

New Hope for a New America

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Excerpt



What's wrong with the America we have today? I don't think we have to look very far around us to come up with answers. Although the dimensions of the problem might be a matter of opinion, the problem itself is very well understood and for the last 20 years at least, our federal government has tried with tremendous diligence to bring about solutions to the increasing social problems that we're facing, but with little success.

One of the problems that we have is crime. In the last 20 years, crime has multiplied by three; forcible crimes, crimes like rape are up five times. What's wrong? What's happening in America? Suicide is now three times what it was 20 years ago. People have no reason to go on in their life. They can't find a purpose or direction. They can't cope with the crisis that they inherit. Mental illness is three times what it was in the last 20 years. Now 10 percent of all children born are born illegitimately, three times what it was 20 years ago.

We look to science to solve these problems and we earnestly believe that man's power and his technology can bring about the solution. We stand here in the city of New York and we see some of the most magnificent structures that have ever been created by man. And yet that same science which offers so much promise and so much hope has also created problems in itself. Professor Linus Pauling pointed out that we now have enough thermo-nuclear explosives stockpiled to use 12 tons of bombs on every acre of the earth. We have over 15 tons of TNT power for every individual alive on earth and the money that has been spent in amassing those stockpiles has been spent in a world where last year 3½ million people died of starvation because they didn't have enough to eat.

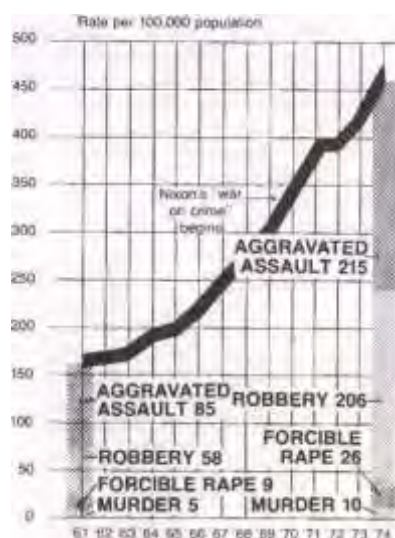
What's wrong with us? How can we be living in the middle of such contrast? How can we take some positive action to solve the problems? Where is the hope in the midst of such despair? America truly is a paradox.

Traditionally we are the land of plenty, the land of opportunity, the kingdom of heaven on earth. People have emigrated from all over the world to come to the shores of America in the hope that there would be something better for themselves or for their children.

They gave up their lives, they gave up their occupations, they gave up their relatives, in many cases they gave up their own physical lives, in the process. But they never turned back because they had the hope that there could be a better future, that they could find something that they couldn't find in the place where they were. America is simultaneously the land of plenty and the land of opportunity and yet, what you've just seen is the land of despair, the land of tremendous tension.

In 1959, in response to a growing mood in the country that America was losing touch with its purpose, then-President Eisenhower formed a commission to find out and to clarify the purpose of our nation. The

commission met and they consulted with the greatest scholars in the land. They held public hearings, and after months of study and earnest search they came to the tragic conclusion that they didn't know the purpose of America.



In 1965, then-President Johnson declared that we were going to establish the great society but he made the mistake of thinking that money alone could solve the problems of America and the world. We launched one of the most massive programs against poverty that's ever been conceived of or carried out. We poured incredible millions of dollars into anti-poverty programs to no avail.

Most of those programs have been discontinued and virtually all of them have been judged a failure. Money itself is not the answer. What is the answer?

America in 200 years, starting from nothing, a land that offered such hope and such promise to mankind, now finds itself unable to define its purpose, unable to solve its problems. In ancient Rome, there was a story that when the empire was threatened in the center of the city a large crevice appeared and they went to the oracle and they said,

"What does it mean?" The oracle said, "It's a test. To close the crevice you have to pull in the greatness of the empire. You have to pull in your greatest wealth." So the people of the city of Rome began bringing their gold and diamonds, like our anti-poverty program, and they poured it into the crevice and nothing happened. They brought their cattle and their household goods and nothing happened. One wise centurion mounted his horse, rode to the edge of the crevice and said, "the greatness of Rome is in her people." He then plunged into the middle of that crevice whereupon it closed up.

We have to look into the hearts of our people. I am reminded of the words of the famed French historian Alexis de Tocqueville, who came to America to understand what was it that made this incredible international experiment work. What was it that made a people uneducated and without tradition, a people without a king, a people without a strong foundation of thousands of years, somehow the most viable society, the fastest growing and the most prosperous, the society with the greatest opportunity? And he wrote when he went back to his native France, "I sought the greatness of America in her harbors and commerce and mines and fertile fields, but it was not there. It was not until I entered her churches and found her pulpits aflame with righteousness that I understood the greatness of her power. America is great because America is good." And he went on to say "if she ever ceases to be good, she'll cease to be great," and that's the very question that we are facing today.

Many people say, "How can you even talk about church and God? If there is a God at all, why does He allow so much evil in the world? You yourself mentioned all the problems in our society; how can a God of goodness permit a world so close to hell to exist on this earth?" The answer is very simple and yet we have had so much trouble in understanding it. In the beginning of time, a God of goodness created a world which stood only for goodness. God as the creator of the world desired to make one family where men of all nations could live together as brothers and sisters harmoniously.

It would never be God's desire to have tensions or conflicts based on ethnic, national, or cultural differences. Those would only be embellishments, like ornaments on a Christmas tree to increase the beauty of the human family. But in the very beginning of time, instead of living within the scope of God's will and that vision of oneness, man began to center things on himself. So God has been working since that time to re-establish the center of all mankind and He's called champions out of the fallen world, called them to realize that the path to true happiness, the path to true harmony is based on two simple things. One is faith in God Himself and the other is a willingness to transcend himself and center on one absolute Father.

In order to establish a world of harmony and goodness, we have to transcend our own limited view, we have to overcome any selfish tendencies and center ourselves on something greater than ourselves. That call which has inspired so much nobility in the hearts of so many men throughout the course of human history has only been imperfectly responded to by all of us and the extent to which we haven't responded fully is the extent to which we haven't been able to realize the world of God.

The first man to be called by God was Abel, a man of faithfulness who was the first man to die for God, slain by his brother Cain. He was the first man whose faith in God was greater than his own concern about his life and his love was greater than his love of his life, and that was the pattern that God was rouse in order to re-establish what was lost, re-establish the ideal for which He had originally created this earth. So as He continued to work throughout history to find others we see that same pattern repeated in the life of Noah. Noah is a man who is an example of faith.

He was called by God not to perform something simple, something incidental, like an extra item at the

store. In order to demonstrate his faith, he was asked to do the impossible.

Noah had perfect faith, but his sons couldn't have faith in him. So there was no way for the world of goodness to begin. And it was not until Abraham's family that God could have a real victory in establishing a foundation of faith. Abraham was called from a pagan family. He was called by God to go out into the wilderness -- and in faithfulness he went. His faith was tested right up until the edge of life itself, and it was his willingness to give up the life of his son, the son whom he loved more than he loved himself, that made the condition of faith for him to be the champion of God.

He established the covenant with God. He is called the father of faith. This is the example of faithfulness that God has sought to teach us throughout history.



If we can be faithful to God and transcend ourselves, we and our descendants can be glorified by God and can establish a world of harmony which will blot out and erase from man's memory the history of evil which we can leave behind us when we adopt a new standard of living, a new way of life, a way which is truly centered upon God -- not 50 percent, not 60 percent, not even 99 percent, but 100 percent. This is our challenge -- to establish a way of life of perfect faith in God and a perfect willingness to transcend our own life to carry out His purpose. This is our responsibility.

The purpose of the Bible is to show all of us the pattern by which God has been working in order to realize His ideal and if we can learn what God is teaching us through the Bible then we can fulfill all of His prophesied expectations in order to realize the kingdom of heaven on this earth.

Jesus came in order to lead the life of perfect faith, to lead the life of perfect self-sacrifice, that through him we could find eternal life by following after him. He didn't say that we had -- try to do better. Instead he said that we must be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. He meant that we had to be perfect in our faith and perfect in our willingness to sacrifice ourselves in order to realize the will of God. As he went from city to city, those who had been prepared for him failed to recognize him because they misunderstood his very purpose. They felt, "Well, here's someone who will help us to save our nation, Israel, or save my family," or perhaps even more selfishly, "here is some way that I can save myself." But God didn't prepare the chosen people to save them alone. If we ask God, "Are You just the God of the Jewish people?" He won't say yes. "Are You just the God of the Christian people or the Hindus?" He wouldn't say yes, He would say that "I am the God of all mankind. My purpose in preparing the chosen people was to make an example of perfect faith, to make an example of perfect sacrifice."

They couldn't understand his message. His followers were so few; at the bitter moment of his crucifixion, even those few deserted him and left him standing alone. Jesus was an example of perfect faith because he even gave up his life, having been so carefully prepared to lead the people.

Even in the face of rejection, he never lost his faith, he never tried to save himself or just his disciples. He never intended to save just his nation, he came for the world. In John 3:16 it says, "For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us," not because God so loved the people of Galilee or the people in the Roman Empire or even the people who were living at that time, but He meant the world, all mankind.

The message of Jesus was one which transcended his own personal ability to express it, because it was a message from God, it was a message of eternal truth, it was a message that if we can but be faithful in the way in which God would lead us and if we can transcend our own self-centered concerns in order to cooperate for God's purpose we can be victorious in the face of all adversities. This was the message of

Jesus Christ. This is the message that, through his disciples, triumphed in Rome 400 years later. And as that message began to spread, they lived with an awareness of the great commandment, the commandment to carry this word all over the globe. Somehow, over the years, the central message of Christianity became blurred in its focus. What had been a sacrificial religion, one of perfect faith, instead became adulterated by man's interpretation, and so the church of the Middle Ages, instead of being one of sacrifice, became one of self-centered concern.

In order to realize His kingdom, reformation was needed. So He brought about the great Reformation, to go back to the direct teachings of Jesus. A tremendous reawakening took place less than 400 years ago to bring the message of Christianity back to mankind. A ground swell, a movement for democracy arose from the midst of the people inspired by God so that each individual, imperfect as he is, could have his own relationship with God. This great democratic ground swell, which was expressed in religion through the Reformation, which was expressed politically through revolutions and new states, came to its climax when out of all the countries of the world, God again sought to call one nation which could be His example, His champion.

There was no country on this North American shore. There were just scattered tribes and people. But God called representatives from every race on earth, every nation on earth, and in just 200 short years He brought us together in a spirit of a great heavenly revolution, one that was based on realizing the value of man and the divine right of the individual.

This great moment, when such a handful of people gathered together and yet could find such tremendous guidance and insight, such tremendous heavenly providence around them, gave birth to a new nation: America. America was not like any other nation, it was literally created by God with bits and pieces from all around the world. It was created with a divine mission to rise up and be an example of God's way of life, of faith in God, of a willingness to sacrifice. It was going to be a nation that God could use to bring the teachings of Jesus into reality, to use not to lead the world, or rule the world, but to use to serve the world, to real h out and to help the world.

God poured out His blessing upon America, gave us material abundance far beyond what has ever been seen on this earth before -- not because of our own merit, but because America was going to be the example. Borrowing some words from the famous historian Henry Steele Commager, in writing about the beginning of this country he said, "Here in the New World there was a sense of Eden. A man could accomplish anything. Here it was possible to discover whether man was capable of governing himself.

There were no longer limits that had been imposed by the Old World." Many famous historians and philosophers have marveled at the existence, at the viability of our nation. Thomas Paine said it best of all when he said that, "Americans would be like the new Adam in the new Paradise." There was a sense that the world was getting a second chance through America. There was the hope that all those things that we always believed in could be realized.

These days it's very popular to go back and re-interpret what the real motives were of the founding fathers of this nation. Many of the radical leftists would have us believe that America became great because of greed and selfishness, that American business was what was the engine of progress, and it was only because of the selfishness of some capitalists that we were able to create the things that really made us great. The ones who believe that, don't really know the story of America. They deny not only the principles and the sentiments of the early founders, but the motivations of those who built this country as we spread westward to California.

A few years ago the Bank of America was the target of a lot of bombing, a lot of protest and it was thought that because it is the largest bank, it was a symbol of capitalist repression. How many people really know the story of Bank of America? It began in San Francisco at about the turn of the century, run by a little Italian immigrant named Gianinni. Mr. Gianinni was just a small banker in this country and he wanted to do something to help.

When the great earthquake shook San Francisco, fires broke out and the city was almost destroyed. Most bankers closed their banks and were unwilling to risk anything in that time of crisis. Mr. Gianinni alone went to his bank, opened his vault and put all the money in a wheelbarrow. He wheeled it down to the wharfs, set up a plank, set out his money, and he opened his bank without even walls around him. He began to make loans to anybody who had plans to rebuild the city of San Francisco. No collateral was needed, no signature, their word was their bond. He put his faith in America, he put his faith in God.

He was willing to sacrifice himself and God blessed his effort. There are many who look back and think we entered World War II for selfish motives. Yet if you read carefully the history of those times our motivation was clearly one of a willingness to sacrifice ourselves in order to realize the ideals of our society. The fact that we were unable to do so was not because we didn't have that intention, but because we couldn't fully realize God's way of life.

After America had been so blessed by God, we came to the final moment when having the society of complete abundance and we began to give out, we began to realize that to level all the injustice of the world would require giving perhaps just a little bit deeper than we had originally intended. We couldn't just give a tithe, we couldn't just give 20 percent, we had to give 100 percent to solve the problems of the poverty of India, to solve the problems of all the people who are struggling. We would have to be willing to give everything and come down to the most sacrificial level, even at the cost of our lives.

After we benefited so much from God's way of life, after the early tradition of sacrifice and faith proved how God could bless a nation which lived according to God's principles, somehow in this 20th century we lost sight of the very root of where that blessing came from, and the fruits of the labor of others became too sweet for us to give up so freely to others.

We became proud if we gave a percent of our income and we became grateful if we accepted responsibility for part of an international problem, when in fact America is the very nation that was created by God in order to realize His will. If we can't live according to God's way of life, if we can't live up to the tradition of our ancestors, if we can't continue to sacrifice so that God can continue to bless us, His blessing will evaporate and all things that have come with it will be taken away.

We are living in a time of crisis: we see the energy crisis, the food crisis, we see crime rising and yet we don't understand that it is because we have turned away from our responsibility. We have begun to try and center things only upon ourselves. It's because of that that God has had to withdraw His blessing from America. It's not possible for us to be God's representative unless we are continually willing to sacrifice ourselves for others. So we see God withdrawing His support.

Many Christian leaders no longer believe in God, according to a recent survey, so God is leaving our churches. After the Supreme Court's decision banning school prayer we see that God is leaving our schools. Now at public meetings we hardly ever begin in prayer. God is leaving our meetings, He is leaving communities and God is going to leave America if we leave God.

Rev. Sun Myung Moon began a movement to rekindle, to revitalize the spiritual foundations of this nation. He was sent here by God to bring us a message that we never should have lost sight of before -- that God's way of life is one of faith and sacrifice. We need to rekindle the original spirit of this country. We have to begin a new Pilgrim movement, a movement where we can all join together in perfect faithfulness to God with a willingness to sacrifice ourselves. We have to take the teachings of Jesus Christ and make them real -- not something which we simply believe or something that we teach to others, but something that we act out in our daily life. This is the mission of the Unification Church.

The message from God is very simple; He only asks two things: that we can be perfectly faithful and transcend ourselves that we can love others more than we love ourselves so that He can continue to love us. It's a simple, simple request, but it is one which has great potential. The hope for a new America is the hope that we can return to God's way of life, that we can fulfill the original intention, the original principles upon which this country was founded.

I met Rev. Moon in 1969. I think I was probably an average individual raised in New York, I had a Lutheran background and I had a real desire to do something for the world. But I had long ago despaired of ever getting enough people to work together to accomplish something big enough to solve the problems, because the problems which I could see were enormous. I lost faith in God because I, like many others, thought how could there be a God? How could any God permit the things which I saw around me? So I had no hope and slowly in my cynicism I was leading an increasingly self-centered way of life.

When I met Rev. Moon, I found an example of the teachings of Jesus which I had never seen before. I later learned that he had had a revelation where Jesus Christ appeared to him directly and told him that he was chosen at this time in history to gather together young and old alike from all the nations of the world to realize God's way of life, to make the foundation for the kingdom of heaven to be realized on earth. And I found in him such hope, such confidence, such determination that again I could believe, again I could be willing to sacrifice my life, again I had hope and faith.

I could live according to God's way of life because of the inspiration. America was created not for herself alone, but to bring God's blessing of prosperity all around the world. At a time when America is retreating from the world, young men and women have been mobilized to carry this message and this hope all around the world.

Recently Unification Church missionaries went to all the countries of the world, 120 in all, to represent America, to do the job that our nation itself should be doing. To tell them about the hope we have here in America, to tell them about the faith we have in America, to tell them that many people in America do live according to those principles and want to realize the heavenly kingdom on earth. Recently we got back some letters from these missionaries, just one of which I would like to share with you. It is from a

small country, Mauritania. He said, "The people here admire power. They admire Hitler because he was strong. They feel no remorse over the killing of six million Jews.

They can't identify with it. They admire Kim Il Sung because he built many factories here. North Korea is building a clothing factory near us. They admire Mao because the Chinese made a pipeline to get water here. They are in great danger of being deceived. I wish every American could have spent this first day with me. There are so many things that make the heart ache. I trust in God that He has a way to save this country; I'll do my best."

While America has been withdrawing from all parts of the world, the agents of Communism -- the antithesis of our religious belief -- have been more active than ever before. Spreading the message, they have been sacrificing themselves. They have been demonstrating faith in their beliefs and they have been winning people. They have been winning people because they seem to be giving them things that those people so desperately need.

God prepared America to bring those things to the people of the world and while so many citizens sit with two or three cars, more than one home and air conditioning in all the windows, people with just a hole in the ground for a toilet are being influenced by the Communists because they bring them water, because they bring them clothing factories, because they appear strong. We're at the crisis point, we're at the time when we must take responsibility for fulfilling God's mission for America. We see the signs all around us. If we cannot revitalize the spiritual foundation of this country, we are going to lose the blessing of America.

I am asking all of you to join with us to come together to work in common purpose to rekindle God's way of life in this country, to establish the teaching of Jesus in reality. There is a great hope at this crucial time. As Henry Steele Commager said, "Those words in our Declaration of Independence which were able to inspire so many became an inspiration for people around the world and so from our founding documents, terminology has been borrowed by many, many governments when they fashioned their own hopes for a democratic future, including the constitutions of Uganda, Zambia and even North Vietnam," and he goes on to conclude that it's obvious that the power of those words to inspire others is still present.

The question is whether those words still have the power to inspire ourselves. Perhaps Wilson said it best in challenging us in his first inaugural address when he said that, "Men's hearts weighed upon us, while we decide men's hopes and men's lives hang in the balance. Men's aspirations are calling upon us to say what we will do. Who can live up to that trust? Who will dare fail to try?"