

What is the world coming to?



If you open a newspaper these days, or listen to the news on radio or TV, invariably you get the impression of trouble.

Looming over all is the frequent threat of economic crisis, with widespread unemployment and material hardship. It used to be that it was simply the “under-developed nations” that were in debt to the world banks with no prospect of ever being able to repay the loans. Now, because of the recent economic crisis, Western governments like the USA and Britain have borrowed hundreds of billions of dollars, generating national debts that will take decades to pay back.

The world is beset by problems: hunger, pollution of land and water, and ever-present violence. There are problems in society, revealed by increasing crime rates and overcrowded prisons; by hospitals filled with patients, many of whom are there because of mental stress; and by an alarming number of victims of drug abuse and alcoholism.

So you might be inclined to ask, What is our world coming to?

A view from outside

There is one feature above all which reveals the hopelessness of the world's condition.

If a visitor from another planet were to come and examine affairs on earth, he would find the human race divided into nations, all insisting on preserving their distinct identity.

Much has been made of the ‘end’ of the Cold War, of disarmament by the former superpowers, and the removal of the threat of nuclear attack. Yet the world is still spending vast sums on arms. If our visitor asked why nations are doing this, he would be told it was ‘for defence’. If he asked, ‘Defence against whom?’, he would learn that it was out of fear of other nations.



In other words, the nations are spending fantastic sums of money every year in creating the power to frighten and destroy because they cannot trust one another. Here is the core of the problem. And no one knows how to stop it! There is no prospect at all of this immense burden being lifted. And meanwhile the development of ever-more-terrifying nuclear weapons goes on . . .

No wonder feelings of pessimism and hopelessness are widespread today. And this is the “advanced” and “civilized” 21st century!

Again the viewer from outer space would see religious and racial groups competing with one another even within the same nation. They may be indulging in outright conflict.

There is no real prospect of solving our world's problems

What is the world coming to?

What is the real problem?

What is the root cause of all this trouble in the world? We would suggest to you that the root cause is human nature. We all have a selfish streak. We can all be self-centred, we can all be intolerant of others or have prejudiced self-centred viewpoints. We can sometimes be ignorant, and on occasions we all have the potential to be downright malicious.

Even the best of men are only men at best.

The Bible agrees with this assessment. It tells us that we are basically self-centred.



The Bible tells us what this produced in the early days of our history:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6 v 5

Jesus spelt out what we are capable of:

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Matthew 15 v 19

Jesus isn't referring to the organ that is pumping blood round our bodies when he mentions the heart. In the Bible the heart is synonymous with the mind.

The prophet Jeremiah was even more blunt:

*The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;*

Who can know it?

Jeremiah 17 v 9

We can summarise what the Bible says by saying that we all have this selfish streak. We are deceitful, and even deceive ourselves.

Is there any hope that the world's problems can be solved, when man is the root cause? Indeed, will mankind even go as far as destroying itself?

Help needed

We need a person or group of people with the wisdom, authority and power to implement the right solution, despite the inevitable opposition.

When human governments try to solve a particular problem they very often generate a new one or generate conflict with another nation in dealing with the problem. So the approach needs to deal with the causes and the effects of all the problems all at the same time.

We suggest that a world government is needed – but a world government with a difference.

Situation vacant

Let's look at the job specification for the head of this world government. What sort of person would be needed. An advert might read like this:



WORLD PRESIDENT. Applications are invited for the most important job in the world.

The successful candidate:

must know all the answers

will have to wrestle with the world's trickiest problems and come up with the right solution every time

must have the personality to inspire devoted loyalty in subordinates

must have the strength of character to impose decisions

(some of which will be highly unpopular)

must be capable of directing the powerful World Police Force

without being the least bit tyrannical or ruthless

must have spotless personal conduct

must be kind and understanding when confronted by weaknesses in others.

We know from history that the leaders of nations have been flawed. When given absolute power they have done terrible things. The well known historian Lord Acton shrewdly said:-

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men."

So if the position of world president existed – the candidate would have to be totally different from any previous leader.

Any applicants?

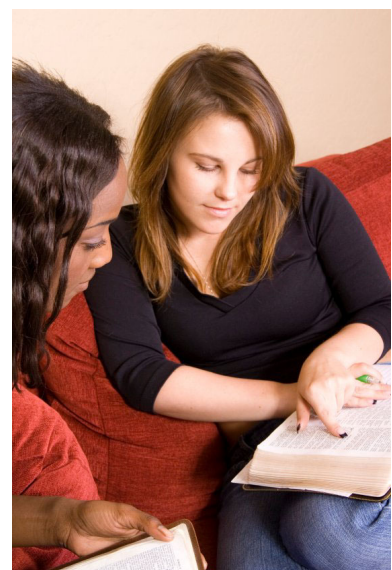
Who then can fill this apparently impossible job?

There is a person whose teaching and wisdom turned the world upside down.

There is good reason to believe the record of his life and actions. The person is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the record of his life and teaching is in the Bible.

If we look at the Bible, we will see that there are very good reasons to trust its message.

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ has the character required in the "World President" job specification.



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The ideal candidate

Jesus Christ had remarkable powers of leadership. Many men have laid down their lives willingly for his sake.

Enforcing his decisions will be no problem. When he was here before, the force of his personality was awe-inspiring. A detachment of armed guards was once sent to arrest him. They came back empty handed, pleading:

“No man ever spoke like this Man!”

John 7 v 46

No one will be able to criticise his behaviour. While he was on earth he threw out a challenge to his opponents:

“Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?”

John 8 v 46

Although they hated Jesus they were never able to take up the challenge.

Above all, Jesus Christ is the only great figure in all history who was completely untainted by the love of greatness, power or material possessions. The Bible makes it plain that he always sympathised with the weakness of others.

Without doubt, Jesus is the only man who would make a satisfactory world president.

The rescue plan

The Bible makes it plain that Jesus Christ is coming back to the earth. When he left the earth, his followers were told:

“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”.

Acts 1 v 11

The Bible's rescue plan involves sorting out our world's problems, including:

- war
- famine
- pollution
- and the problem we all face - death

Here is one section of the Bible that talks about this rescue plan:

*The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.
They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.
Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid.*

Micah 4 v 2 to 4



We will look at more aspects of this wonderful rescue plan in later sessions.