

The Statesman's View as Shared Beneficiary

A part of the human condition is a shortsightedness that we must compete with each other so that I can only benefit at someone else's loss. But is it really to my advantage to benefit from someone else's loss of advantage? Is it not possible that by employing our apparent advantages, we may make life better for each other, ourselves included? Is it possible that we could have the attitude that if we all benefit, it is to everyone's advantage? Let us reflect for a moment on our Creator's plan. Our Creator designed our world with abundance, with the intent that every one of His creation experience a life of abundance. This is clear throughout His Instruction Manual, for example:

You brought us out to abundance (Psalm 66:12).

God created mankind as His highest achievement. In a key description of God's created order, He informed us:

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." God also said, "Look, I have given **you** every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for **you**" (Genesis 1:26-29).*

Hence, we must recognize that mankind is the pinnacle of God's creation and that every other created thing is given to mankind for the purpose of supporting the quality of life that God described elsewhere as: "a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Timothy 2:2).

Thus, as we look at the supporting mechanisms that our Creator has built around us to achieve that quality of life for every human being, we must feel free to use it to benefit ourselves as a global community. However, let us also remember that when God described His creation to mankind, the words He used were: "I have given you". We must be careful to remember that the word He used for "you" in the original language is in the plural, not in the singular. Thus, I dare not use His supporting creation in such a way that it benefits me or my people to the exclusion of other segments of mankind that God loves equally as much.

This includes my respecting my fellow humans right to fully utilize the natural resources our Creator has placed within their hands. Furthermore, this includes respecting their stewardship over those resources and their right to fully utilize those resources in a way that will benefit their people, and where possible, even my helping them in that utilization.

Let us consider Jesus' teachings on this issue:

Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them—this is the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:12).

This teaching is so noble that it is often called "The Golden Rule". What are God and Jesus telling us? Is it not this? — Help each other; There is enough to go around; God is big enough to meet all of our needs. Our Creator has ultimately intended for everyone to have enough, and we do not need to take away from others. Jesus clarified repeatedly:

Love one another (John 13:34; 15:12).

In other words, “care for each other”. This was expected to have practical consequences, as one of God’s spokesmen taught its application:

For you were called to be free, brothers; only don’t use this freedom as an opportunity for selfish advantage, but serve one another through love (Galatians 5:13).

Can this work in the world of politics? It is with this in mind that I find the example of George C. Marshall especially inspiring. Marshall, while he was Foreign Minister, displayed the heart of a Statesman. Marshall was convinced at the end of the destructive war in Europe that it was to everyone’s advantage, the United States included, for Europe to be re-built and transformed into its full economic capacity. Through Marshall's efforts for helping the reconstruction of Europe, he not only assisted in the creation of a giant economic engine that Europe became, but he strengthened democracy in the participating nations at a time of vulnerability, and strengthened cooperation among European nations.

Marshall’s vision was so important to him that he sacrificed his own political future by publicly vowing not to run for President so that those in the opposing political party, who controlled the legislature and the finances, would not distrust his vision and to have the best hope of their embracing his vision as apolitical. His vision for the rebuilding of Europe caused him to persuade American politicians and businessmen to make huge contributions that they were not prepared to make and which they often resisted. And yet, I am convinced that George Marshall changed the course of history when one considers the dynamics of the Cold War and the battle between the market economy and democracy on the one hand, and the centrally planned economy and communism on the other. Apart from the vision and perseverance of George Marshall, I am convinced that the history of Europe would have taken a far different course. The struggle between communism and democracy would have taken a far different path, with probably several more European nations falling to communism.

I believe that the values that motivated Marshall to commit his energy to such a vision are consistent with our Creator’s intent, which was expressed this way through one of His servants:

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to ignore your own flesh and blood? (Isaiah 58:7)

Jesus said it this way:

The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same (Luke 3:11).

Other servants of God said it this way:

The LORD of Hosts says this: Make fair decisions. Show faithful love and compassion to one another (Zechariah 7:9).

This makes for happiness among the parts, so that the parts have the same care for each other that they do for themselves (1 Corinthians 12:25).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STATESMAN. Can I recognize that I have responsibility to take the well-being of people in other nations into consideration as I makes decisions as a Statesman?