one of the fringe benefits of *zoe* is God’s supernatural hand on our lives to fulfill His plan.

Forgiveness leading to *zoe* is the most important gift we as human beings can ever receive. Listen to these words written anonymously:

*If our greatest need had been information,
God would have sent us an educator.
If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist.
If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist.
If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer.
But our greatest need is forgiveness,
So God sent us a Saviour!*⁴⁴

This is why Jesus’ coming is so important. He came to provide us with forgiveness.

I would like to summarize the greatest challenge facing mankind in the question asked by the eminent historian Will Durant before the recent political changes in our world:

*The greatest question of our time is not communism versus individualism; not Europe versus America; not even the East versus West. It is whether men can live without God.*⁴⁵

This is a rhetorical question and the clear answer is, “No! Real life—*zoe*—comes precisely from God.”

It was the same concern I have expressed to you that caused a past President of the General Assembly of the United Nations to state:

These are great days and what is being decided in them is absolutely historic. But all these things are going to pass, and with them life itself. What, then, is the life that does not pass; what, then, is life eternal? This is the first and last question. I believe that "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent" (John 17:3)...Faith in Jesus Christ is the first and last meaning of our life. I do not care who or what you are; I put only one question to you: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?⁴⁶

Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon was a signer of the United Nations Charter, primary drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and President of the 13th General Assembly, but of even more significance to him was that each individual should experience *zoe* resulting from Jesus.

Almighty God Himself said: "My people...have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."⁴⁷ Have you missed the spring of living water and tried to create life for yourself in your own strength? If so, you realize you are a broken cistern. Jesus said, "the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."⁴⁸ Later, Jesus said, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'⁴⁹

Jesus invites us with these words: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in."⁵⁰ Jesus invites us to allow Him into our lives. As we respond, He forgives us and, literally, the Spirit of God comes to live within us. It is His life inside us that gives us *zoe*.

If you have never received the forgiveness and the life that Jesus provides, I invite you to take the same first step I took in receiving Jesus as my Saviour. I did this by addressing to God a simple prayer, which may be of use to you:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have forgiveness and real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever. Thank You. Amen.

The most valuable thing I possess is the *zoe* I have described to you. There is only one more thing I desire in order to make my life complete, and that is for you to have this life too.

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Can We Eradicate Poverty While Tolerating Alienation?

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I am driven by the goal of building a healthy world, where each man, woman and child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. A key part of this involves creating a world where poverty is neither acceptable nor necessary. On the surface, eradicating poverty looks hopeless because the extent of it is steadily increasing in the face of all our efforts. However, there is one essential issue that I believe, if resolved, would reverse poverty. It is our tolerance of alienation. It is our decision that it is all right for some people to feel alienated. I will argue that our willingness to tolerate alienation is fundamental to the continuance of poverty — and it is this that we must deal with.

Let us imagine for a moment that we did not share the same meal around the tables this afternoon. Suppose that some of the people at your table were served a full meal, but that you were served a bowl of thin soup with only a few grains of rice. How would you feel? You would feel cheated. You would feel abused. You would feel devalued as a human being. You would feel angry. Now, consider the reaction of others to your misfortune. Imagine that everyone else at your table acted as if you did not exist. No one looked at you. No one spoke to you. No one offered you anything to eat, not even a roll or dessert. At best, some of them patted you on the head and kept on eating. Now, how would you feel? You would feel indignant. You would feel that this mistreatment was intolerable. You were invited to the table on equal footing with everyone else but you were not treated equally well.

You know where I am carrying this analogy. Everyone was invited to this planet on an equal footing, but not everyone was received equally well. The feelings are the same as at the inequitable meal: devalued, resentful, frustrated, angry.

During the two decades I have been at the U.N., I have heard friends from developing nations telling those from developed nations that they feel alienated, cheated out of a seemingly equitable share of the pie, that they were not given an equal opportunity. I see our colleagues from the developed nations taking a defensive posture, giving the distinct impression that they do not hear the hearts of the hurting and alienated, and cannot empathize with their pain. I cannot imagine anything more damaging to a human being.

My conviction is that the root problem for poverty is our comfort with our fellow human beings feeling alienated. I am convinced that if we decided we would no longer tolerate alienation, then poverty would largely disappear with it. On the other hand, I do not believe we can eradicate poverty and tolerate alienation at the same time. If we reached the point where we no longer tolerated alienation, then many of our problems would disappear, including ethnic division, gender discrimination, and governmental abuses.

Alienation means to feel isolated or estranged, rejected, left out. It means to feel treated as less than a human being. Is alienation of some fraction of our global population the price we must pay for “progress”? What are the underlying assumptions behind this question?

1. The fraction that feels alienated is small.
2. The fraction is decreasing at an acceptable rate.

3. Alienation is unavoidable.
4. The alienation is, in some way, the primary responsibility of those alienated.
5. Those alienated accept their state with patience.

All of these assumptions are false. There is tremendous pain and hurting among our alienated brothers and sisters. If we were too blind to understand this before 11 September, we have no excuse now.

In our world and in each of our nations, there are people living under intolerable conditions. It is as if we have learned to live with our consciences by pretending that the alienated do not have the same feelings that we would have if we were experiencing their suffering. We have lost the capacity to care that they are feeling such intense pain. We have lost the capacity for true compassion. I see this as a measure of what has happened to the human race in this highly materialistic world.

Poverty is the simplest of many indicators of alienation. While I want to approach the issue of poverty through alienation, I want to look at alienation in a broader context because it is at the root of many problems.

Alienation Between Developed and Developing Nations. We have alienation at all levels, from the smallest unit of society to the largest. We have alienation between developed and developing nations. One-tenth of our global population feels the alienation of living in an LDC.¹ One-fifth of our global population feels the alienation of a per capita income of less than \$1 per day.² Fully one-half of our global population feels the alienation of a per capita income of less than \$2 per day.³ More than half the world's population lives on less than I spend on coffee. Their awareness that many of us live much better than they do has to be a source of frustration. Knowing that they cannot educate their children and equip them to escape this cycle of poverty has to push them to the brink of hopelessness.

I am encouraged that some are looking at the problem of poverty from a human point of view. *The Brussels Declaration* issued during the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries spoke of “freeing our fellow women, men and children from the... dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty” and affirmed our “collective responsibility to uphold these principles of human dignity, equality and equity.”⁴ I was encouraged by many of the statements in Monterrey reflecting shared empathy with the victims of poverty.⁵ But I also heard as motivation for reducing poverty the deterrence to terrorism.^{6,7,8} A reduction in terrorism will hopefully follow as a result of reducing alienation. However, if reducing terrorism becomes our motivation, it will not lead to an eradication of poverty, but merely to a reduction to a so-called “tolerable level.” Humanly speaking, there is no “tolerable level.” We must determine that we will not tolerate one person living in alienation. And we must do this because we care for them.

Alienation Between Civilizations. We also have alienation between civilizations or cultures. The tragedy of 11 September was a vivid reminder of what we have known all along: there is alienation between our several different cultures. The attacks of 11 September clearly brought to the surface the feelings of alienation on the part of our brothers and sisters from Islamic civilization with regard to the West. Western global domination has been achieved at the sacrifice of the more vulnerable in our world. We, in the West, have been seduced into “win-lose” thinking. Recently, I saw a bumper sticker that read “I win! You lose! Too bad!” Someone thought this was cute. It is dangerous thinking. I would submit to you that we must subscribe to a “win-win” mentality. Clearly, in a world where our lives are interconnected, we can only win if we all win.

We can sympathize with the pain felt by the perpetrators of 11 September. I am not justifying their actions. What they did was wrong. However, they are fellow human beings who are hopelessly lost, which should cause us great pain. The question remains: Were there triggers that caused these individuals to feel alienated and that they had nothing worth living for? We want to identify these triggers, and then to eliminate them. The frustration was expressed by Huntington who stated that members of Islamic civilization are “convinced of the superiority of their culture, and obsessed with the inferiority of their power.”⁹ We in the West must take the complaints of our Muslim brothers and sisters very seriously, not simply for the purpose of eliminating the substrate for terrorism, but because we care about their pain.

Similarly, the other 5 or 6 civilizations feel just as alienated by Western civilization as Islamic civilization does.

For example, African civilization feels alienated by Western civilization, based upon the history of colonialism, slavery and pillaging of resources. It is this phenomenon of alienating each of the other civilizations that has caused Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani to coin the popular expression “the West and the Rest.”¹⁰ It is imperative for us in the West to build healthy bridges based upon mutual respect with each of the other civilizations. Regardless of the culture we are from, we must build healthy bridges with members of each of the other civilizations.

Let us reflect, in passing, that although poverty leads to alienation, alienation is based upon rejection much broader than economic. Personal poverty was apparently less of an underlying factor for the perpetrators of the 11 September attacks than other issues of rejection.

Alienation Within a Nation. In addition to alienation between developed and developing nations and between civilizations, we have alienation within a nation. Just as serious and perhaps even more visible is the alienation that exists within a culture and a nation. The alienation within a nation can be reflected in the distribution of wealth within the nation. One indicator is the ratio of the consumption by those in the highest consuming 10% of the nation to those in the lowest 10%. As a reference, this ratio is typically in the range of 8-17 for Western and Asian nations. By contrast, in Africa and Latin American, this ratio is typically 20-40, although there are ratios as high as 66, 78, and 85.¹¹ This means that the highest consuming 10% of the nation enjoys using 30, 40, even 80 times as much as the lowest consuming 10%. What is disturbing is that this ratio is so much higher within the poorest nations.¹² Thus, the distribution of wealth within a developing nation is nearly as skewed as it is between the developed and developing worlds.¹³ It should be no surprise, then, that the level of alienation within a developing nation is so high. In eradicating poverty, it will be necessary to address this alienation.

Alienation Within the Family. Then, there is alienation within the family. Let me illustrate this by asking the gentlemen this question: How many times have you said to your wife “I wish I were a woman instead of a man”? On the other hand, has your wife ever said to you “I wish I were a man, because I would have more opportunities”? The reason this statement is only made in one direction is because the members of one of the genders have a distinct advantage. Members of the other gender frequently feel alienated. There is intense pain over a lack of educational and vocational opportunities. Overcoming poverty will require the full participation of every member of society. We cannot afford for half of our population to feel like second-class citizens. We must resolve their alienation.

Confronting Alienation. I believe that the point is made that we have alienation at every level of our societies. The sad scenario I am painting for you today is that, generally, we are far too comfortable with people living as second-class citizens within our families, our nations and our world.

On each alienation issue, there is a pairing of two groups: those who benefit from the alienation and those who suffer—in other words, alienators and alienated. Alienation involves stepping on others to gain advantage. It involves hurting people, even some close to us, for our personal benefit. I am arguing that alienation is an active process, not simply a passive one as we would like to argue if we wanted to be excused from personal responsibility. I consider that consenting to receive the benefits of alienation makes me fully an active participant.

Correcting alienation will require my confronting my advantages over a significant fraction of my brothers and sisters. I have a privileged position and opportunities that half of the world does not have, just by my gender. What did I do to deserve or to gain this privilege? Absolutely nothing! I have a privileged position and opportunities that 85%¹⁴ of the people of our world do not have just by my being born in a developed nation. What did I do to deserve or to gain this privilege? Absolutely nothing! Once we recognize that alienation is an active process, then it is clear that we who benefit from the alienation process must voluntarily release our grip on that benefit and work to reverse alienation. We must be willing to sacrifice something that does not really belong to us. With privilege comes responsibility. Those of us who are on the privileged side of alienation issues are the ones who must break down the alienation. The change must start with us.

The major problem is that we who benefit from alienation are unwilling to give up our advantages. I see an unwillingness of those benefiting to use their advantage to correct the alienation. To be blunt, we are willing to deal with

every alienation issue except the ones from which we personally benefit. But this is precisely what will have to change if we are ever to overcome poverty.

If you are from a developed nation and you tell me that you are committed to eradicating poverty and yet you tolerate alienation of our brothers and sisters from LDCs or from Islamic civilization or from Africa or any of the other major civilizations, then to me you are not believable. If you are from a developing nation and you tell me that you are committed to eradicating poverty and yet you tolerate alienation within your nation, then to me you are highly suspect. If you tell me that you are committed to eradicating poverty and yet you tolerate alienation of your wife, then to me you are not credible.

The fundamental issue is: Are we willing to loosen our grip on the advantages we have received, through no merit of our own, for the sake of reducing alienation? We are faced with the seemingly insurmountable challenge of overcoming our selfish impulses to treat others as if they are just as important as we are. I am convinced that we can only do this with the power of God.

Jesus confronted the problem of tolerating alienation when He commanded “Love your neighbour as yourself.”¹⁵ This sounds difficult enough, but Jesus added an element that makes this even more difficult. Jesus used a word for *love* that in the original language describes a love for another that is unconditional, not based upon whether the recipient deserves it. This is a pure love, not for anything that can be gained in return. Not surprisingly, this word *agape* does not occur anywhere in Greek literature outside of the teachings of Jesus in the Bible.¹⁶ When Jesus said “Love your neighbour as yourself,” He was not saying to reduce hostilities with our neighbour for our mutual benefit. He was saying that we are to care about others with pure motivation—for their sakes and for their sakes alone. When Jesus defined the neighbours whom we are to love unconditionally, He referred to the ethnic enemies of the hearers¹⁷—a clearly alienated group. We are to love those whom our society teaches us are unlovable and whom we should hate—those whom our society permits or even encourages us to alienate.

How can we love those with whom we have differences? Let us consider the context of Jesus’ remarks. Jesus’ full statement was:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”¹⁸

This does not say “Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself.” It says “Love yourself with God’s kind of love, then love your neighbour the same way.” The reason we do not and cannot love others is because we do not and cannot love ourselves. We cannot accept ourselves as a creation of God—sinners, yes, but sinners who can be forgiven through Jesus’ death on our behalf. Our inability to accept ourselves and love ourselves makes it impossible to love others. As human beings, we are too insecure to love ourselves. The key to all of this was described by Jesus when He told us to love God first. It is only as we love God and begin to understand and trust Him, that we have confidence in what He has done in creating us and designing a plan for us. Only God can forgive us and, with it, change our nature, giving us the capacity to love ourselves. Once we love Him, we can love ourselves. Then, and only then, can we begin to love others, and begin to reverse alienation.

Everyone must view it as his or her personal responsibility to reduce feelings of alienation in our world. Jesus told us:

Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.¹⁹

I know that I am a part of a group that has hurt my fellow human beings. This means that I cannot even go to the altar and worship God if I do not seek forgiveness from and reconciliation with my fellow human being whom I have offended. We must humble ourselves before God, seek forgiveness from those we have alienated, and then commit ourselves to change, with God’s help.

The inner struggle we face in changing was expressed by the Apostle Paul when he said:

*I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to—what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong....But I can't help myself, because I'm no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things.*²⁰

We each have a side of us that alienates. It is obvious that we need an agent capable of changing us on the inside. We each have an alienating nature that, I am convinced, can only be brought under control by the power of God. I am convinced that the person of Jesus is a key part of this.

Can God change a person from one with the capacity to alienate into one with the capacity to heal alienation? I am convinced that God is powerful enough to do much more than this. Let me share one example of His power in the life of my wife Elaine. Sixteen years ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her: "You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right." She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, which had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can work in our hearts to make us, who are by nature alienators, into agents for healing alienation.

I need this kind of power in my life in order to be a healer from alienation rather than one who inflicts alienation. For me, this is summarized in the words of the Apostle Paul when he said "I have been crucified with Christ; and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."²¹ It is by voluntarily giving up my personal goals to God and allowing Jesus to live my life for me that I have the ability to move from alienator to healer. God has told us through His servant: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"²²

Dealing specifically with the form of alienation that underlies poverty, let us consider how obedience to God can change the situation. Listen to this historical example from the first century. Referring to followers of Jesus:

*All the believers were of one heart and mind, and no one felt that what he owned was his own; everyone was sharing. And the apostles preached powerful sermons about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and there was warm fellowship among all the believers, and no poverty—for all who owned land or houses sold them and brought the money to the apostles to give to others in need.*²³

This is a group of people who clearly were able to deal with their alienation issues. Each member of this group started out as an alienator. However, each member of this group had been changed by the power of God.

The group illustrated here presents us with a very high standard. My dream is to see this kind of cooperation. For now, let us, with our first step, accept a lower standard. Once we have learned the principles of successfully conducting business, will we keep them from our brother or sister? No, we would share them. If he asked me if I would purchase his goods, would I buy them on equal footing? Gladly. If he asked me if I would give him a helping hand? I would. If he asked me if I would help him have access to the global economy? Definitely!

Such an approach has never been attempted on the scale I am proposing. The closest example we have is England in the eighteenth century. England, by the middle of that century, experienced a measure of economic prosperity. However, there was tremendous economic disparity fuelled by rampant greed and abuse of power, leading to poverty and famine. In the midst of abundance all around, fathers could not obtain enough work or income to feed their families. The economic abuse included children working in factories and coalmines 14 to 16 hours per day, often under dangerous conditions.²⁴ In the midst of this, a spiritual renewal spread throughout England. People at all levels of soci-

ety experienced a change of heart toward God. Many changed their goals and the way they lived. Many leaders lived their changed lives in the public arena and encouraged others at all levels of society to participate in that renewal. As a result, reform took place in several areas: social, political, and economic. Economic reform included tackling the laissez faire system of economics, public works programs to elevate the salaries of working class labourers, and increased personal philanthropy toward the poor.²⁵ There was a dramatic improvement of the lives of those on the lower rungs of society.

Knowing what I know now, I am convinced that the best thing that we can each do to remove alienation and, with it, to alleviate poverty is to submit our lives to Almighty God and then to encourage everyone within our sphere of influence to do the same, whether from North or South, elite or peasant. We must ask God for the power to love those who are still alienators and encourage them to submit their lives to God as their Master.

How do we submit to God? The crucial question becomes: How do we become so intimately linked with God as to become His instrument for reversing alienation in our world? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by the selfishness we have been talking about. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings, whether as private citizens or government officials. It excludes us from the presence of Holy God. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. The problem is insurmountable from a human point of view. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²⁶

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”²⁷

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”²⁸ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”²⁹ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³⁰

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!³¹

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.³²

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in partnership with God as His servant in our world, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God that lasts forever and follow Him in healing the alienation of such a high percentage of mankind? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up — near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire to the other side of the Falls and back. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow to the other side of the Falls and back carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to be a healer of alienation. No one — neither you nor I — can become the agent God would use for healing alienation without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for healing alienation and eradicating poverty, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”³³

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, there will be a growing corps of individuals who are able to receive healing from our alienation with God and to, then, be a part of healing the alienation that exists in our world.

For this reason, I invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive You as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God’s agents for healing the alienation that exists on so many levels.

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Hope for Failing States

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We live in the midst of a highly dysfunctional world. Several dozen nations are not meeting the basic needs of their citizens. As the world becomes smaller, and more interconnected, we must deal with the troubled nations in our midst. Progressively more attention is being paid to these troubled nations. They are often referred to as failed states. They are variously described as: weak, failing, failed, or collapsed states.¹ All of these are troubled to varying degrees. All of these are failing their inhabitants.

Failed state status refers to the non-delivery of basic goods considered the norm for governments. Chief among these goods is security of person, followed in importance by health and educational services, and, finally, infrastructure in the broader sense, including stable currency and economy.² Conservatively, a third of the global population lives in such nations.³ Using life expectancy as one of many possible measures of state failure, we can realistically conclude that 60% of the global population lives in nations where basic needs are not adequately met.^{4,5}

It is true that there are states whose governments are simply unable to deliver basic services. What is highly disturbing is that there are states whose governments are unwilling to provide those basic services. Ironically, there are cases where the ranking officials have no intention of delivering services. This is done purposely. We have a refusal to govern. There is an analogy here with those corporations where the officers strip the assets, leave it bankrupt, and walk away. Based upon the legal system for almost any nation, we would judge this to be criminal behaviour. In contrast, within the club of states, such judgment is seldom made. Rather, we often treat such people as heroes, especially when this behaviour is coupled with anti-Western rhetoric.⁶ We have a class of government officials who have discovered that it is to their personal disadvantage to attempt to deliver public services to the broad population — that every dollar they provide in services to their civilian population is one less dollar to go into their pockets or those of their cronies. There are some officials who simply do not wish to waste their time on administering the nation. As one commentator stated, “In most failed states, regimes prey on their own constituents.”⁷

Then, there are societies that are ungovernable. This may be due to ongoing conflicts. There are nations whose value systems have been so badly damaged by corrupt regimes that there has been a societal breakdown, making them difficult to govern by sincere regimes that follow.^{8,9}

This issue is more than academic. Lives are stolen. Lives are shortened. Individuals are prevented from reaching their potential. Literally, hundreds of millions of individuals are cheated. We have a human rights problem of the highest magnitude. Far more lives are impacted by this problem than by slavery — far more lives than by genocide.

The result is frustration for everyone in such societies, and hopelessness for those on the lower rungs. They have no means of escape. Their lives are reduced from pursuing dreams to bare survival.

We in the international community are perplexed with what to do with the troubled nations in our midst. We must answer the fundamental question: What is the basis for their importance to us? Are they important because of our humanitarian concern for the inhabitants who suffer because these nations fail to deliver those basic services considered the norm for governments? Are they important because they fail to provide security of person for their inhabi-

tants? These nations do tend to experience an inordinate amount of conflict. Or, are they important because of a chaotic environment that may provide a haven for potential terrorists?¹⁰

The problem of the weak, failing, failed and collapsed states preoccupies us within the U.N.¹¹ A large number of the failing nations are included in the ranks of the LDCs. The failing states are responsible for: more than their share of civil wars, more than their share of refugees, more than their share of humanitarian crises.¹² And they consume more than their share of peacekeeping efforts. Their problems probably consume 75% of the U.N. budget. And they consume more than their share of the limited attention that the international community is capable of. But what is worse, it seems that with the massive effort the U.N. is undertaking on behalf of the failing states, we are accomplishing little more than a delaying or holding action, rather than real rehabilitation.

The moral issue that we must address is: Do regimes have the right to do as they please with the resources, assets and income of the nation, including channelling these for personal benefit, thereby depriving the inhabitants of benefit from national assets, including healthcare and education? Is building a secure economy upon which individual entrepreneurship can flourish a luxury for some fortunate small percentage of our world? Do we in the international community stand by when we see regimes depriving the inhabitants of livelihood, and life itself?

We have the perplexing issue of what to do with these nations — what our responsibility is. Ultimately, we must take some responsibility. We have somehow imparted an incorrect model of governing and societal responsibility — of what a working democracy should look like. We have contributed to this erroneous understanding, whether we have done this through colonialism or the international economic system, including the way transnational corporations operate.

There are advocates for massive rehabilitation efforts for the failing states. The advocates argue for intensive tutoring to continue, if need be for decades, until democratic governance becomes internalized within the governing class. Rotberg comments:

*...interim administrations have been anxious — very anxious — to ‘complete’ their ostensible missions and leave. They preferred short-term fixes and quick reconstruction efforts to sustainable efforts of nation building requiring long-term commitments. Effective, enduring, resuscitation demands creating or restoring capacities for security, for governance, and for institution building. That sometimes takes a generation or more. The uncomfortable but necessary lesson of the partially successful efforts to date is that the revival of failed and collapsed states will prove more lasting if the regional or international organization in command only very gradually, over a span of years, relinquishes authority to a new indigenous replacement.*¹³

Rotberg elaborates further:

*When states fail and collapse, the process...destroys the underlying understandings between the government and the governed. That is precisely why sustained state building requires time, massive capacity building, large sums from the outside, debt relief, and appropriate measures of tutelage. Rich nations must promise not to abandon state rebuilding efforts before the tough work is finished — before a failed or collapsed state has functioned well enough for several years and has had its political, economic, and social health restored. The worst enemy of reconstruction is a premature exit by international organizations and donors...*¹⁴

When we recognize that most of the weak nations have a short history of governing themselves independently, we have to ask ourselves: What kind of tutoring and modelling of democratic governance did we provide them? Perhaps that tutoring and modelling were incomplete, and we owe the people further help.

Will we in the international community act? Is our action predicated simply on a concern for ourselves, i.e., self-interest, or upon sincere concern for the welfare of the inhabitants of these nations, who suffer greatly? When considering those states that are legitimately failing, we must confront a sacred principle within the club of states — non-intervention in internal affairs.

It is nearly universally agreed that state failure is of human agency.¹⁵ Regardless of the seeming cause, it is agreed that failing state status can almost always be traced back to the leadership and their actions. Any attempts at rehabili-

tation must address the moral component. Our mentoring must include the moral. This is a heavy responsibility, for which we must make sure we are adequate.

State weakness is caused by erroneous thinking and erroneous behaviour on the part of government leaders. The correct view is that government is an institution originating with God. He makes it clear that government officials are servants of God¹⁶ and servants of the people. God established government to be His hands and feet to do the good for the people that He intends for them and that He would do for them if He had physical hands and feet, which, of course, He does not. Government officials are charged by God with operating by proxy on His behalf. God defined the quality of life He intends for every individual as “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”¹⁷ God defines government officials as “servants of God.”¹⁸—a servanthood that has nothing to do with what they individually may think of God. He mentions Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and Cyrus, King of Persia, by name as “My servant”¹⁹ and “My shepherd”²⁰ before either one of them acknowledged God’s existence or mastery over their lives.

God speaks directly to His servants who conduct their offices irresponsibly:

This is what the Lord GOD says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds..., who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed their flock? You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fatlings, but you do not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty.²¹

God then admonishes those who have shepherding responsibility on His behalf:

Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but freely, according to God's will; not for the money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.²²

When a government official steps into an office, he/she accepts a tremendous responsibility from God upon their shoulders.

Re-building weakened states requires re-building civil society as well. A weakened state is inevitably a reflection of a damaged civil society. Consider for example, the weakest states in our midst. We may reasonably conclude that it is the damage to civil society by decades of misrule that has rendered them ungovernable today.^{23,24} Thus, in addition to establishing security by the international community and tutelage of those in the new governmental structure, there must be a re-building of the civil society, together with its value base. This is a problem for a host of nations whose values have been damaged or destroyed by ill-intentioned leaders. I think a healthier way to look at our problem—the restoration of failing states—is with the functioning of democratic institutions as the outflow of a healthy civil society. Practically speaking, we cannot expect our government officials to be more moral than the society that produces them. Thus, generally we must begin with civil society.

My personal interest in rehabilitating failing states began when invited to help such a nation in the early 1990s to move from collapse based on a foundation of atheistic Marxism to a democratic state. In studying healthy societies, it became clear that there are seven essential characteristics that must infiltrate the lives of everyone in that society. I have studied every U.N. document on democracy that I could find and listed the essential ingredients. I found that these all can be categorized into those seven areas. The resulting seven essential attitudes that must be instilled into the heart of every member of a healthy society are:

1. *High sense of worth for the individual.*
2. *Governors as servants of the people.*
3. *Participatory.* Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.
4. *Inclusion.* Every individual and group should feel they can participate in the national dream.
5. *Justice.*
6. *Healing of wounds from injustice.* A healthy society must be a self-healing society because wounds are always

being inflicted, either intentionally or inadvertently.

7. *Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.*²⁵

Interestingly, each of these seven essential attitudes is uniquely supported by faith in God. Neither atheism, nor humanism, nor philosophical systems will, by themselves, support these seven essential values necessary for a healthy society. (See “The Seven Pillars of a Healthy Nation and Their Foundation,” pages 205-229.)

Let me emphasize my point by considering an African nation generally viewed as a failing state. One of the considered predictors of a nation moving toward state failure is high infant mortality rate.²⁶ This particular nation ranked near the top in infant mortality rate. In 2005, a man was elected to the presidency of this nation, unashamedly explaining that his faith in God was one of his highest priorities. Shortly after taking office, he took steps to cut infant and maternal mortality, out of deep conviction of the value of every human being, based upon his obedience to God. What he naturally did out of obedience to God helped move his nation away from the brink of state failure.

As a part of mentoring, we must help change the thinking patterns that underlie failure. In teaching these principles to a group of political leaders of one nation attempting to recover from collapse, under a new regime, the leader of one of the major political parties stood before the rest and asked “Are there any examples in history of government officials actually serving the people?” He as a political leader of a state experiencing failure due to a damaged value infrastructure could not imagine that government officials would care for and serve the people. This sad comment is a measuring stick of a damaged society whose value base needs to be re-constructed. I am convinced that faith in God is an essential ingredient in changing the thinking patterns as we seek to help move failing states toward health.

The historian Gibbons summarized the relationship between faith and effective governance a century ago when he said:

*Every philosopher and statesman who has discussed the subject of human governments, has acknowledged that there can be no stable society without justice, no justice without morality, no morality without religion, no religion without God.*²⁷

Because of this truth, the religious institutions must play a critical role in this process. Education, and popular education—the news, media, and entertainment industries—can and must support this process. In many, if not most cases, there must be changes within these institutions in order to facilitate this process for the sake of the national good. Consider, for example, the religious institution. In discussing this issue with the Foreign Minister of one of the failing states, he told me, “If I go into a group of religious leaders and you were to ask an observer ‘Who is the politician in the group?’ the observer would point to everyone else but me!” The point is that those of us who have spiritual responsibility must put away the desire for authority and status, and commit ourselves to serve selflessly our societies.

Let me make it clear that I am not going out of my way to criticize the non-Western nations. State failure has been a part of our shared history. Tilley concludes, for example, that most of the states in Europe after 1500 failed. “And of the handful which survived or emerged into the nineteenth century as autonomous states, only a few operated effectively—regardless of what criterion...we employ.”²⁸

England in the last half of the eighteenth century is a vivid example of a failed state. Although it may be considered to have been at its cultural zenith, it was a complete failure in meeting the needs of the majority of its citizens. As is often the case, underlying this failure was a moral collapse. England was, to quote one historian, “built on the Slave Trade, child labour, the poverty of the masses and political corruption in high places.”²⁹ The extent of poverty, famine, and shortened life expectancy in the midst of the extravagance of the upper class was distressing. There seemed to be no hope for reducing the poverty and the disparity. And it would not have happened except for one thing. In the midst of this, John Wesley, the preacher, began a spiritual renewal that spread throughout the country and throughout society. As a result of the spiritual reform, lives were transformed, including those throughout the ruling class. It was this influential group that led the effort for social, economic and political reforms. At the forefront was the politician William Wilberforce, who led the fight for the abolition of slavery. With the social reform, many movements began

that led the effort to help meet the basic needs of the masses and lifted the human being: children's homes and orphanages; care-giving societies for the sick and aged, and for the blind and the deaf; hospitals for those unable to pay; the Salvation Army; city rescue missions for the destitute; to name a few.³⁰ At the same time, there were governmental reforms aimed at providing basic services for the masses. There were dramatic economic reforms, including tackling the laissez faire system of economics, public works programs to elevate the salaries of working class labourers, and increased personal philanthropy toward the poor.³¹ As a result of changed hearts and changed lives among the upper class, including the ruling class, there was an increase in compassion toward the less fortunate that led to personal charity and seems to have been a very important component in overcoming the extreme poverty. To me, this is a dramatic example of reversal of state failure triggered by spiritual renewal. I am convinced that there are principles here can cause restoration to happen in our nations today.

I am convinced that God is powerful enough to accomplish this. Let me share one example of His power in the life of my wife Elaine. Two decades ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her: "You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right." She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, which had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can work in our hearts to make us, who are by nature selfish, into agents for restoring the weakened states in our midst.

I need this kind of power in my life in order to be a force for lifting the dignity of human beings rather than one who steps on them, even inadvertently, to advance myself. For me, this is summarized in the words of the Apostle Paul when he said "I have been crucified with Christ; and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."³² It is by voluntarily giving up my personal goals to God and allowing Jesus to live my life for me that I have the ability to lift my brothers and sisters. God has told us through His servant: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"³³ For those of us from developed nations, we must humble ourselves before Almighty God and recognize our need for God's help in rebuilding the values in our own nations so that we may truly be qualified to tutor those in the weaker nations in our midst. For those of us from weaker nations, we need God to give us hearts to be servant-leaders to our people.

The key is that we must learn to care about the lives of others just as much as our own, even if we do not know them. I am convinced that our only hope lies in allowing God to make us new from the inside. I am convinced that the only force that can change our hearts from the self-centredness that ultimately can lead to damaging our nations, into hearts that would be willing to sacrifice our personal goals for the sake of restoring our nations is God Himself working within our lives and our hearts. And I am convinced that as God changes the hearts of our countrymen, one-by-one, that our societies can be transformed, and health restored to our nations.

How can we capture the help that only God provides? The crucial question becomes: How do we become so intimately linked with God as to become His instrument for restoring our nations? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings, whether as private citizens or government officials. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us.

The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this life-time means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.³⁴

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”³⁵

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁶ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”³⁷ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³⁸

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!³⁹

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.⁴⁰

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in partnership with God as His servant in our nations, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire over the Falls. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd

“How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow over the Falls carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to see God’s hand at work in our nations and to help achieve His purposes. No one—neither you nor I—can become the agent God would use in the lives of our nations without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for building a healthy world, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.⁴¹

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, there will be a growing corps of individuals who are able to begin partnering with God to build healthy nations.

For this reason, I invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive You as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God’s agents for restoring the health of our troubled nations, and lifting the well-being of those currently left out.

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Is Self-Governance a Sustainable Concept?

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The norm today is self-governance. However, this has not always been true. At the beginning of the twentieth century, not one nation had universal suffrage.¹ One relatively short century later, the majority of nations have universal suffrage. The United Nations has been a major contributor in this process. The move to universal suffrage has not been without problems. In many cases, this move has been accompanied by ethnic tension, the emergence of authoritarian leaders, and major abuses. There are inherently serious dangers in the self-governance process. There are regimes that claim to be afraid to give the people the right to rule themselves. Putting aside for a moment the likelihood that these regimes are simply clinging to power for selfish reasons, there is significant danger in allowing people to determine their own destiny.

One of the key steps in the move toward universal suffrage occurred in North America in the late eighteenth century. One theme of the American war of independence was “No taxation without representation,” and was an effort to participate in their own governance—self-governance. In 1776, the concept of self-governance was revolutionary. The concept of self-governance was not found in Europe, and not, as far I know, in Asia or Africa. Historically, it has been assumed that the common people were incapable of directing the affairs of society—that there is an elite governing class that is especially equipped to be entrusted with this responsibility.

The British were among the more progressive European regimes. At the time of American independence approximately 2% of the British adult population was eligible to vote in parliamentary elections.² The ensuing American republic allowed for the electoral participation of 40% of the adult population. Although this was a major improvement, still, women, indigenous inhabitants, and inhabitants of African origin were generally excluded. From today’s perspective, this was unacceptable, but, at the time, it was a radical step forward because it was predicated upon the conviction that the general population was capable of determining their own destiny politically.

In an effort to understand why the implementation of universal suffrage has not been as smooth as we would have liked, I would like to take us back to the late eighteenth century and the time of the first major step toward universal suffrage. I would like to review with you the thinking of those involved in that revolutionary step.

Concept of self-governance. As you know, there were many giants involved in this process—Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and others. They understood very well the inherent risks. Benjamin Franklin, coming out of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, was asked by a Philadelphia housewife: “Mr. Franklin, what have you achieved?” Franklin replied “A republic, Madam—if you can keep it.”³ He understood well the forces opposing effective self-governance. Professor Alexander Tytler, the Scottish historian, writing at the same time, said “A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government.”⁴ The Founding Fathers understood the dangers of self-government and they all expressed what they were convinced were essential ingredients for broad suffrage. Nearly four decades into the American experiment in self-governance, John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson—one Founding Father to another, after both had served in the presidency, shared his convictions:

The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were the only Principles in which that beautiful Assembly of young Gentlemen could Unite....And what were these general Principles? I answer, the general Principles of Christianity...Now I will avow, that I then believed, and now believe, that those general Principles of Christianity, are as eternal and immutable, as the Existence and Attributes of God; and that those Principles of Liberty, are as unalterable as human Nature and our terrestrial, mundane System.⁵

George Washington, in his Farewell Address in 1796, as he left the presidency, said:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Man and Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them.⁶

John Adams, addressing the military, while President, said:

We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions if they are not bridled with morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.⁷

The Founding Fathers all were convinced that obedience to God was the bedrock for self-governance. They stated their convictions so strongly and so repeatedly that we should be reluctant to ignore their instructions.

Daniel Webster reiterated the convictions of the Founding Fathers on the 75th anniversary of independence:

Let the religious element in man's nature be neglected, let him be influenced by no higher motives than low self-interest, and subjected to no stronger restraint than the limits of civil authority, and he becomes the creature of selfish passion or blind fanaticism. On the other hand, the cultivation of the religious sentiment represses licentiousness...inspires respect for law and order, and gives strength to the whole social fabric, at the same time that it conducts the human soul upward to the Author of its being.⁸

Webster elaborated on this theme:

Our ancestors established their system of government on morality and religious sentiment. Moral habits, they believed, cannot safely be trusted on any other foundation than religious principle, nor any government be secure which is not supported by moral habits....Whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens.⁹

John Adams warned:

Statesmen, my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People in a greater measure, than they have it now, they may change their Rulers and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty.¹⁰

Tendency of self-governance to self-destruct. The weakness inherent in self-governance that the Founding Fathers were trying to protect against was selfishness or greed. The fuller statement that we quoted earlier from Professor Tytler reads:

*A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the Public Treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the Public Treasury.*¹¹

In other words, people can abuse the privilege of self-governance for their own selfish interests, rather than the common good. It is only when the public can care about the common good that a society can prosper under self-governance.

It is clear that the architects of the move toward suffrage of the common citizens were convinced that the most important factor affecting the building of a self-governing society is the character of the people. Based upon Prof. Tytler's conclusion that "A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government," we can conclude that man desires self-governance, but his very nature destroys it. John Adams made the same point, saying:

*Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide.*¹²

We can see this destructive process occurring in the United States, especially evident during the current presidential campaign.

Moral requirement for self-governance. The alternative of a ruling elite is even more dangerous, because man unchecked is a very dangerous animal. C. S. Lewis argued that:

*Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters.*¹³

Those who constitute a ruling elite have the same fallen nature as those making up society, and are by nature no better.

Benjamin Franklin argued, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters."¹⁴ Without drawing God in, self-governance cannot work. One commentator made the following analysis:

*Freedom can only work to the extent of the morality of the people living in it. Without strong moral motivations, freedom develops into license and license into anarchy. Doing what is right in one's own eyes, usually ends up in doing what is wrong.*¹⁵

Individual self-governance. It is clear that the essential requirement for an effective self-governing society is the character of the people. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, said "If we are not governed by God, then we will be ruled by tyrants."¹⁶ By this, he was saying that if we do not submit to God and allow ourselves to be governed by Him, we invite being harshly governed by less scrupulous fellow human beings.

Robert Charles Winthrop argued:

*All societies of men must be governed in some way or other. The less they have of stringent State Government, the more they must have of individual self-government. The less they rely on public law or physical force, the more they must rely on private moral restraint. Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them, or a power without them; either by the word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible or the bayonet.*¹⁷

Self-governance as envisioned in the U.S. Constitution was predicated upon the capacity for each citizen to be self-governed or self-controlled. James Madison, a driving force behind the U.S. Constitution, said:

*We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.*¹⁸

Submission to God is necessary in order to handle our freedom—to prevent my freedom from hurting my neighbour and his freedom. The historian Philip Schaff tersely summarized the need for the spiritual dimension in any nation that would seek self-governance:

*Republican institutions in the hands of a virtuous and God fearing nation are the very best in the world, but in the hands of a corrupt and irreligious people they are the very worst and the most effective weapons of destruction.*¹⁹

This is why I am convinced we have as many problems as we do in our emerging democracies. Phillips Brooks, the nineteenth century historian, said:

*No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude. There is no such thing as an entirely free man conceivable.*²⁰

What Solzhenitsyn described with regard to infringement on individual rights applies equally here:

*...how can we ourselves make sure that our rights do not expand at the expense of the rights of others?...If we do not wish to be ruled by a coercive authority, then each of us must rein himself in. No constitutions, laws, or elections will by themselves assure equilibrium in a society, because it is human to persist in the pursuit of one's interests....A stable society is achieved not by balancing opposing forces but by conscious self limitation.*²¹

The key is conscious self-limitation.

What is the alternative? Apart from a self-governing society driven by self-limitation, the best you can have is a society limited in its self-driven anarchy by fear—fear imposed by authoritarian leaders. A society held in check by fear cannot achieve its full potential.

The historian Gibbons summarized the relationship between faith and effective governance a century ago when he said:

*Every philosopher and statesman who has discussed the subject of human governments, has acknowledged that there can be no stable society without justice, no justice without morality, no morality without religion, no religion without God.*²²

What are we to do? Some of you face a challenge similar to the one I face. For me, the challenge is that very few people in American society today understand what the underlying foundation for effective self-governance must be. Even fewer in the government understand this. The values of our Founding Fathers in the late eighteenth century are generally no longer embraced by our government leadership to the extent that if we were to attempt to establish a self-governing society today from nothing, I am convinced we would fail. Hence, the irony of attempting to export to other cultures something we would not be able to make work in our own culture. Others of you are from nations that blindly adopted universal suffrage without regard for the fundamental requirement I have elucidated here, with the predicted difficulties. What must we do?

Professor Ralph Buultjens concluded his book *The Decline of Democracy* with these words:

I feel a profound sense of drama, if not tragedy. Democracy is an ideal that has inspired the noblest sentiments of human civilization....The modern democratic experience appears as a brief interlude, a short flowering of

freedom, in the human record of political injustice and oppression....We must remember that the expectations for democracy have far exceeded its capacity; the reality has never been able to match the ideal. It is also clear that the traditional concept of democracy, the product of two centuries of effort, is passing into history.... Democracy arose in a time when the values of liberty and self determination outranked all others....If we seek to restore democracy, we must first renew the values that gave it birth.²³

Let us focus on his last sentence, “If we seek to restore democracy, we must first renew the values that gave it birth.” We must clearly identify those values, and that is what I have attempted to do here. I have argued that these values are based upon obedience to God. I am convinced, and am trying to demonstrate, that obedience to God must be the foundation for establishing the values necessary for self-governance. I am arguing for my nation to return to these values. Likewise, if your nation adopted self-governance without preparing the foundation of obedience to God, then I encourage you to provide leadership in building this necessary foundation.

Thus, the overwhelming evidence is that faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to God are the indispensable foundation for a self-governing society.

What about the application of Christian perspectives in a nation that contains other religious groups? Listen to this perspective from a Jewish man with regard to the role of Christianity in the United States:

As a Jew, I'm entirely comfortable with the concept of a Christian America. The morality of Christianity, though not necessarily its theology, is my morality.... Should America be a Christian nation? It comes down to this: in any society, someone's values must prevail. If America isn't animated by the Judeo-Christian ethic it will be governed by less enlightened doctrines.²⁴

The more Christian, in the true sense of the word, America becomes, the more morally sensitive it will be and the better for all of us — Christians and non-Christians, atheists and agnostics alike.²⁵

I am arguing that each of us must allow God to make us into the building blocks necessary to support and maintain self-governing societies. I am convinced that God is powerful enough to accomplish this. Let me share one example of His power in the life of my wife Elaine. Two decades ago, Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her: “You are going to be all right. You are going to be all right.” She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, which had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! The God who gave Elaine a new body can work in our hearts to make us, who are by nature selfish, into agents for building the values within our societies necessary for self-government.

I need this kind of power in my life in order to be a force for advancing the common good rather than one who steps on my fellow humans, even inadvertently, to advance myself. For me, this is summarized in the words of the Apostle Paul when he said “I have been crucified with Christ; and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”²⁶ It is by voluntarily giving up my personal goals to God and allowing Jesus to live my life for me that I have the ability to lift my brothers and sisters. God has told us through His servant: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”²⁷ We must humble ourselves before Almighty God and recognize our need for God's help in building the values in our nations necessary to support self-government. And I am convinced that as God changes the hearts of our countrymen, one-by-one, that our societies can be transformed into healthy, self-

governing nations.

How can we capture the help that only God provides? The crucial question becomes: How do we become so intimately linked with God as to become His instrument for instilling these values into our nations? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy — without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by our selfishness. Our moral imperfection — our unholiness — blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings, whether as private citizens or government officials. Our unholiness is incompatible with God’s perfect holiness. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²⁸

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”²⁹

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁰ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”³¹ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.³²

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!³³

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.³⁴

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in partnership with God as His servant in our nations, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire over the Falls. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow over the Falls carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering an intimate relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to see God’s hand at work in our nations and to help achieve His purposes. No one—neither you nor I—can become the agent God would use in the lives of our nations without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for building healthy self-governing nations, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.³⁵

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, there will be a growing corps of individuals who are able to begin partnering with God to build healthy nations.

For this reason, I invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive You as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God’s agents for building healthy self-governing nations where individuals can prosper and reach their God-given potential.

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Does God Intervene in the Affairs of Nations?

8 May 2003

I believe that we can only remain optimistic in the midst of events in our world today if we can answer for ourselves this one question: Does God Intervene in the Affairs of Nations? This is a time of tremendous uncertainty. We see decisions being made in our world that alarm us. Decisions are made that hurt others either by accident or with evil motivation. At best, decisions seem to be made with very narrow interests in mind, not for the general good. This is complicated by the fact that our nations are now so inter-connected that a decision made in one corner of our world affects those across the globe. As a consequence, the problems we face in leading our nations seem beyond the ability of any individual to solve. The question is on all of our lips: Is there any help for us?

I want to test two hypotheses with you: First, there is a God actively involved in the affairs of our nations. Second, His help is essential in leading and building healthy nations. For two decades I have been testing, together with government officials, the proposition that our nations must be governed in partnership with God. I would like to share with you some of those conclusions. I would also like to help you understand the work that God is doing in the life of each government official so that you can better understand the work of God around your own life.

Let me give you background information before we begin testing these hypotheses. God spoke through one of His servants to reveal the following truth:

He rules forever by His power, His eyes watch the nations.¹

You (God) rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.²

These affirm that there is a God who has created each nation with a purpose and a plan, and who is actively working out His purposes for each nation. God has described the general tenets of His plan as follows:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”³

God has a plan for each of our nations that is good in every way.

He pointedly tells us that He intervenes in our human plans to accomplish His purposes, with these words: “The LORD foils the plans of the nations”—that is, the plans of human origin that contradict His. God goes on to tell us: “He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.”⁴

One essential component of His plan is government. Government is God’s idea. It did not originate with man. God gave us His perspective on this institution when, referring to governing officials, He said:

*There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted...The authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.*⁵

Government is a God-ordained institution, established by God specifically for the purpose of achieving an orderly society in which each individual can reach his or her full potential. All government officials are servants of God, with responsibility for administering this institution. They are servants of God as much as any clergy. The Head of Government is chief among these.

God has given us one more piece of information. He has told us: "He sets up kings and deposes them."⁶ Although the head of the nation is important to God because of the crucial role he or she plays in God's plan, God often makes an example of the head of the nation to illustrate a fundamental principle. Generally, the principle God elucidates for the head of the nation applies, by extension, to all government officials. Here, we may conclude that God actively puts into office all government officials, yourself included, regardless of the human instrumentation He uses.

God's Active Intervention in the Lives of Government Officials. Now, let us begin testing the hypothesis that there is a God actively involved in the affairs of a nation and its administration. God's active intervention in the lives of government officials is readily visible in the lives of two powerful rulers who headed early empires. During a six-century period leading up to the birth of Christ, the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires, in succession, dominated the known world. God intervened in the lives of Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylonia, and Cyrus, King of Persia, for all the world to see.

God said the following to Cyrus, King of Persia:

*I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please"...This is what the Lord says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of...."so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God...who summons you by name....I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me."*⁷

Who is speaking here? Clearly, it is God Himself. He describes Cyrus as "My shepherd" and as "His anointed." He also makes it clear that as Cyrus enters office, he does "not acknowledge Me." God summons Cyrus by name, picks him up, takes hold of his right hand to guide him, bestows upon him a title of great honour, places His anointing upon him, strengthens him, and uses him as His shepherd even though Cyrus does not initially acknowledge God. This tells us about God's patience with us while we learn to work with our unseen Master.

The expression rendered "so that" in the English communicates cause and effect. There are two powerful "so that" statements in the passage we are looking at. The first is: *so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God....* God's first purpose in the life of Cyrus is that he would know for certain that God exists and is in charge. Parenthetically, the word *know* here does not mean to know about, but rather conveys experiential knowledge.^{8,9} The same original word is used of the intimacy between two lovers. All of the things that God does in the life of Cyrus, none of which he deserves, are so that Cyrus will know and experience God for himself. By extension, we may conclude that God's first great purpose in the life of the head of nation, and of every government official, is that he or she knows God in an intimate, experiential way. I am convinced the discerning government official will be able to see God's hand at work if he or she is willing. I am convinced that this truth applies to every public servant, yourself included.

The second "so that" statement is: *so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.* God's second great purpose in the life of the head of nation is that everyone else, as they watch the leader, will recognize the work of God. God works in the life of the head of nation so that members of society will recognize that there is a God who rules over that nation and the lives of all men and women. In Cyrus' case, God's expressed impact encompassed all of humanity, because Cyrus ruled the whole, known world. The application of this

truth is that the impact is upon everyone under the administration of the head of the nation. Likewise, when you apply this principle to government officials at other levels, the ones impacted are those under the jurisdiction of the official.

From God's hand in the life of Cyrus, we learn that the government official is so important in God's overall work on this earth that God sovereignly picks up an individual, and supernaturally places him or her in office. He does this with two overpowering objectives:

1. *so that you may know that I am the Lord,*
2. *so that all those under your jurisdiction may know there is none besides Me.*

We have no choice but to conclude that God is actively involved in the affairs of a nation and its leaders. This is made even clearer by the knowledge that God revealed these instructions and His purposes to Cyrus 170 years before he reigned. God gave these instructions to Cyrus in 710 B.C., whereas Cyrus actually began his reign in 539 B.C. God has His hand so much on the affairs of a nation that He could reveal His work in Cyrus' life long before Cyrus was born!

With this kind of intervention in the life of a ruler, you would expect him to change the way he governed for the better. The impact of God on Cyrus' life is in evidence within the halls of the United Nations. In the second-floor corridor between the Security Council and the Trusteeship Council is a copy of a document issued by Cyrus. The original may be viewed in the British Museum.^{10,11,12,13} Cyrus begins this document:

I am Cyrus, King of the World, Great King, Mighty King, King of Babylon...; King of the Four Quarters...

He then proceeds to describe his takeover of Babylon:

I, well-disposed, entered Babylon and amidst public jubilation, sat on the royal throne...My numerous troops took over Babylon without molestation. I allowed no one to harass or terrorize the people....I concerned myself with the needs of Babylonians...to promote their well-being. I freed the citizens of Babylonia from the yoke of servitude. I restored their dilapidated dwellings and redressed their grievances.

Cyrus describes himself as a compassionate ruler. That he, indeed, ruled in such a manner is supported by other historical evidence. This document testifies to a ruler being changed from the inside to sincerely care about the people. God picked up this man who did not initially acknowledge God and worked in his heart in such a way that he broke with the prevailing tradition of harsh, authoritarian rule. In fact, this document hanging in the U.N. is aptly entitled "The First Known Human Rights Declaration." God's work in the life of Cyrus is real and it is dramatic.

We can also gain valuable understanding by looking at the way God dealt with the head of the first of the four empires, the Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar II was King of Babylon at the zenith of its power. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar was presumably the most powerful ruler who ever lived. As such, he was proud and arrogant. God warned him to humble himself for more than a year. Finally, after Nebuchadnezzar continued to ignore these warnings, God humbled him by removing his sanity. Nebuchadnezzar spent the next 7 years living as a wild animal in the forest. Nebuchadnezzar describes his experience in a fascinating, open letter that concludes with these words:

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes towards heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified Him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation....He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have You done?" At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendour were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.¹⁴

Although the Bible is the most accurate historical book of antiquity,¹⁵ there are other historical works surviving from the early sixth century B.C. that support Nebuchadnezzar's absence from the throne for a lengthy period.^{16,17,18}

What I find fascinating is that this man — presumably the most powerful ruler in history, who lost 7 years of glory and material benefit due to God's discipline — expressed no resentment toward God, only the highest admiration. We must conclude that even when God has to correct us as we deviate from His path for us, He does it in such a way that we can recognize His love for us.

Can we find God working out the same two overpowering objectives in Nebuchadnezzar's life that He did in Cyrus' life?

1. *so that you may know that I am the Lord,*
2. *so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.*

Yes, we can! Nebuchadnezzar made it very clear that he recognized God's working in his life. You might think that it would be easy for Nebuchadnezzar to recognize God's hand working in his life. However, pride can blind a government official, especially the head of a nation. And in Nebuchadnezzar's case, it took seven years before he was able to recognize that it was God working in his life. Secondly, through Nebuchadnezzar's clear words, every subject in his empire would know there is a God who reigns over the empire and over their lives. We can imagine that both Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus governed more compassionately as a result of recognizing God working in their lives.

From my view at the United Nations, I have a partial, albeit very incomplete, picture of what God is doing in the lives of heads of nations. I have seen God working in the lives of dozens of heads of nations. So as not to betray trust, I will share very cautiously, without identifying anyone. One example is a man who governed for several years as a Marxist dictator. With the close of the Cold War and the opening up of his country to multi-party elections, he was soundly defeated in the first open election and removed from office. In the process, God began to work in his life. God caused him to repent before the parliament, certainly sparing him from the consequences of his past abuses. He then focused his life on getting to know God. When the next elections were held in his country, he had so changed that he was elected by popular acclaim to head the nation. Those around him tell me that there is no comparison between the way he governs now and the way he governed before. God was working out the same two purposes in this man's life as He did in Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar. And in the process, this man governs more compassionately as God is becoming the ruler in his personal life. It appears that God took him through a *Nebuchadnezzar experience* and, in the process, changed him into God's instrument in the nation.

Let me share one more example of God intervening in the affairs of our nations today. Two decades ago, there was a nation without the strong leadership it had experienced for many decades. Rivalries developed within the cabinet, each with his own backing, and the nation seemed destined for bloodshed. In the midst of this, followers of Jesus came into that nation. In response to their teaching, God changed hearts, and spiritual rejuvenation occurred throughout the nation. During the course of their stay, these spiritual leaders met with the cabinet. There were changed hearts and spiritual renewal within the cabinet as well. A few days later, one powerful minister came to the Prime Minister to apologize for his intentions and to express a desire to cooperate. As a result of changed hearts among the leadership, bloodshed was averted and the nation was saved. The change was so dramatic that when I shared this example, using similarly vague wording, with an audience that included a later Prime Minister of this nation, he came to me afterward and said, "That was my country you were speaking about!" God still works in the affairs of nations and in the lives of leaders. We simply need the eyes to see.

Not only does God intervene for the sake of nations, but He demonstrates His compassion, even more remarkably, by intervening in individual lives. A number of years ago, Elaine's and my lives were forever changed when God intervened in her life. Elaine was diagnosed as having a malignant ovarian tumour at an advanced stage. This kind of tumour at such an advanced stage is very difficult to treat effectively. Furthermore, the malignancy had spread to other locations in her reproductive system. Did this mean that God was going to allow my beloved wife to die? We did not believe it was God's intent. Two days later, she returned for further testing. As she was waiting in the examination room for the tests, in great pain, Jesus appeared to her in person. This was a miracle in itself. He told her: "You are going to

be all right. You are going to be all right.” She thought this meant she would not die from the cancer, but that she would have to undergo extensive treatment. Then, Jesus disappeared. A few minutes later, the medical technician began the tests and scanned her body for an hour looking for the tumour, but could find none! Subsequently, the doctors have taken tissue samples but have found no evidence of cancer cells. The symptoms, which had been present for more than a year, immediately left and never returned. She did not need any medical treatment. God clearly performed a miracle! God still intervenes in the lives of individuals today with a love that seems unwarranted.

As we consider God’s intervention, let us be honest. We must conclude that we, as God’s human instruments, have betrayed our responsibilities by not seeking to make decisions as God would have us and, as a result, we have made terrible mistakes, inflicting needless suffering. For example, I feel that we in the West should get down on our knees before the people of Africa and repent for the mess we have handed them through artificially carving up the continent and forcing peoples without natural affinities to function together. Similarly, at Yalta in February 1945, tens of millions of people were arbitrarily condemned to decades of dehumanization at the whim of influential decision-makers. And there are countless injustices being experienced today, all starting with the premise that there is no God reigning over our nations, to whom we must look and to whom we are directly accountable in every action we take.

One issue that causes me great pain is that the constitution drafted for the newly independent United States in 1787 tolerated the dehumanizing institution of slavery. Decades later, it was the sense of God’s directive to correct this injustice that drove Abraham Lincoln. Looking at his struggles as he sought to correct this injustice, we gain insight into his perspective on our active God. In the midst of this struggle, one man said to Lincoln:

Slavery must be stricken down wherever it exists. If we do not do right, I believe God will let us go our own way to our ruin. But if we do right I believe he will lead us safely out of this wilderness, crown our arms with victory, and restore our now dissevered Union.

Lincoln replied:

My faith is greater than yours. I...believe that He will compel us to do right in order that He may do these things, not so much because we desire them as that they accord with His plan of dealing with this nation, in the midst of which He means to establish justice.¹⁹

Lincoln saw God as working out a plan greater than our own. Our responsibility is to seek to understand that plan and to cooperate with Almighty God in achieving it.

What happens when there is injustice and we do not see God intervening? We must be quick to realize there are times when there is more He asks of us. For example, He has told us:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.²⁰

Many times God’s plan includes the requirement for our active participation.

This afternoon, we have taken a very small look at the way God works and intervenes in the affairs of nations and the lives of leaders to accomplish His grand purposes. If we are going to be honest, the conclusion we are forced to draw is that if God is at work in these ways that we can see, we must believe that He is at work in other ways that we cannot see.

As we look at our nations and our world from any angle, it is clear that we need help beyond ourselves. In many cases, our people are worse off than they were 40 years ago. Our hope cannot be in the one superpower. Our hope cannot be in the IMF or the World Bank. And, sadly, as significant as the U.N. is, even it cannot save us. No human force can be the source of our hope. We need the help of the one and only real superpower—Almighty God.

I am convinced that any honest Head of State/Government or other government official will readily admit that administering a nation is beyond the capability of any human being. For a national leader to try to fulfill his responsi-

bilities without seeking to understand the mind of God and depending upon Him would be analogous to your piloting a ship through the barrier reef around Bermuda without using the navigational maps that are available. Let me ask you: Would the use of those navigational maps be an insult to your intelligence, or an affront to your leadership ability? Of course not! It would be common sense. How foolish it would be to view a national leader's expression of dependence upon God as a sign of weakness! Guiding our nations is far more complex than navigating a ship through a reef.

If a leader fails to view himself as the junior partner in this relationship and ignores God's purposes and plans for the nation, I am convinced that untold, unnecessary suffering will be experienced by the people, suffering that cannot be fully alleviated no matter how much money or manpower is poured out in an effort to overcome the problem. Let me ask this question: If the work of the government official is so special to God that He intervenes in the life and actions of that official even before that official acknowledges his Master, shouldn't we readily cooperate with our Master rather than forcing Him to drag us along like a stubborn, disobedient child?

How can we capture the help that only God provides? The crucial question becomes: How do we become so intimately linked with God as to become His instrument in the leadership of our nations? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings, whether as private citizens or government officials. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's perfect holiness. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God....By Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.²¹

Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, "a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."²²

Thus, Jesus has told us "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."²³ God has told us "There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."²⁴ Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.²⁵

God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!²⁶

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.²⁷

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to operate in partnership with God as His servant in our nations, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire over the Falls. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd “How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow over the Falls carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to see God’s hand at work in our nations and to help achieve His purposes. No one—neither you nor I—can become the agent God would use in the lives of our nations without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for building a healthy world, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”²⁸

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, there will be a growing corps of individuals who are able to begin partnering with God to build healthy nations.

For this reason, I invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive You as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God’s agents for implementing His plans within our world.

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The Unfulfilled Passion: Universal Human Rights

6 May 2004

We are privileged to be at the centre of a momentous battle—to lift the human condition. There are three fundamental questions that preoccupy us: Are there universal human rights? Will we ever be able to agree on what they are? And, can we implement them for every person on this planet? I am convinced that every person knows instinctively that there are certain rights that belong to each of us as human beings. However, I am convinced that there is an even more fundamental issue. The major issue as I see it is not whether there are universal human rights, but, rather, whether we are willing to concede to others the same basic rights that we require for ourselves.

The challenge to human rights is illustrated by the rise of Lenin and then Stalin. Lenin used the argument of economic rights in his attack on capitalism. As described by one commentator,

Shortly after the Bolshevik accession to power, Lenin was presented by his favourite lieutenant with a set of draft guarantees of liberty...as an insurance against the revolution degenerating into terror. He waved it away: "Comrade, I see no need to circulate this...It is a childish idea...that we could stop or forestall so fatal a development with the help of this sheet of paper." The comrade in question was Nikolai Bukharin, who in 1936 was ordered by Stalin to put his catechism into the new Soviet constitution, which did not save him two years later from being wrongly arrested, dishonestly tried and peremptorily shot.¹

The essence of the issue is illustrated here. We use the argument of human rights to get our way, but we are unwilling to grant them to others.

For me, a clear indicator of where we stand in the battle for human rights is the issue of slavery. On the surface, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries broke the stranglehold of slavery that had existed for millennia. During the nineteenth century, out of great social convulsion, came the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the end of slavery in England, and the Emancipation Proclamation. The twentieth century saw tremendous progress in the development of legal instruments protecting human rights and that we considered to be an earthen work dam to protect us against slavery. This organization became a major catalyst for the birthing of these instruments. A cursory view would lead us to conclude that through education and social advancement, we have moved beyond slavery.

And yet, in parallel with these major advances, there were major retrenchments, often done much more quietly, that had the effect of undoing the good done by the warriors that gave their energies in the fight against slavery. The stark reality is that there are more people enslaved today than by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Conservatively, there are 27 million in a variety of forms of slavery today.²

Women are entrapped in sexual slavery.^{3,4} Both boys and girls are sold into slavery as labourers.⁵ Children are enslaved to fight and die as soldiers in wars they do not understand and will not benefit them.⁶ Even larger numbers experience the slavery of debt bondage and forced labour.⁷ In each of these cases, the entrapped are truly slaves that do not receive compensation for their labour and are not free to leave the labour relationship. The slavery is maintained

by force. The enslavement of the entrapped is never of their own choice.

More than 700,000 women are trafficked each year for the purpose of sexual exploitation.^{8,9,10} These women are coerced into sexual slavery,¹¹ from which few escape alive. Those who do escape are severely damaged. Let me make it very clear: These women are not prostitutes; they are sex slaves. They receive no compensation, and there is nothing voluntary about it. Sometimes, they are duped or lured into slavery based on the promise of education, a job and a better life. Sometimes, they are sold knowingly or unknowingly by parents or relatives. Sometimes, they are kidnapped. If they make any attempt to escape, they pay dearly, often with their lives. After they are completely destroyed emotionally and physically, they are sent home, generally to die of disease. Women rescued from sexual slavery experience tremendous emotional damage, from shame and guilt, to anger, to hopelessness and depression, to attempted suicide.¹²

What is slavery? Slavery is manipulating or coercing—actually forcing—someone to do something they don't really want to do with their hearts. It is taking away a person's right to choose and with it, taking away their humanity. The motivation is economic. The issue is simply this: In business, would you prefer to pay labour costs or to have free labour?

In facing the same battle, Abraham Lincoln said:

*The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty...With some, the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labour; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labour.*¹³

Clearly, the issue is: Who has rights and who doesn't?

The impact of slavery goes way beyond the 27 million deemed to be slaves. Because there is no agreement on what rights belong to every person, we have the weakening of boundaries on acceptable behaviour, and the usurping of rights of others. Thus, hundreds of millions more are abused in such a way as to be considered slaves, for all practical purposes. For example, let us take a closer look at prostitution. Earlier, I drew a distinction between sexual exploitation and prostitution so that you would not in your mind bring sexual slavery down to the same benign level in which prostitution is often viewed. Rather, my goal is to encourage you to view prostitution as serious a breach of human dignity as sexual exploitation. The forces bringing women into prostitution are far from benign. No woman would choose prostitution if she were provided with a skill set and a way to earn a living wage. By depriving women of that opportunity, in many cases they feel they have no alternative but to sell their bodies.¹⁴ One researcher described that

*Some prostitution survivors have stated that it took them years after leaving prostitution to acknowledge that prostitution wasn't a free choice because to deny their own capacity to choose was to deny themselves.*¹⁵

And yet, prostitutes are not included in the 27 million legitimate slaves. How many people, are forced into degrading, dehumanizing ways of life for the benefit of the dominators in our societies? The number of individuals living in borderline slavery is many times the 27 million.

Every culture has examples of slavery. Are these aberrations of an otherwise humane race? Or are they symptomatic of a deeper problem that we must confront? Dare we conclude that there is a fundamental flaw in the nature of man that we must confront—a flaw that transcends culture?

Where does slavery begin? It starts with me. It begins whenever I attempt to manipulate someone else into doing something they do not wish to do. Whenever I do this, I have taken away their freedom to act and begun the process of enslaving. We try to be the dominating force in every relationship that we have. We are each, by nature, enslavers. We try to enslave everyone that we can.

If you have difficulty envisioning that each of us has an enslaving nature, visualize the following with me: As a junior official, did you ever feel like your superior used your need for his approval for your advancement in order to exact from you things that he should not have? Of course. We all experienced this. But the method he used is one of enslavement. Hopefully, by patience and, sadly, cunning, we have escaped this. But the saddest of all is this: When you

reached the position where you were called upon to exert authority, did you manipulate people to do what they didn't wish to?

Let me share an example from my own life. There was a time in my life, a few decades ago when my superior used my need for his approval to extract things from me that he ought not to have. Essentially, it was his enslaving nature. Later, I found myself tempted to use similar methods over those who reported to me. Fortunately, God rescued me from this situation—not so much from being enslaved myself, which happened, but from adopting the mindset of an enslaver myself. Does it surprise you that you or I should fall into this trap? It should not, because we all have within our nature the tendency to control and dominate others. Each one of us has the nascent tendency to enslave. It is this nature that we must ultimately confront. Practically, I must have victory over this tendency every day.

Let me support this with two examples. Whenever we employ hungry workers and pay them substandard wages because they have no viable alternative, are we not enslaving them? Whenever we purchase goods produced by underpaid workers in the developing world who have no alternative, are we not taking advantage of them?

The second example: What do you suppose is our real motivation within the international community with regard to the Millennium Goal of reducing poverty? Is our goal to lift those in poverty all the way up to the level we experience, or is it rather to lift these brothers and sisters to a level just sufficient to satisfy our consciences? Is this not symptomatic of the problem we have been discussing?

Thus, although 27 million individuals are fully enslaved according to every definition of the word, all 6 billion of us have experienced the impact of our enslaving nature—and all 6 billion of us have exerted it upon others.

What will the solution be? Will it be a legal solution? Will it be an educational solution? Will education train this out of us? No! Where slavery exists today in each of its forms, the more knowledgeable take advantage of the more naïve.¹⁶ Education simply feeds our enslaving nature and makes us more cunning. Granted, education may help protect those vulnerable to enslavement,¹⁷ but it does not prevent us from enslaving. Rather, just the opposite. In fact, if you go back to the original documents arguing for universal public education in this country, one purpose of education was to create a docile working class to serve the emerging industrial sector. Noam Chomsky summarized education this way: “Schools...are institutions for indoctrination and for imposing obedience.”¹⁸ Thus, even our educational systems are often a manifestation of our enslaving nature.

What saddens me is the inability of religion to constructively impact our cultures and to protect us. I am angry that the unscrupulous take advantage of the sense of honour instilled into the common people to exploit them. Even when those holding slaves in debt bondage or sexual exploitation are corrupting the books, thus never allowing the enslaved to pay off their supposed debt, the enslaved seem to want to complete their unfair obligation in an honourable way. In many cases, local religion is used against the enslaved by instilling submission.¹⁹ Religion is often misused to mislead the victims into accepting their plight as slaves. What saddens me is that there are two sets of values—one for the enslavers, and one for the enslaved. Religion—as a minimum, a distorted religion—is used to instil submission into the hearts of the enslaved. This was certainly true of religion taught to slaves in the United States. In every culture, the elite of that culture hold certain rights for themselves, often imposing a false culture on their weaker brethren, holding them in bondage. This is one more manifestation of our enslaving nature that we should even manipulate religion to enslave our fellow human beings.

Furthermore, the problem is not a legal problem, and will not be resolved by legal instruments alone. The U.N. has done as much as could be desired in establishing international legal instruments protecting against abuse and in promoting laws outlawing slavery. As a result, modern slavery is conducted outside the law, circumventing the law, twisting the law. Whereas two hundred years ago, slavery was overt, today it is covert. Today, no one would publicly claim to be a slaveholder.

One of the common denominators wherever slavery exists today is corrupt government starting at the local level—government officials selling their services to the enslavers. It can only survive with the help of corrupt government officials who forsake their God-given responsibility of protecting the rights of individuals.

The problem is not a legal problem. It is a problem of the heart. Fundamentally, it is a problem of greed and of degrading one's neighbour into being a tool for economic gain. The key to maintaining slavery is valuing a human being according to what he/she can produce, rather than what he/she is.

There are limits to what can be accomplished by the development of legal instruments alone. A very instructive example is the elimination of slavery in England two centuries ago. England in the last half of the eighteenth century may well be considered to have been at its cultural zenith. And yet, this was, to quote one historian, “built on the Slave Trade, child labour, the poverty of the masses and political corruption in high places.”²⁰ Commensurate with this, there were severe human rights abuses. For example, there were 160 offences for which a person could be put to death, primarily skewed toward the lower class, including such offences as picking a pocket for more than one shilling, or destroying a small tree.^{21,22} There seemed no hope for abolishing slavery or for legal reform. And it would not have happened except for one thing. In the midst of this, John Wesley, the preacher, began a spiritual renewal that spread throughout the country and throughout society. As a result of the spiritual reform, there were social, economic and political reforms. With the social reform, many movements began that lifted the human being: children’s homes and orphanages; care-giving societies for the sick and aged, and for the blind and the deaf; hospitals for those unable to pay; the Salvation Army; city rescue missions for the destitute; the Y.M.C.A. movement; to name a few.²³ Many of these movements that we take for granted today actually resulted from the changes of heart during this reform. There were dramatic economic and political reforms. One key Member of Parliament, William Wilberforce, was a direct beneficiary of the spiritual renewal and committed his life to the removal of slavery, which was accomplished 50 years later in 1833 while on his deathbed.²⁴ The sequence that produced these dramatic changes is: spiritual reform that led to social, economic and political reforms, followed by legal reform, to hold in place the changes already caused by the changes in heart. Legal reform followed in the footsteps of these reforms, pinning the accomplishments into place. This I believe is the effective legal reform. I am convinced we must work hard on legal instruments to tighten the boundaries on human behaviour. However, I am convinced that legal instruments are most effective when preceded by a change of attitude, a change of heart.

The key initiating event in this case was a spiritual renewal that caused large segments of the society to submit their lives to God. How does our increasing submission to God change our enslaving nature? Practically, there are two ways. The first is seeing our human brothers and sisters as God sees them.

The way God sees us is understood by His creation of mankind:

*God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness....” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*²⁵

God created men and women in His own image.

Furthermore, we are told: “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”²⁶ Of all the species that God created, mankind is the only one into whom He breathed life. We must see ourselves and each other as very special. We are so special to God that God not only made man in His own image, but He breathed the breath of life into man. We are special by our creation.

We are also special by God’s intervention in our lives. God has told us “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”²⁷ Man is the object of Almighty God’s affection and His energy.

Then, we are special by God’s intervention in history. God came to earth briefly in human form to teach man by word and example how to live this life, and then to sacrifice His life so that we could have an intimate relationship with the God of the universe. He gave of Himself so that we could each have the fullest life possible. We are special by God’s intervention in our lives and in history.

Does this not make you feel that you are special? Does this not make you feel that all human beings are special, even when we see their imperfections?

When God commands us to pray and work for a certain quality of life, that quality of life is this: “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”²⁸ He has created each and every one of us with dignity, and to experience dignity. This is not an abstract human rights goal based upon some cultural prejudice. It is God’s desire for every human being on the face of the earth.

This is the majesty of human beings, if we can see each other through the eyes of God. If we cannot see human

beings through the eyes of God, we fail them terribly. We inflict great damage upon them. We are special by the dignity God bestowed upon us.

A beautiful example of the application of this principle occurred three weeks ago, when a woman in Burundi was honoured for her efforts to thwart genocide there. She, a Tutsi, together with her husband, saved the lives of 41 Hutus by fighting off a spear- and machete-wielding Tutsi militia. Her reaction to risking her life was this:

We did this because we were convinced that human life is sacred. We did it because morality obliged us to act. We should not put forward our own ethnic group, but rather our humanity. We were created by the same God....²⁹

It is this knowledge of the dignity of man based upon knowledge of our Creator that should be the basis of our search for universal human rights. Alexander Hamilton, the legal architect of the U.S. Constitution, wrote in 1787:

The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for amongst old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature by the hand of divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured.³⁰

There is a second way in which our increasing submission to God changes our enslaving nature. It is by relying on God's power to resist my human desire to dominate, and even enslave, those around me. I must fight this urge every moment. And I ask God for His help by appealing to the following Biblical principle:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.³¹

I need God's power on my behalf to bring my enslaving desires under control. Alexander Solzhenitsyn put it into perspective when he said it this way:

'Human rights' are a fine thing, but how can we ourselves make sure that our rights do not expand at the expense of the rights of others?...If we do not wish to be ruled by a coercive authority, then each of us must rein himself in. No constitutions, laws, or elections will by themselves assure equilibrium in a society, because it is human to persist in the pursuit of one's interests....A stable society is achieved not by balancing opposing forces but by conscious self limitation.³²

Human rights can only flourish through our conscious attempts to obey God and rely upon His power to overcome our enslaving nature. Apart from our dependence upon God, human rights cannot flourish.

As long as I permit any person to be belittled or degraded, I am correspondingly degraded. It is only as I see every individual as created in the image of a majestic God that I am set free. As long as I allow my wife to be viewed as a second-class person because of her gender, my worth is, at the same time, reduced. We must forever put away the idea that I alone have the right to be free and to use the energy of others, by my cleverness, by taking advantage of him—or her. That is why Abraham Lincoln, looking back upon the Emancipation Proclamation, said “It was not only the Negro I freed, but the white man no less.”³³

How can I submit myself to God so that I can have the power to overcome my own enslaving nature? The crucial question becomes: How do we become so intimately linked with God so as to become His instrument in lifting the dignity of our people? God created us out of love and for the purpose of bestowing love upon us as part of this intimate relationship. The God who reigns over nations is holy—without moral imperfection. However, clearly, we are not morally perfect. We have the capacity for evil. We hurt others, even the ones we love, by our selfishness. Our moral imperfection—our unholiness—blocks this relationship with God. It blocks us from the full benefits available to us as human beings, whether as private citizens or government officials. Our unholiness is incompatible with God's per-

fect holiness. By ourselves, there is no way we can come into the presence of Holy God. By ourselves, we are eternally separated from the One who created us and loves us. The eternal consequences are great when one recognizes that being separated from our Creator at the end of this lifetime means a literal hell.

How can this blocked relationship with God be overcome? We need a way to be forgiven so that God can draw us close to Himself. By ourselves, there is no way we can accomplish this. Only Almighty God can do it. That is precisely why God Himself came to earth as Jesus to die on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. God has told us:

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Mahatma Gandhi described that sacrifice when he said that Jesus, “a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”³⁵

Thus, Jesus has told us “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”³⁶ God has told us “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”³⁷ Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God is able to forgive us and to see us as holy. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the only provision given to mankind whereby we can have our sins forgiven and have this intimate relationship with God. God has told us:

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God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!³⁹

Let me be very clear: What I am advocating is not religion. It is the person of Jesus. As God Himself, Jesus is for all of us, not just certain races, cultures, or regions of the world. I believe this is what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he said:

Because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.⁴⁰

The repentance and forgiveness that allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and, as a result to overcome our enslaving nature, is centred in the person of Jesus. Let us not think we can have this any other way but through embracing Jesus and Him alone.

How do we place our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, so we can experience this intimate relationship with God? The illustration that communicates best to me relates to the region where I grew up—near Niagara Falls. The water flows over Niagara Falls so violently that if anyone falls into the water, it is certain death. Many people do risky things over Niagara Falls to gain attention. One of these was a tightrope walker. He had a wire strung over the Falls, from one side to the other. This man first walked along this wire from one side of the Falls to the other, and back. Then, as the crowd grew, he repeated his walk but this time he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked over the wire to the other side and back. Then, he boldly filled the wheelbarrow with bricks and guided it along the wire over the Falls. By this time, the crowd had grown very large and was cheering loudly for him. He then asked the crowd

“How many of you believe I can take this wheelbarrow over the Falls carrying a person inside instead of these bricks?” The crowd cheered wildly. Then, he asked the crowd “Who is willing to get into the wheelbarrow?” The crowd became silent. Their belief lacked 100% confidence. To place our faith in Jesus Christ means to get into the wheelbarrow with Him, making ourselves completely dependent upon Him. Our sole basis for having our sins forgiven and for entering a close relationship with God is Jesus’ death on our behalf.

It is this making ourselves dependent upon Jesus that gives us the capacity to experience God’s presence in our lives. No one—neither you nor I—can become the agent God would use in overcoming slavery and lifting the dignity of our fellowman without the life of Jesus in us. Therefore, if you are serious about developing the kind of relationship with God necessary for building a healthy world, I challenge you to come to Him. Jesus invites us:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”⁴¹

As we come to Jesus and drink, He will satisfy us and this will spill over to others in our societies, causing them to come to Jesus and drink. As others around us drink, there will be a growing corps of individuals who are able to begin partnering with God to build healthy nations.

For this reason, I invite you to come to Jesus and drink. Let me encourage you to embrace the Master Shepherd of our world and your life. I encourage you to invite Jesus into your life by praying to God:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have an intimate relationship with You. I ask You to come into my life to dwell. Today, I receive You as my Saviour from my sins. I ask You to guide me moment-by-moment as I serve You. Thank You. Amen.

Not only will this start you on the most exciting journey known to mankind, but it is the most significant thing each of us can do to become God’s agent for lifting the dignity of our peoples.

Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of Dr. Charles Habib Malik (1906-87) of Lebanon, signer of the U.N. Charter, the second President of ECOSOC, and President of the Thirteenth General Assembly. I continue to be inspired by the way his deep faith guided him as a key drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I am especially grateful for the way he invested in my life.

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Is the Bible God's Authoritative Guide for Our Lives and for Affairs of State?

The History and Structure of the Bible. The Bible consists of 66 books written by 36 authors over a period of 1600 years.¹ The Old Testament consists of 39 books written 1500 B.C.-450 B.C. The Old Testament is primarily a history of God dealing with one people, with important applications to everyone else. The New Testament contains 27 books all written 45 A.D.-90 A.D. The New Testament describes the life and teachings of Jesus, and their application to the life of His follower. The New Testament consists of 4 Gospels, 22 Epistles (letters), one Revelation. All were written during the lifetime of eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ.

The Bible's Claims to Be the Word of God. The Bible is filled with claims that it is the word of God. Altogether, this claim is made more than 3,000 times in the Bible. The Bible is filled with the following kinds of statements: "Thus says the Lord;" "declares the Lord;" "God spoke;" etc. For example, the Bible states:

*This is what the Lord says: I am the Lord, and there is no other...I, the Lord, do all these things.*²

The Bible makes the following claim about itself:

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*³

The Bible states the mechanism by which God delivered His word through human beings:

*For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*⁴

The Bible describes these writers as being borne along by the Spirit of God, as the wind fills the sail of a ship and takes it in a certain direction. God spoke His Word through His hand-picked individuals.

What Does Jesus Say About the Bible? Jesus consistently referred to the Bible as the Word of God, for example:

*This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.*⁵

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a

*pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*⁶

What Do the Apostles Say About the Bible? The Apostle Paul said, for example:

*If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.*⁷

The Apostle Peter said:

*...Just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*⁸

The Apostles of Jesus considered the Holy Scriptures to include not only the writings of the prophets and the teachings of Jesus, but also the writings of the Apostles.

What Does the Bible Say About Its Historical Accuracy? The Bible writers—the human instruments through whom God conveyed His message to mankind—repeatedly stated the historical accuracy of their writings. For example, the Apostle John wrote:

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.*⁹

The historian Luke wrote:

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*¹⁰

The Apostle Peter wrote:

*We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain.*¹¹

Obviously, historical accuracy is an essential requirement before we can consider the spiritual accuracy of the message. However, not only is the Bible an accurate historical book, but it is an accurate report to mankind of the message God wants us to have from Him. It is nothing less than God's Word to mankind.

Prophecy as the Test of God's Word. The Old Testament, when it was written, was 25% prophetic. It was a combination of short-term prophecy and long-term prophecy. As you saw the short-term prophecies being fulfilled, it gave

you confidence that God would fulfill the long-term prophecies, which might involve decades or centuries. More than 300 of the long-term prophecies relate to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. They describe His birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection in remarkable detail. All of these prophecies about Jesus were fulfilled in Him. And they were all written in the Old Testament, which means they were all written down before 450 B.C. Thus, with a 450-year gap between their writing and their fulfillment in the life of Jesus, no one could doubt that Jesus legitimately fulfilled them.

Archaeology as the Test of God's Word. What does archeology say about the Bible? Nelson Glueck, the renowned Jewish archeologist, wrote "It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever [disproved] a biblical reference."¹² He went on to describe "the almost incredibly accurate historical memory of the Bible, and particularly so when it is fortified by archeological fact."¹³

Skeptics have criticized the Biblical account of the fall of Jericho as being impossible. The Bible describes this incident as follows:

When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.¹⁴

Critics claimed that this passage was not historical, that the walls could not have fallen down flat, outward. During the excavations of Jericho (1930-1936), Garstang found something so startling that a statement of what they found was prepared and signed by himself and two other members of the team. Garstang said:

As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city.¹⁵

Thus, on this point, the Bible has been confirmed by archeology to be accurate.

Because Luke was a historian, he gave us sufficient historical information to examine his writings. Before the advent of modern archeology, Luke was extensively criticized as being historically inaccurate. However, archeology has proven him reliable. Sir William Ramsay, trained in the German historical school of the mid-nineteenth century and considered one of the greatest archeologists ever to have lived, said:

Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history, and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely much that was valueless for his purpose. In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.¹⁶

Has the Bible Been Distorted Throughout History? The Bible has always been viewed as the direct word to mankind from a God who is holy, awesome, powerful and who deals quickly and harshly with anyone who would distort His truths to mankind. Those who have transcribed and translated the Bible have operated with the conviction that it is God's Holy Word and have treated it with the same fear and respect that they would God Himself. Thus, the Bible has been passed on from generation to generation for 3,500 years as the most accurate document of history. There are a handful of questionable words that have crept into the text over the centuries. However, not one of these affects a single Biblical truth. The author of the Bible is clearly God. God, who is powerful enough to convey His truths through human instruments to mankind, is also able to protect those truths and to convey them intact throughout 3,500 years of history.

Is the Bible God's Authoritative Guide for Affairs of State? The Bible is God's instruction book given to human beings. In it, God gives clear instructions for living our lives, and for ordering our societies. God makes it clear that government is His idea and that He is the head of every government. As such, He gives clear instructions for government and for those who would serve in government as His servants.

Where Should One Start? I recommend starting with the four Gospels at the beginning of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. One may start with either of these four. Some prefer Luke, some John.

For Further Reading:

Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino: Here's Life, 1972, 1979).

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God's View of Government and Government Officials

God has made it clear that He has created mankind and established each nation. He has designed three primary institutions within the world system: family, religious structure, and government. Each of these institutions deals with a different, equally important sphere of human activity. God is the head of each of these institutions. (For further insight, see God's Plan for Government. A Study Outline, especially Section III.A. The Limits of Government, Form of Government, Bringing Government Back on Course. Sphere of Government; and Section IV. God's Expectations for Government Leaders.)

Government has the primary responsibility of creating and maintaining an orderly society in which man is to live and to carry out the various aspects of his life. How are the three institutions to interact with each other? With regard to the other two institutions, government has the responsibility to maintain an orderly society in which family and religious structure can function. Government, however, must be extremely careful that it does not overstep its God-given boundaries and interfere with the God-given functions of the other two institutions. It must protect them, but not touch them.

Those human beings who serve in these three institutions are placed in office by God, are accountable to Him and serve at His pleasure. This could be demonstrated for each of the above three institutions. Let us take government as an example. Government officials are servants of God. God tells us:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.¹

The authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.²

In the sixth century B.C., God referred to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, as "My servant."^{3,4} Government officials are God's servants and are doing His work even if they do not recognize Him and worship Him. God referred to Cyrus, King of Persia, as "His anointed,...whose right hand I take hold of,"⁵ and said of Him: "He is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please."⁶ Furthermore, He said to Cyrus:

I will go before you...so that you may know that I am the Lord...I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge Me. I am the Lord, and there is not other; apart from Me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me.⁷

Government officials derive their authority from God. They are placed in office by God and serve at His pleasure. Thus, government officials are God's servants just as much as clergy are, and have an equal responsibility to obtain

guidance from their Master in the discharge of their duties.

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The Relationship Between God's Law and Governmental¹ Law

God created man to function on many planes, not just the physical plane. Hence, God created man to be multidimensional. Furthermore, God has created man to function within three primary institutions: family, religious structure, government. Each of these three institutions organizes itself to achieve the purpose for which it was established, each setting its own ground rules. Government has the primary responsibility of creating and maintaining an orderly society in which man is to live and to carry out the various aspects of his life. Government's responsibility does not even encompass all of man's existence on the physical plane, and certainly not on the other planes of man's existence, for example, the spiritual. Government deals with a very limited part of the total existence of man. On the other hand, God's Law deals with every plane on which man functions and every facet of his existence. Of the totality of God's Law, it deals in part with governmental law and in large part with other aspects of the existence of man outside the scope of governmental law. Thus, one who is primarily concerned with governmental operation should not dismiss God's Law just because some parts of it are beyond the limited scope of governmental law. Government officials must recognize their limited scope of responsibility within the overall plan of the Master Designer.

God's Law, in a specific passage of the Bible, may address a limited aspect of an issue of governmental law. God's Law, in its totality, addresses issues of governmental law to the full extent God deems necessary. God has given man who walks with Him everything necessary to extrapolate from God's Law to governmental law.

The ability to apply God's Law to governmental law requires an intimate walk with God and an intimate knowledge of the character and mind of God. Then, God can guide that person and speak to him/her. His indwelling Spirit shows the individual how to apply God's Law to the specific issue.

1. I have chosen the term governmental law to describe laws that are within the jurisdiction of government. There are several terms that cover all or part of this area—civil, Roman, municipal, etc.—terms that can have different meanings in different cultures. However, I have chosen the slightly more cumbersome term because it describes exactly what I intend.

The Seven Pillars of a Healthy Nation and Their Foundation¹

I believe the fundamental questions for the twenty-first century are: *What are the essential ingredients for a healthy nation?* and *Can we build a healthy nation upon any other foundation than faith in God?* It is these issues that I would like to explore with you.

There are two views of government in our world:

1. The State is all-important and the individual is expendable in the pursuit of the State goals.
2. The individual is God's highest creation and the purpose of government is to serve the individual in reaching his/her full potential.

The first view is all-too-common and has been the painful experience of too many people. It is the non-democratic perspective experienced under Marxism and dictatorships. The second view is the ideal of democratic societies. Every decision in government is made differently depending upon which of these two views is held. Those in emerging democracies are attempting to move from the first view to the second view. This move requires a radical change in thinking and, ultimately, in the value system upon which we place our beliefs.

As a part of changing our view of government, there are seven essential attitudes — pillars — that must be instilled into the heart of every member of government and of society:

1. *High sense of worth for the individual.*
2. *Governors as servants of the people.*
3. *Participatory.* Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.
4. *Inclusion.* Elimination of disenfranchisement or exclusion. No individual or group should feel they cannot participate in the national dream.
5. *Justice.*
6. *Healing of wounds from injustice.* A healthy society must be a self-healing society because wounds are always being inflicted, either intentionally or inadvertently.
7. *Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.*

I believe that every characteristic commonly attributed to a democracy is included in these seven pillars. Where do these pillars come from? How can we build them, then strengthen them? Are they uniquely supported?

There are two prevailing philosophies that do not support these seven pillars. The first of these is atheism. This was the official philosophy under the Marxism of the twentieth century. It is the *de facto* philosophy within those former Marxist nations moving toward democracy during the past two decades. Those raised under enforced atheism were not only cheated out of important aspects of being a human being, but they were handed a philosophy that will not support democracy.

The second philosophy is misnamed humanism. Humanism is less a focus on lifting humankind as a whole, as is often argued, than being set free from the perceived constraints of an Almighty God to focus on our own goals. A more correct name would be *me-ism*. Many have been beguiled by the proponents of this philosophy and subsequently seduced by it.

Humanism starts with the proposition that there is no God and constructs an approach to life without the need for God. Humanism is the philosophy that says “I am the master of my own world. I will look within myself for the solutions to the problems that I face.” It is human-centred and dependent only on ourselves.

The clearest statements on humanism come from the *Humanist Manifesto II*, in 1973, which interestingly enough originated about 30 meters from my laboratory. This *Manifesto* describes “faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them,” as “out-moded.”² It further describes faith as “harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter.”³ It proceeds to describe faith in God as “either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race.”⁴ It then argues erroneously that enlightened self-interest is sufficient to build a harmonious world, with equality for all.⁵

The original *Humanist Manifesto*, now called *Humanist Manifesto I*, 40 years earlier focused on removing man’s connection with his Creator. In place of hope based on God’s goodness, love and omnipotence, it states:

*Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.*⁶

—and I might add, he has nothing beyond the power within himself for achieving his goals.

Frederick Edwards, Executive Director of the American Humanist Association, favourably quotes Joseph C. Sommer:

*Humanism’s focus is on meeting human wants and needs in this world by the use of human efforts...This life should be lived as though it is the only one we have.*⁷

Humanism is the predominant philosophy even within deeply religious societies. It is so pervasive that it subconsciously consumes well-meaning religious people. We inadvertently foster it in the training of our children. It is the basis of our education. In addition, committed humanists are trying to seduce religious believers through what they term religious humanism, which is nothing more than godlessness. The humanist Robert Ingersol, again quoted by Edwards, describes religious humanism:

*Religious Humanism is usually without a god, without a belief in the supernatural, without a belief in an afterlife, and without a belief in a “higher” source of moral values. Some adherents would even go so far as to suggest that it is a religion without “belief” of any kind...Furthermore, the common notion of “religious knowledge” as knowledge gathered through nonscientific means is not generally accepted in Religious Humanist epistemology.*⁸

Thus, what is called humanism is nothing more than atheism dressed up to try to look respectable. Humanism must be considered as contemporary atheism—the successor to the atheism of the twentieth-century Marxist states.

And yet, because of the impact of this thinking upon the world in which we live, we are all far too close to being practical humanists. The challenge for each one of us is to understand the impact of this seduction upon our lives and public responsibilities, and then to draw into a deeper relationship with our loving Heavenly Father, from whom all life derives its meaning.

It is important to recognize that not one of the seven pillars of a healthy society is supported by either atheism or humanism. There are avowed atheists and humanists who support one or more of these pillars. However, neither atheism nor humanism, as a value system, will support even one of these pillars. The best that philosophy without God has to offer fails to lead us all the way to these pillars. Faith in God is the only belief that supports these pillars. I have great respect for the other major religions of the world. However, I am going to proceed based upon my experience as a follower of Jesus Christ. If you are an adherent of a different religion, I would ask you to attempt to find the same support for democracy from the teachings of your own religion and then let us sit down together and compare conclusions.

Let me start with a warning that democracy does not grow in every soil, that it does not grow by itself. It requires a special foundation in order to develop and grow. The pitfalls facing a society attempting democracy are so severe and so numerous that John Adams, one of the architects of the American democratic experiment, warned:

*Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide.*⁹

Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul E. Sigmund concluded their book *The Democratic Experience* with these words:

*Unstable democracy is the normal case because the democratic idea still has great appeal, and as the authoritarians fail, as they often do, the only legitimate alternative is to be found in democratic institutions...The prognosis for the future of democracy in the developing areas is a mixed one. Sometimes the circumstances will be such that a democratic leader and a particular combination of historical accidents will permit these forms to take root and grow. In many more cases, once the pattern of traditional rule is broken, a cycle of alternation of democracy and dictatorship ensues...The prospects then are for continued instability in a world in which stable, efficient democratic government is an ideal more often than it is an operative reality.*¹⁰

The harsh reality is that there are nations seeking to move from Marxism or despotism to democracy today that may fail and revert to a more human-degrading regime than the people experienced in the past.

Professor Alexander Fraser Tytler, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, said:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the Public Treasury. From that moment on the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the Public Treasury, with a result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy always followed by dictatorship. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through the following sequence:

*From bondage to spiritual faith,
From spiritual faith to great courage,
From courage to liberty,
From liberty to abundance,
From abundance to selfishness,
From selfishness to complacency,
From complacency to apathy,
From apathy to dependency,
From dependency back into bondage.*¹¹

It is clear that the most important factor affecting the building of a democratic society is the character of the people.

Ralph Buultjens concluded his book *The Decline of Democracy* with these words:

I feel a profound sense of drama, if not tragedy. Democracy is an ideal that has inspired the noblest sentiments of human civilization...The modern democratic experience appears as a brief interlude, a short flowering of freedom, in the human record of political injustice and oppression...We must remember that the expectations for democracy have far exceeded its capacity; the reality has never been able to match the ideal. It is also clear that the traditional concept of democracy, the product of two centuries of effort, is passing into history...Democracy arose in a time when the values of liberty and self determination outranked all others...If we seek to restore democracy, we must first renew the values that gave it birth.¹²

According to Buultjens, and each of the authors I have quoted here, we can only have democracy if we are willing to commit ourselves to the values that are precisely required in order for democracy to take root, grow and sustain itself. What are the values that gave democracy birth? Let us take a look at these seven pillars of a democratic society that I have listed above, and consider the failure of atheism and humanism and the support of faith in God.

1. High sense of worth for the individual.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.¹³</i></p> <p>Heinrich Himmler:</p> <p><i>We must be decent, honest, loyal and comradesly to members of our own blood and to no one else...Whether the other peoples live in comfort or perish in hunger interests me only in so far as we need slaves for our culture, apart from that it does not interest me. Whether or not ten thousand Russian women collapse from exhaustion while digging a tank ditch interests me only in so far as the tank ditch is completed for Germany...We Germans, who are the only people in the world to have a decent attitude to animals, will also adopt a decent attitude to these human animals, but it is a crime against our blood to worry about them and bring them ideals.¹⁴</i></p> <p>Adolf Hitler, commenting on the especially heavy casualties among junior officers:</p> <p><i>But then, that's what young men are there for.¹⁵</i></p> <p>Jean Paul Sartre:</p> <p><i>Every existence is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance.¹⁶</i></p> <p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.¹⁷</i></p> <p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>Ethics stems from human need and interest... Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures.¹⁸</i></p>	<p>God:</p> <p><i>Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.¹⁹</i></p> <p>God created man in His image.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.²⁰</i></p> <p><i>Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His.²¹</i></p> <p>Man is so special to God that God not only made man in His own image, but He breathed the breath of life into man.</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.²²</i></p> <p>God is man's servant to protect him and guide him.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.²³</i></p> <p>God revealing Himself through one of His servants:</p> <p><i>For You (God) created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.²⁴</i></p> <p>Man is the object of Almighty God's affection and His energy. God came to earth briefly in human form to teach man by word and example how to live this life.</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.²⁵</i></p> <p>Humanist Manifesto I:</p> <p><i>Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.²⁶</i></p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant about Himself and Jesus — God in human form:</p> <p><i>Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.²⁷</i></p> <p>God came to earth briefly in human form to suffer on our behalf so that we could each have the fullest life. God as Jesus said:</p> <p><i>I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.²⁸</i></p> <p>Does this not make you feel that you are special? Does this not make you feel that all human beings are special, even when we see their imperfections?</p>

2. Governors as servants of the people.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Josef Stalin:</p> <p><i>The State is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies.</i>²⁹</p> <p>Vladimir Ilyich Lenin:</p> <p><i>The State is a special cudgel, nothing more.</i>³⁰</p> <p>Stalin:</p> <p><i>The live man is a burden. The dead man is no burden.</i>³¹</p> <p>Mao Tse-tung:</p> <p><i>Communism is not love. Communism is a hammer which we use to crush our enemy.</i>³²</p> <p>Mao:</p> <p><i>Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.</i>³³</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves...For [the ruler] is God's servant to do you good...He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong-doer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.</i>³⁴</p> <p>The government official is a servant of God. He/she is a servant of God just as much as any clergyman.</p> <p>God described Nebuchadnezzar, the harsh ruler of the Babylonian Empire with these words:</p> <p><i>My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon...</i>³⁵</p> <p>And God later dealt firmly with Nebuchadnezzar to bring him in line.</p> <p>God paints the following picture to depict the Head of Government as servant of the people:</p> <p><i>He chose David His servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep He brought him to be the shepherd of His people Jacob, of Israel His inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.</i>³⁶</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p>In describing the Head of Government as a servant of the people, God uses the picture of a shepherd. What is a shepherd? The shepherd protects the sheep, finds food for the sheep, anticipates danger to the sheep and avoids it, has complete responsibility for the safety and well-being of the sheep. The shepherd is a servant of the sheep. This is God's picture of what the Head of Government must do for the people of his/her nation.</p> <p>And when the Head of Government does not serve the people, God deals with them as He described in this situation:</p> <p><i>“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!” declares the LORD. Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend My people: “Because you have scattered My flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD. “I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.</i>³⁷</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever he does.</i>³⁸</p> <p><i>You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.</i>³⁹</p> <p><i>Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.</i>⁴⁰</p> <p><i>Be eager to serve.</i>⁴¹</p>

3. Participatory.

Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Benito Mussolini:</p> <p><i>Nothing beyond the State, above the State, against the State. Everything to the State, for the State, in the State.</i>⁴²</p> <p>Hermann Goering:</p> <p><i>Let me have men about me that are utter villains—provided that I have the power, the absolute power, over life and death.</i>⁴³</p>	<p>God:</p> <p><i>Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you...Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.</i>⁴⁴</p> <p>God, through the Apostle Paul:</p> <p><i>First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.</i>^{44b}</p> <p>Full participation occurs when we invest our energy to support our prayers.</p>

4. Inclusion. Elimination of disenfranchisement or exclusion.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Hitler:</p> <p><i>Like a woman...the masses love a dominator rather than a suppliant and feel inwardly more satisfied by a doctrine which tolerates no other beside itself than by the granting of liberal freedom. They have no idea what to do with it as a rule, and tend to feel they have been abandoned.</i>⁴⁵</p> <p>Ernest Rohm, Nazi leader:</p> <p><i>Brutality is respected. The people need wholesome fear. They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive...Why babble about brutality and get indignant about tortures? The masses want them. They need something that will give them a thrill of horror.</i>⁴⁶</p> <p>Humanist Manifesto I:</p> <p><i>In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life.</i>⁴⁷</p> <p>The individual's own life is ultimately all that matters. This is at the root of exclusion.</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.</i>⁴⁸</p> <p><i>Fathers, do not exasperate your children....</i>⁴⁹</p> <p>There are three God-ordained institutions: marriage and the family; government; and church. There are strong parallels between these three institutions. Each was established by God. Those who serve in these institutions are servants of God. The servant in each of these institutions is admonished to keep from inflicting frustration and hopelessness to those whom he/she serves.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature, rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command. "Love your neighbour as yourself."</i>⁵⁰</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself...I am the Lord your God.</i>⁵¹</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."</i>⁵²</p> <p>As the antidote to hopelessness, God's plan for every man, woman and child is hope.</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p>God:</p> <p><i>If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.⁵³</i></p> <p>We, as human beings, are to work for the removal of oppression and the resulting hopelessness from the rest of humanity.</p>

5. Justice.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Ernest Rohm, Nazi leader:</p> <p><i>Brutality is respected. The people need wholesome fear. They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive...Why babble about brutality and get indignant about tortures? The masses want them. They need something that will give them a thrill of horror.</i>⁵⁴</p> <p>Leon Trotsky:</p> <p><i>The dictatorship of the Communist Party is maintained by recourse to every form of violence.</i>⁵⁵</p> <p>Lenin, in ordering mass terror in the Soviet Union:</p> <p><i>It is necessary secretly—and urgently—to prepare the terror.</i>⁵⁶</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.</i>⁵⁷</p> <p>Justice is a high requirement of God. He says more about justice than any other character quality.</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of My people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.</i>⁵⁸</p> <p>There is a special warning to those in governmental decision-making roles.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.</i>⁵⁹</p> <p>God revealing Himself through His servant:</p> <p><i>Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne....</i>⁶⁰</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p>God, speaking to an unjust king:</p> <p><i>For this is what the Lord says about Shalom son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king of Judah but has gone from this place: "He will never return. He will die in the place where they have led him captive; he will not see this land again. Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying for their labour"... "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and the needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the Lord. "But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion."</i>⁶¹</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully...The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.</i>⁶²</p>

6. Healing of wounds from injustice.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Charles Darwin:</p> <p><i>Looking at the world at no distant date, what an endless number of lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world.</i>⁶³</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Blessed is he who has regard for the weak.</i>⁶⁴</p> <p>Jesus began His public ministry with these words:</p> <p><i>The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour...Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.</i>⁶⁵</p> <p>With these words, Jesus was appealing to a passage delivered to man 700 years earlier:</p> <p><i>The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.</i>⁶⁶</p> <p>What phrases in this passage describe emotional healing?</p> <p><i>...to bind up the brokenhearted, ...to proclaim freedom for the captives, ...to proclaim release from darkness for the prisoners, ...to comfort all who mourn, ...to provide for those who grieve, ...to bestow on them the oil of gladness instead of mourning, ...to bestow on them a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.</i></p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p>And probably other phrases in this passage describe emotional healing as well. We tend to think of God and Jesus as providing spiritual healing. And yet, in this defining passage regarding Jesus’ ministry, it is emotional healing. I think the best way to view Jesus’ ministry is spiritual healing, building upon it healing from emotional distress, resulting in the quality of life God intends for us.</p> <p>God revealing Himself through His servant:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.</i>⁶⁷</p> <p>Jesus summarized the commandments:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”</i>⁶⁸</p> <p>This attitude must reflect itself in the way we view those who are hurting emotionally.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.</i>⁶⁹</p> <p>When we see someone who is carrying an emotional load that is beyond their capacity, we must help them carry that load. We have a God-given responsibility to help those who, for whatever reason, are unable to carry their load in this stressful world.</p>

7. Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>Individuals should be encouraged to realize their own creative talents and desires...We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility...The possibilities of individual freedom of choice exist in human life and should be increased.</i>⁷⁰</p> <p>This speaks of social responsibility as secondary to self-fulfillment.</p> <p>Humanist Manifesto I:</p> <p><i>The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good.</i>⁷¹</p> <p>Atheism and humanism assume that man is basically good, although there is frustration over social evil for which there is no solution.</p> <p>Frederick Edwords, Executive Director, American Humanist Association:</p> <p><i>Secular Humanist tradition is a tradition of defiance...or challenge to authority.</i>⁷²</p> <p>This is not a good basis for building a civil society.</p>	<p>God:</p> <p><i>Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you...Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.</i>⁷³</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."</i>⁷⁴</p> <p>God is admonishing the one who has more than he needs not to hoard it, but rather to use it to lift up the one in need. The idea is to help the one who is weaker to become stronger so that in the future when I have a need, he will be strong enough to help lift me up.</p>

We must build these seven values into every member of society in order to have a healthy, cooperative society. Furthermore, it is these seven values that lead to an attitude of public service. In an ideal democratic society, every member should be prepared to move from the private sector into public service whenever there is a need that they can fill.

Summary. Faith in God is the indispensable underpinning for the morality, the values, the character qualities and the attitudes that must underlie a healthy, cooperative society.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Friedrich Nietzsche:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>God is dead.</i>⁷⁵</p> <p>Karl Marx, when asked about his life objective:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To dethrone God and destroy capitalism.</i>⁷⁶</p> <p>Nietzsche:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I call Christianity the one great curse, the enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, too underground, and too petty.</i>⁷⁷</p> <p>Nietzsche said that “because God had died in the nineteenth century, there would be two direct results in the twentieth century: first...the twentieth century would be the bloodiest century in history; second...a universal madness would break out.”⁷⁸ Incidentally, he spent the last 11 years of his life insane before dying in 1900.⁷⁹</p> <p>Hitler took Nietzsche’s writings as his philosophical blueprint. Hitler personally presented a copy of Nietzsche’s works to Mussolini.⁸⁰</p> <p>Hitler’s words displayed at Auschwitz:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality...We will train young people before whom the world will tremble. I want young people capable of violence — imperious, relentless and cruel.</i>⁸¹</p>	<p>Dag Hammarskjöld:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason.</i>⁸²</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful...And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.</i>⁸³</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Viktor Frankl, survivor of Auschwitz:</p> <p><i>If we present man with a concept of man which is not true, we may well corrupt him. When we present him as an automation of reflexes, as a mind machine, as a bundle of instincts, as a pawn of drive and reactions, as a mere product of heredity and environment, we feed the nihilism to which modern man is, in any case, prone. I became acquainted with the last stage of corruption in my second concentration camp, Auschwitz. The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment—or, as the Nazis liked to say, “of blood and soil.” I am absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers.⁸⁴</i></p>	<p>George Washington:</p> <p><i>Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them...And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.⁸⁵</i></p> <p>John Adams:</p> <p><i>Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts contained! Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality and industry; to justice, kindness and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God.⁸⁶</i></p> <p>John Adams:</p> <p><i>Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.⁸⁷</i></p> <p>James Madison:</p> <p><i>We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves...according to the Ten Commandments of God.⁸⁸</i></p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Dr. Ravi Zacharias, in his book <i>Can Man Live Without God?</i>, provides us with vivid insight into the mind of a godless ruler. On one occasion, Stalin used a live chicken to demonstrate one of his operating principles to those in his inner circle. Holding the chicken tightly, he began to pull out its feathers. As the suffering chicken struggled in vain to escape, he continued to pull out its feathers until the bird was completely stripped. “Now you watch,” Stalin said as he set the chicken on the floor and showed it some food in his hand as he walked away. Amazingly, the tortured chicken followed him closely. Stalin dropped some grain on the floor for the chicken, and as it began to follow him around the room, he told his astounded colleagues:</p> <p><i>This is the way to rule people. Did you see how that chicken followed me for food, even though I had caused it such torture? People are like that chicken. If you inflict inordinate pain on them they will follow you for food the rest of their lives.</i>⁸⁹</p> <p>Lenin:</p> <p><i>Morality is that which serves to destroy the old, exploiting society.</i>⁹⁰</p> <p>Marx:</p> <p><i>Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people.</i>⁹¹</p>	<p>Philip Schaff:</p> <p><i>Republican institutions in the hands of a virtuous and God-fearing nation are the very best in the world, but in the hands of a corrupt and irreligious people they are the very worst and the most effective weapons of destruction.</i>⁹²</p> <p>William Penn:</p> <p><i>If we are not governed by God, then we will be ruled by tyrants.</i>⁹³</p> <p>Phillips Brooks:</p> <p><i>No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude. There is no such thing as an entirely free man conceivable.</i>⁹⁴</p> <p>John Adams:</p> <p><i>Statesmen may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone which can establish the principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. A patriot must be a religious man.</i>⁹⁵</p>

The Social Impact Upon Two Eighteenth-Century American Families

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Max Jukes was an atheist who married a godless woman. Out of 650 descendants who were traced, 310 died as paupers; 150 became criminals—7 of them murderers; 100 were known to be drunkards; and more than half of the women were prostitutes. The descendants of Max Jukes cost the United States government more than \$1.25 million in nineteenth-century dollars.⁹⁶</p>	<p>Jonathan Edwards was a contemporary of Max Jukes. He was a committed follower of Jesus Christ who gave God first place in his life. He married a young lady who loved God. Out of 1,394 descendants who were traced, 295 graduated from university, of whom 13 became university presidents; 65 became professors; 30 were judges; 100 were lawyers—one the dean of an outstanding law school; 56 practiced as physicians—one the dean of a medical school; 75 became officers in the military; 100 were well known preachers. Another 80 held some form of public office, of whom three were mayors of large cities; three were elected as United States Senators; three as state governors; and others were sent as ambassadors. One was the Comptroller of the U.S. Treasury, and another was Vice President of the United States. Not one of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards cost the U.S. government a dollar.⁹⁷</p>

Which type of family do we need as the building block for a healthy, democratic society?

Everyone in society must be imbued with these characteristics.

Fundamentally, we need a society made up of democrats who can move into leadership, but also who can discern democratic character in the process of selecting leaders. Hitler's rise to power did not commence in the 1920's. Rather, it began decades earlier when Germany's philosophers and theologians began to lead the people in the weakening of their faith. The weakening of faith led to a weakening of the seven pillars of democracy throughout society. This, in turn, facilitated the rise of non-democratic potential leaders and, at the same time, a citizenry incapable of evaluating potential leaders in terms of their ability to be effective servant-governors.

We cannot see in advance that a person with a flawed character will become a tyrant. And yet, it is a fundamental principle. Lord Acton emphasized this in his classic statement: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."⁹⁸ Edmund Burke said it this way: "There never was a bad man that had ability for good service."⁹⁹ For example, I am told that Enver Hoxha, the harsh Albanian dictator until 1985, did not depict himself as a tyrant when he entered office, but rather as a nationalist and as a saviour of the people. The same is true of Slobodan Milosevic. When a society does not build into the character of each member, often the members with the least character grab for power. As we move toward a truly democratic society, again our only hope is in God and in His ability to change tyrants into democrats.

How does God change individuals from dictators to democrats?

God speaking through His servant:

*If anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*¹⁰⁰

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*¹⁰¹

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*¹⁰²

There are numerous examples in history. The first example is Nebuchadnezzar II, ruler of the Babylonian Empire. God warned Nebuchadnezzar first through a dream and then through a prophet of the discipline that God would inflict upon Nebuchadnezzar for his godless behaviour. Nebuchadnezzar rejected both warnings. God dealt with Nebuchadnezzar as Nebuchadnezzar himself describes in this open letter to all of humanity:

All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes."

Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified Him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion;

His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have you done?"

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.¹⁰³

God changed Nebuchadnezzar from a tyrant into a God-fearing leader, apparently a democrat and a caring leader.

Another example is the recent President of one nation. He was a Marxist dictator when he held power during the 1980's. When free elections were held in 1991, he was enthusiastically turned out of office. However, then God began to gain his attention. God so touched his life that his character changed. He confessed to the whole nation for his mistakes, and Parliament exonerated him. He began to read the Bible for several hours each day. When the second free election was held in 1996, he was elected the President of his country. When he was in office earlier, he had been a tyrant. After being returned to office with a life submitted to God, he operated much more as a democrat. With God's help, he became more and more democratic.

God can change an individual from a dictator into a democrat while he or she is in office. However, I am convinced that God wants to change everyone from a dictator into a democrat before entering office so that they are prepared and equipped to serve whenever his or her peers see a need.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Do I desire democracy for my nation so much that I would be willing to admit my need for God's help?
2. Do I desire democracy for my nation so much that I would be willing to let Jesus be the one to carry away the evil aspects of my character?
3. Do I desire democracy for my nation so much that I would be willing to give my life completely to God?

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Moving from Atheism to Faith in God

Ravi Zacharias:

Atheism is not merely a passive unbelief in God but an assertive denial of the major claims of all varieties of theism; atheism contradicts belief in God with a positive affirmation of matter as ultimate reality.¹

Atheism, in summary, provides:

- No design
- No purpose
- No historical reality
- No significance for the individual human being
- No significance for life
- No purpose for life
- Not fully alive—dead spiritually
- No hope
- No solution for guilt
- No solution for greed in the world
- No power to change my life
- No power for social reform
- No power to change the world
- No solution for death
- No power to deal with death
- No power to deal with crisis
- No power over circumstances around my life
- No peace of knowing God has the circumstances around my life under control
- No power to deal with sickness
- No power for leadership
- No objective basis for determining right from wrong

Atheism robs the individual of the life that Jesus described when He said:

I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.²

The sincere atheist, if he is true to his convictions, has no choice but to commit suicide. Nietzsche said:

*The thought of suicide is a great consolation.*³

But let me state quickly and clearly that suicide is not a valid choice. I am convinced that no objective person can claim to be an atheist. The atheist claims to have positive evidence that there is no God. Therefore, the atheist must claim absolute knowledge because if he did not have absolute knowledge, he would have to admit that within that body of knowledge outside of his own sphere, there may exist knowledge about God.

The best he can claim is to be an agnostic. But, the honest agnostic will find God.

Sartre, toward the end of his life:

*I do not feel that I am the product of chance, a speck of dust in the universe, but someone who was expected, prepared, prefigured. In short, a being whom only a Creator could put here: and this idea of a creating hand refers to God.*⁴

Voltaire supposedly converted on his deathbed.

Kierkegaard became more religious throughout his life.

The atheistic position is untenable.

Vincent Miceli:

*Communist humanism does not liberate man; it delivers man into his own hands to do with himself what he will; this is slavery. For, once man rejects God, he has no place to go but back into himself and there lies the agony of isolation. Thus, the revolt against God is the prelude to all serfdom. For the essence of man's freedom is that he be able to transcend himself, the material things of earth and choose to live in companionship with God. Indeed, it was in order that man might enjoy freedom that God, Absolute Liberty Himself, made man in His own image and likeness....But communist humanism, in delivering man into his own hands, really renders man captive to the material world below man. Communist humanism, by ripping man down from God, the source of all freedom, makes man less than man.*⁵

Jesus:

*He sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind.*⁶

Atheism is an imprisonment and a blindness from which we must be set free.

The person who cannot believe in God is in bondage.

The person who cannot perceive God's existence is in bondage.

And he must be set free by Jesus.

Some of my friends were placed in bondage.

Some of my friends were not allowed to experience the light of the Spirit of God throughout their earlier lives. Through circumstances beyond your control, you may have been placed in bondage and prevented from seeing.

Jesus has promised:

*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*⁷

The challenge to the atheist is that God claims to be the source of knowledge and the channel for accessing knowledge. Therefore, the dilemma for the one denying God is that he can have no knowledge about God.

Why is this true?

Jesus told His closest followers the night before He was put to death:

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father; and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.

One of Jesus' closest followers:

Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?

Jesus:

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.⁸

The one denying God cannot hope to have any knowledge about God.

Pascal's challenge:

Should a man be in error in supposing the Christian religion to be true, he could not be a loser by mistake. But how irreparable is his loss, and how inescapable is his danger should he err in supposing it to be false.⁹

When Jesus was challenged, He said:

If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own.¹⁰

The key to gaining knowledge about God is committing oneself to responding to it.

Jesus:

If I set you free, you will be free indeed.¹¹

This is true for each of us. Apostle Paul, after his conversion, said:

He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.¹²

Jesus:

He sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind.¹³

I encourage you to reach out, in prayer, to the God who is reaching out to you and who is anxious to make Himself known to you:

Holy God, please forgive me for sinning against You. Thank You for loving me enough that You came to this earth as Jesus and died on my behalf so that I could have real life with You. I ask You to come into my life to give me unbroken friendship with You forever and to let me see You in truth. Thank You for giving me purpose and hope and the power to live the life You designed for me. Amen.

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God's Plan for Government: A Study Outline

John Adams, one of the founders of the American democratic experiment:

Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts contained! Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality and industry; to justice, kindness and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God.

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I. The Challenge Facing Government: Man, God's Purposes for Man, and the Role of Government

Objective: To clarify God's nature, man's nature, the need for government, the origin and purpose of government.

A. Nature of God

1. God is transcendent—above created matter, mind or spirit; not derived from or dependent upon anything else. He is the source. Psalm 90:1-2; 104:1-5,24-25,27-32; Isaiah 40:13-14; 55:8-9
 - a. God planned everything.
 - b. God created everything. Genesis 1:1; 2:1
 - c. God preserves everything.
 - d. God governs everything. Psalm 47:7-8; 82:1,8; 93:1
("The Lord has assumed kingship"); (Psalm 66:7; Isaiah 41:2)
 - e. God will bring it to His own appointed consummation. 2 Peter 3:1-13
 - f. Implications. God is sovereign and human leaders must be careful not to be fighting against God's plan. We must go to the source in making plans.
Proverbs 16:25,9; Isaiah 29:15
2. God's character.
 - a. Omnipotent Jeremiah 32:17
 - b. Omnipresent, infinite, limitless. Psalm 139:7-10
 - c. Omniscient. Psalm 139:1-6
 - d. Immutable. Malachi 3:6
 - e. Everlasting. Psalm 90:1-2
 - f. Holy. Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 36:22-23; Leviticus 11:44a
 - g. Just. Psalm 89:14; 97:1-2; Isaiah 61:8; John 5:30
We can learn much about the quality of justice God wants us to display by looking at this aspect God's character. There are probably more statements in the Bible about justice than any other quality.
Zechariah 7:8-10; Jeremiah 22:1-5; Deuteronomy 10:17-18
 - h. Good. Psalm 31:19; Matthew 5:45
 - i. Loving. John 3:16 (*agape*)
 - j. Patient. 2 Peter 3:9
 - k. Faithful. Psalm 119:90
 - l. Full of grace. Luke 1:50; Psalm 103:10
 - m. Implications.

B. Nature of man

1. Created in God's image. Genesis 1:26-27
Ability to make decisions. Joshua 24:15
2. Superior to any other created being. Genesis 2:7,19-20
3. Man is to have dominion over the rest of God's creation. Genesis 1:28-30.
4. Implications. There must be a respect for human life and for the quality of that life in accord with man's place in God's creation. There must be an environment that allows him to make decisions and to exercise creativity.
5. Man's sinful nature, man's rebelliousness. Deuteronomy 9:24; Psalm 78:17; I John 3:4
 - a. Defined and controlled by the Law.
 - 1) Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:3-17
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:9-10

- b. How good is man?
 - 1) All are tainted by sin. Romans 3:9-18, 22b-23; I John 1:8,10
 - 2) How high is the standard? Exodus 20:3-17, Matthew 5:27-28
- c. Man is a self-centred, rebellious being who takes advantage of others to achieve his own goals. But there is a limit to it. He may do good.
 - 1) Limit to evil. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,6
 - 2) Salting influence. Matthew 5:13-16; Psalm 66:3; Genesis 26:28
 - 3) Conscience (internal witness) and external witness. Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-15; Acts 14:17; 1 Timothy 4:2
 - 4) Some capacity to do good, but there is doubt that the motivation is pure and selfless. Acts 27:43
 - 5) Spiritual nature of those who have been transformed. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:20-24; Galatians 5:16-25
- 6. Implications. Society is made up of imperfect (rebellious) individuals. Government leaders have the same flaws. Form of government must take this into account, with appropriate checks and balances.

Reinhold Niebuhr: "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

In *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944), quoted in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 823.

C. S. Lewis: "Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters."

In "Equality" from *Present Concerns*, quoted in *Christianity Today*, 3 February 1989, p. 31.

Michael Novak: "One cannot understand America and certainly not its founders or institutions, if one does not understand the Jewish and Christian consciousness of the reality of sin. Without that understanding, one is living in a fool's paradise. Without that, the institutions will not function or long endure. This republic was designed for sinners. There is no use trying to build a republic for saints. There are too few of them, and even the ones there are, are difficult to live with. No, if you wish to build a republic that will last, you must design it for sinners. That is the only 'moral majority' there is...a republic of sinners—and, therefore, a republic with checks and balances, as well as other 'auxiliary precautions' (to employ the phrase of James Madison, well-taught as he was by Christian teachers)." Quoted in Cal Thomas, *The Things That Matter Most* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 217.

C. Nature of the world

1. Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-22; Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:6
2. Implications.

D. God's purposes for individuals

1. Salvation—place faith in God. 1 Thessalonians 5:9; John 17:3
2. Lordship of Jesus Christ—live in dependence upon God's wisdom and power. Ephesians 5:18-21; Micah 6:8
3. Just. Micah 6:8
4. Work, especially engage in work that will contribute to society. Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-22; Titus 3:14; Ephesians 4:28
5. Submit to authority. Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-18; Ephesians 5:21-6:9

6. Experience blessing, well-being. 1 Timothy 2:1-2
7. Implications.

E. Origin of government

1. Receives authority from God. Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14
2. Established by God. Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Daniel 2:21
3. But not a holy institution. Matthew 22:15-22; Revelation 11:15 (in the future); Luke 4:5-7; 1 Corinthians 2:8

F. Purposes of government

1. Restrain evil; protect man from his essential nature. 1 Timothy 1:9-10; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14; 1 Timothy 2:1-2
2. Method of restraining evil. Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14; John 19:10-11; Acts 25:9-11
 - a. Internal to society (himself and his neighbour)—police force.
 - b. External to society—military force.
3. Encourage good behaviour. Romans 13:3; 1 Peter 2:14
4. Administer justice. Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 1:16-17; Exodus 23:6-8; Jeremiah 22:11-13,15-17; Proverbs 29:4; 29:14
5. Collect taxes. Romans 13:6-7
6. Provide environment in which one can prosper in his relationship to God. 1 Timothy 2:2

For Further Reading:

Robert Duncan Culver, *Toward a Biblical View of Civil Government*, (Chicago: Moody, 1974).

II. God's Purposes for Nations

Objective: To clarify the role of nations in God's plan.

A. God divided mankind into units (linguistically and geographically). Genesis 11:1-9

Robert Duncan Culver: "It is apparently not God's will, however, under the present condition of sin, that the world should be governed as a unified world state. Furthermore, it is probably impossible."

In *Toward a Biblical View of Civil Government*, (Chicago: Moody, 1974), p. 81.

Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of Netherlands 1901-1905 and great theologian: "Man is created from man, and by virtue of his birth he is organically united with the whole race. Together we form one humanity, not only with those who are living now, but also with all the generations behind us and with those who shall come after us—pulverized into millions though we may be. All the human race is from one blood. The conception of States, however, which subdivide the earth into continents, and each continent into morsels does not harmonize with this idea. Then only would the organic unity of our race be realized politically, if one State could embrace all the world, and if the whole of humanity were associated in one world empire. Had not sin intervened, no doubt this would actually have been so. If sin, as a disintegrating force, had not divided humanity into different sections, nothing would have marred or broken the unity of our race. And the mistake of the Alexanders, and of the Augusti, and of the Napoleons, was not that they were charmed with the thought of One World-Empire, but it was this—that they endeavoured to realize this idea notwithstanding that the force of sin had dissolved our unity....I say, all this is nothing but a looking backward after a lost paradise."

In *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), pp. 79-80.

B. There should be a number of nations. Acts 17:26-27

Define *nation*.

1. *ethnos*: originally a multitude, denotes
 - a. a nation or people, e.g., Matt. 24:7; Acts 10:35, often in the singular, it is used of the Jews, Israel, e.g., Luke 7:5; 23:2; John 11:48,50-52; Acts 10:22; 24:2,10,17.
 - b. in the plural, of nations other than Israel, the Gentile nations, the heathen, e.g., Matthew 4:15; Romans 3:29; 11:11; 15:10; Galatians 2:8.
2. *genos*: a family, an offspring, a nation, a race, e.g., Mark 7:26; Acts 4:36; Galatians 1:14.
3. *allophusos*: foreign, of another race, e.g., Acts 10:28.
4. *goy* (O.T.): a foreign nation—Gentile, heathen, nation, people.

C. The appearance, disappearance, boundaries of the nations are determined by God. Acts 17:26-27

D. Purpose is to facilitate the seeking of God. Acts 17:26-27

E. God's purposes in human history take precedence over those for individual nations. Isaiah 40:15-17

One man said to Abraham Lincoln as he was contemplating his direction with regard to slavery: "Slavery must be stricken down wherever it exists. If we do not do right I believe God will let us go our own way to our ruin. But if we do right I believe he will lead us safely out of this wilderness, crown our arms with victory, and restore our now dissevered Union."

Lincoln replied: "My faith is greater than yours. I also believe that He will compel us to do right in order that He may do these things, not so much because we desire them as that they accord with His plan of dealing with this nation, in the midst of which He means to establish justice. I think He means that we shall do more than we have yet done in furtherance of His plans, and He will open the way for our doing it. I have felt His hand upon me in great trials and submitted to His guidance, and I trust that as He shall further open the way, I will be ready to walk therein, relying on His help and trusting in His goodness and wisdom." Quoted in Elton Trueblood, *Abraham Lincoln: Theologian of American Anguish* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 126-127.

Proverbs 21:1

- F. The real leader of each nation is God. Psalm 47:7-8; Jeremiah 10:7
- G. Each nation is to worship God. Psalm 33:8,12; versus Psalm 9:5,17
- H. God's purpose for Israel, as a special case.
 1. To be a holy people. Leviticus 11:45; Exodus 19:5-6
 2. To be a witness for God among the nations. Psalm 102:15-16; 1 Chronicles 16:23-24; Ezekiel 36:19-24
 3. To be a vehicle for the entrance of God's saviour into human history. Genesis 12:1-3
- I. Will God bless any nation that commits itself to the purposes for which God created Israel? Proverbs 14:34; Ephesians 2:11-13; Romans 9; 11:11-24

Lincoln, in his call for a National Fast Day on April 30, 1863: "And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

March 30, 1863, quoted in Trueblood, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88.

Lord Charnwood said of Lincoln: "We may regard, and himself regarded, the liberation of the slaves, which will always be associated with his name, as a part of the larger work, the restoration of his country to its earliest and noblest tradition, which alone gave permanence or worth to its existence as a nation."

Quoted in Trueblood, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

- J. God deals with all nations, not just Israel.
 1. Psalm 66:7; 67:4
 2. Jonah
 3. Jeremiah 18:7-10
- K. God can use one nation as an instrument to punish another nation.
 1. Assyria to Israel. 2 Kings 17:6-8
 2. Babylon to Judah. Jeremiah 25:1,8-9
 3. Babylon to Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Jeremiah 27:1,3-8
 4. Babylon to Egypt. Jeremiah 43:10-11a
 5. Cyrus. Isaiah 44:28-45:5
 6. Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, third paragraph:

"...Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained....The

Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" 4 March 1865

Quoted in Benjamin Weiss, *God in American History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), pp. 95-96.

L. Implications

III. The Limits of Government, Form of Government, Bringing Government Back on Course

Objective: To clarify the purpose of government by viewing it as one of several institutions established by God and responsible to God, considering the limits upon each institution; that there is not an ideal form of government that should be employed by every nation; the options open to us in changing government not apparently fulfilling its God-given purpose.

A. Sphere of government

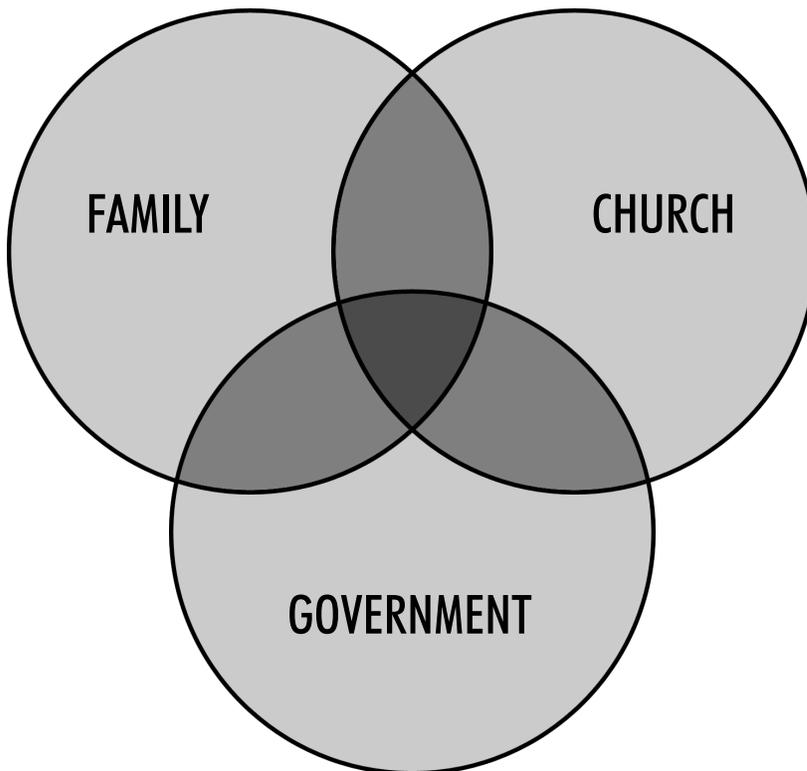
1. God-ordained institutions

a. Family.

- 1) Husband and wife. Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:2-12; Malachi 2:14-16; Ephesians 5:22-33; Proverbs 27:17
- 2) Parents over children. Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:1-2
- 3) Husband's responsibility. Ephesians 5:22-33
- 4) Parents have responsibilities for children.
 - a) Education. Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4
 - b) Behaviour and character. Deuteronomy 6:1-2; Proverbs 22:15

b. Church. Matthew 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:18-23; 4:11-16; 5:22-32

c. Government. Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-14; 1 Timothy 1:9-10 (See Sections I.E,F)



See also Samuel E. Ericsson, in Lynn R. Buzzard, *With Liberty and Justice* (Wheaton: Victor, 1984), p. 42.

2. Separation and interaction of God-ordained institutions.

Robert Culver: "In this philosophy (Calvin, Luther, and Herman Dooyeweerd), the state, or civil government co-exists with church, industry, education, agriculture, art, individual genius, and so forth. All are aspects of God's works of creation, preservation, and providence. Each is autonomous, that is, each operates according to laws of its nature as a creature. The state is only one among the several. Its task is to police them all so that they stay within their autonomies and do not infringe upon one another even though they must impinge on one another. When the state steps in to take charge of any one of the others, a wrong is committed, and disorder is introduced, just as would be the case if civil government were made a department of the church or of the university. God alone has claims of sovereignty over them all." *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

- a. What is government's role in marriage?
- b. What is the Church's role in marriage?
- c. Whose responsibility is education?
- d. What is government's role in economics and business?
- e. Whose responsibility is welfare?
 - 1) Each meet his own need, with an excess available to save and to give.
 - a) Each work to meet his own basic needs. Titus 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-14
 - b) Save. Jeremiah 40:10; Ezekiel 4:9; 2 Chronicles 32:28
 - c) With an excess available to give. Ephesians 4:28
 - 2) Family.
 - a) Take care of its own members. 1 Timothy 5:8,16
 - b) Widows under 60 years old are not to be a burden. 1 Timothy 5:9-15
 - c) Widows over 60 years old are to be taken care of by close believing relatives. 1 Timothy 5:8,16; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15
 - 3) Church.
 - a) Take care of godly widows older than 60 years if there are no close relatives where the wife is a believer. 1 Timothy 5:9-16
 - 4) Neighbours and community.
 - a) Neighbours are responsible for the welfare needs of those not covered by the above. Deuteronomy 15:7-11; 26:12-13; 24:19-21; Leviticus 19:9-10
 - 5) Government's role in social safety-net
 - a) Government is apparently responsible for limited welfare needs not covered by the above. Genesis 41:46-49,53-57; Ezekiel 16:49
 - b) Government can prevent many welfare needs and is intended to. Jeremiah 22:13-17; Isaiah 10:1-2; Exodus 22:21
 - c) Strengthen the institutions that have responsibility.
 - d) Policies that facilitate profitable work, safe savings.
 - e) Government should not favour the poor, nor the rich. Exodus 23:2-3; Leviticus 19:15
- f. What is the role of Church and government in each other's affairs? 1 Samuel 13:5,7-14; 15:1-3,20-23,32-33
- g. What is the Church's role in change of government? Jeremiah 18:1-12; 25:1-14
- h. Is the spiritual domain outside the boundary of government? 2 Chronicles 7:14; Malachi 3:8-12; Jonah 3:4-10

B. Biblical history of government

1. Patriarchal. Genesis 46:26; 49:1-2,8-10
2. Theocracy. Exodus 19:3-8

3. Government by judges. Judges 2:13-18
4. Monarchy. 1 Samuel 7:15; 8:4-9; 10:24

C. Form of Government

1. The actual form of a government is not the most important factor, but rather whether it displays justice and righteousness. Jeremiah 22:1-5,13-16
See Section I.F.4

Alexander Pope: "For forms of government let fools contest; Whate'er is best administered is best."
In *An Essay on Man (1733-34), Epistle III, line 393*, quoted in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 337.

2. Considering the human weakness inherent in leaders, there is a need for balance of powers and constitutional limits. Isaiah 33:22

Culver: "The Federalist Papers by James Madison and Alexander Hamilton elaborated this view of affairs, saying in one important passage: 'It may be a reflection on human nature that such [constitutional] devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing of a government which is to be administered by men over men, the greatest difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place oblige it to control itself.'" Op. cit., p. 103.

See quotes by C. S. Lewis and Michael Novak in Section I.B.6

3. Will Herberg: "In the Augustinian'Reformation argument, we may therefore find a significant justification of constitutional democracy; yet we should not forget there are other types of regime compatible with the legitimate state, and that constitutional Democracy as we understand it is actually possible only under certain historical conditions, which are by no means always present."
Quoted in Culver, op. cit., p. 130.
4. Capitalism vs. socialism.

D. Change of government

1. What are the conditions for changing government?
Danger. Culver: "In many parts of the world, less orderly and law-honouring revolutions have come with wearying regularity. In most cases, however, the new regime immediately becomes self-protective. This requires safeguards that take away the very freedoms for which the revolution was fought."
Op. cit., p. 110.
Note: Change usually leads to deterioration.
2. Dilemma: If the unprincipled people are the ones most actively involved in changing government, will there not be a deterioration in the governmental process? Contrast this with Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."
Attributed, quoted in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 374.
3. What can we do when we think government is not fulfilling its purpose?
 - a. Submit. John 19:10-11

- b. Appeal. Daniel 1:5,8-13; Acts 25:9-11
 - c. Obey God, disobey government, bear the consequences. Daniel 3:1-22; 6:1-13,16,19-23; Acts 4:7-12,18,33; 5:16-21,26-29,40-42
4. How may government be changed? Proverbs 24:21; 30:21-23; Romans 13:1-2; Daniel 2:21; Jeremiah 18:1-12; 25:1-14; 22:5

Robert Lawrence Ottley, speaking of the prophets: "There is indeed significance in the fact that in spite of their ardent zeal for social reform they did not as a rule take part in political life or demand political reforms. They desired, it has been justly said, not better institutions but better men."

Quoted in Culver, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Old Testament prophets did not seek to change government, rather men. Psalm 103:6

5. David replacing Saul.
- a. Saul anointed. 1 Samuel 10:1
 - b. Saul's disobedience and rejection. 1 Samuel 13:8-14
 - c. David anointed. 1 Samuel 16:12-14
 - d. David refused to kill Saul. 1 Samuel 24:2-12; 26:2-16
 - e. David punishes for Saul's death. 2 Samuel 1:1-16
6. American Revolution. Declaration of Independence.
7. U.S. Civil War. Abraham Lincoln Second Inaugural Address. (See Section II.K.6)
8. Sovereignty of God over nations and their leader. Ezekiel 28:1-2,6-10; 32:1-8,11-12; Jeremiah 22:1-5
Guatemala and Belize
Samuel Doe (violence begets violence)
Telemachus
9. What tools does the Christian have for improving government?
- a. Sovereignty of God. Psalm 46:10
 - b. Pray. 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Proverbs 21:1
 - c. Reconciling negotiation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
 - d. Moral improvement of society.

IV. God's Expectations for Government Leaders

Objective: To clarify the way that government leaders must work with God.

A. Required attitude

1. Derive authority from God. Romans 13:1; Deuteronomy 1:17-18; Jeremiah 27:5; Psalm 83:18; Exodus 9:16
2. Are placed in office by God and serve at His pleasure. Romans 13:1; Daniel 2:21; 4:17; Deuteronomy 17:15; Psalm 94:20-23
3. Sense of dependence upon God. Psalm 33:13-17
4. Leadership is a sacred trust. Jeremiah 22:1-2,11-17
5. Are selfless servants of God. Romans 13:6; Deuteronomy 17:15-20
6. Must be just. Proverbs 29:4,14; Deuteronomy 1:13-17; 16:18-20; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Isaiah 1:10,17; 1 Kings 10:1,6-9
7. Must be honest or righteous. Proverbs 29:12; 16:12; Deuteronomy 1:13-17; 16:18-20; 2 Samuel 23:3-4; Exodus 18:21
8. Must be wise. Jeremiah 23:5; Deuteronomy 1:13; 16:18-20; Exodus 18:2; 1 Kings 3:7-12
9. Should be equipped. Proverbs 30:21-23; Daniel 1:1-5; Deuteronomy 1:15

B. Purpose

1. Administer the government obligations. Romans 13:1-7
2. Administer justice. Proverbs 29:4,7; 22:22-23; 14:31; Isaiah 10:1-2; Jeremiah 22:16; but Proverbs 29:26

C. Separating the private man from the public man

1. Forgiveness vs. justice. Matthew 5:39-45,5,9
2. Public morality. Deuteronomy 17:17
3. Avoiding slander. Proverbs 6:16-19
4. Forsaking personal gain. Deuteronomy 17:16-17; Jeremiah 22:15-17; Exodus 18:21
5. Worship of God. Deuteronomy 17:18-20; Psalm 2:10-12; 2 Kings 22:3-11; 23:1-3,25; Proverbs 14:34; Romans 13:4,6 "a minister of God" or "God's servant"
6. Family responsibilities. Parallel with other leaders. 1 Timothy 3:1-7

For Further Information

Our goal is to serve you as you serve your people. We would love to dialogue with you on any questions you might have as a result of the ideas presented here. We would welcome the opportunity to learn how we may serve you and your people better. Please address your communication as follows:

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WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT LEADERSHIP FOR NATION BUILDING

AFRICAN CABINET MINISTER:

I have found reading it extremely exciting and interesting....It is certainly a serious reference book that every leader or anyone in a position of leadership should read. It has a profound message for all leadership, and the lessons contained therein can go a long way to change and improve our world.

PRIME MINISTER OF A PACIFIC NATION:

I am appreciative of your being so kind in sharing with me many thought-provoking principles covered in your books....I share your views that only God's principles can move a nation into well-being. The rest have been tried and found wanting.

FOREIGN MINISTER OF AN EASTERN EUROPEAN NATION:

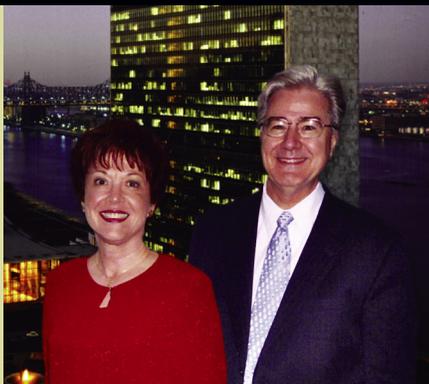
I found the thoughts and ideas it contains a source of inspiration for every statesman and diplomat which is resolved to work for the well-being of his countrymen and for the benefit of mankind.

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The type of literature that you enclosed is what aspiring politicians need, so that they develop into statesmen, rather than into politicians. As I read it through, I felt where I needed guidance myself in some of my past deliberations. I might have performed better than I did, if only I had the benefits of such literature before. I will be pleased to send photo copies of it to some aspiring politicians from my country so that they do not repeat the mistakes we who preceded them made. The paper has refreshed and broadened my own spiritual environment and with it my political vision.

ASIAN FOREIGN MINISTER:

Indeed, building a healthy nation without God's help is impossible for any man, let alone a duly-elected leader, to accomplish. Now more than ever, we need to realize that without addressing the root causes of conflicts and the moral degeneration in our societies (which are basically spiritual in nature, as elaborated in your book), any man-made or government-driven effort is bound to fail.



DR. GARY AND MRS. ELAINE ALLEN

Dr. Gary Allen is President of the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community, which his wife Elaine and he founded in 1983. Dr. Allen is an internationally known brain scientist. He has spent more than a quarter century at the United Nations working with diplomats and visiting government officials, exploring the applicability of faith in God to problems facing nations and leaders.

