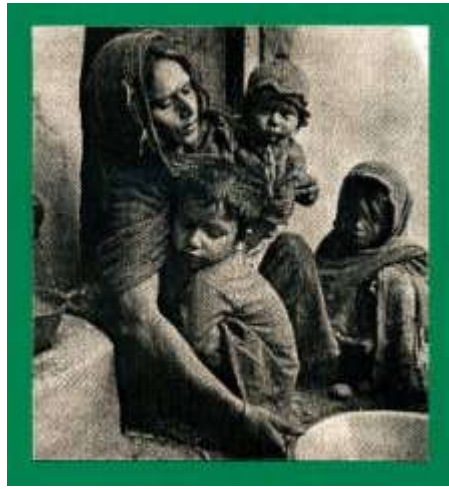


OUR UNJUST WORLD



Why is there such poverty and suffering in spite of all our high technology?

WE LIVE in a fast changing world and the present pace of change is creating enormous new realities, and anxieties. This is an age when national economies can be collapsed by economic forces and power politics.

High technology quickens the pace of change, and promises prosperity for many, but it also threatens to leave billions of people out in the cold. It is obvious that modern technology favours those who are able to acquire and use it.

Theoretically, technology is available to all, but the reality is that the tools of prosperity are not in the grasp of the underprivileged majority.

Some argue that “the poor have never had it so good,” because in recent years the average real income of the world’s poor have increased by 3%. The claim of substantial improvement, however, flees in the light of the reality of a poverty-stricken world.

At the turn of the Millennium ...

*** The three richest people in the world owned and controlled more wealth than 600 million of the poorest.**

*** 1.1 billion people lived in extreme poverty - on \$US 1 or less per day.**

*** In 1960, the richest 20% of the world's population had 30 times as much wealth as the poorest 20%. By 1995 the rich had 82 times as much.**

*** More than 800 million people went hungry every day.**

*** 22,000 died of hunger every day. 8 million each year.**

*** There are now 24 million refugees in the world.**

*** 430 million people live in conditions of extreme suffering.**

*** In the Third World, about 29% of children die before the age of 5, and 33% of the adult population do not live past the age of 40. And hunger and poverty are only a part of the world's woes. There's also . . .**

*** Wars - more people died in the 20th century through war than at any time in the past.**

*** There are more slaves in the world today than when slavery was abolished.**

*** There is the drug trade that is ruining millions of lives worldwide.**

*** There's the great shortage of clean water, and the lack of education and health care.**

*** Although there have been tremendous advances in medical science, new diseases are appearing, and old diseases are becoming more rampant than ever.**

What stops the nations from launching a massive, whole-hearted program to alleviate the immense human suffering in the world?

There's a lot of talk and a lot of resolutions, but man's best intentions fall short of what should happen.

Late last century the United Nations announced the Decade of Water and Sanitation. The program was to provide clean drinking water to the world. It didn't happen.

A more recent initiative, the UN Development Program, calculated that it would take just \$US 40 billion to ensure universal access to clean water, as well as basic education, basic healthcare, basic nutrition, sewerage and sanitation facilities, and access for women to basic gynaecological and obstetric care.

That is a small sum for the international community. (NATO spent that much in the Balkans war in 1999!)

The United Nations is reported to be seeking a major role in tackling world problems, and reshaping the present world order. But corruption and fierce competitive trade constantly stymies the efforts.

At a Millennium Summit (Sept. 2000), UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted the world's crises. But globalisation can lift billions of people out of squalor, he told the Summit, IF the new global marketplaces act like a global society.

Annan had a vision of a "moral world order" - a world filled with dignified people - a world where people do not hack each other to pieces, and where the rich are genuinely concerned about the appalling suffering around the world.

The Millennium Summit ended with a Millennium Declaration, which listed the world's problems, including poverty, pollution, AIDS, and human rights violations. It also listed several ambitious goals for the UN, including ...

* halving the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day (22% of the world) by the year 2015.

* halving the number of people who do not have safe drinking water (20% of the world population), by 2015.

* to provide primary school education for children everywhere by 2015.

* to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the scourge of Malaria and other major diseases. (According to UN sources it will cost at least \$3 billion per year to address these epidemics.)

*** to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.**

*** to close the technology divide, and thus to make the fruits of globalisation available to the poor as well as the rich.**

By 2005, Annan and the United Nations was bogged down with corruption scandals.

GLOBALISATION IS NOT THE ANSWER!

Globalisation refers to the ever-increasing global trade. Globalisation is not something new; since the beginning of nations there has been international trade; but today, as the world grows smaller due to instant communications and fast travel, world trade has taken on a dubious agenda.

Critics see the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as a threat to national sovereignties, and to individuals' fundamental rights. Some charge the WTO with working against the interests of developing nations.

An anti-globalisation activist puts it this way:

“Globalisation is a real power play on the part of concentrated corporate power and the states that are linked to that. They are trying to develop a particular form of global integration which is in the interests of financial institutions. What happens to the population is incidental.”

Today the forces of globalisation are being challenged by a frustrated, growing, and fierce opposition at international economic and trade forums.

Globalists maintain, however, that the WTO is the only hope of the developing nations to lever open US and European food and textile markets.

The East Asian “miracle” over the past 40 years has been quoted as evidence of the value of trade liberalisation. It has transformed the lives of hundreds of millions of people in economies like those of Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, which followed Japan's

example.

Today there is a demand for greater global trade liberalisation, but the politics of the rich nations, and the protectionist industries in those nations, make it difficult for true free trade to succeed.

With all the drawbacks of globalisation, however, not many want to totally roll it back. To do so would mean isolation, limited trade, growth, travel, migration, cultural, scientific and artistic exchanges. It would mean a shut down of internet, international tele-communications and educational exchanges. It would mean handling our environmental and social conditions, and disasters, all alone!

The globalisation debate and conflict comes down to what type of world we are creating.

The reality is that we are living in a selfish, unjust, commercial world. Our economic systems are not charities! They are based on profit motives. It's a fierce, competitive world out there, friends. And it is an increasingly corrupt world.

In our 21st century, world conditions are as they were in the days of Noah.

“Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight; the earth was full of violence.” (Genesis 6:11)

PROTEST IS NOT THE ANSWER!

Faced with corruption in high places, what can ordinary men do? Ideally, debate and goodwill should lead to an acceptable consensus on how to create a beneficial commercial world. But it is clear that multinational companies are heavyweights; they can and do influence decisions, and protests can do little to stop them.

While the cancer of monetary greed infects our social institutions, even sincere men can do little to reshape the future and make a benevolent world order?

POLITICAL WILL IS NOT THE ANSWER!

You have heard that “money is the root of all evil.” But the Bible says it’s “the love of money” that is the root of all evil. And note the strong warning:

“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and some, by hankering for it, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

Man has a problem. It’s not merely his actions; it’s his heart.

“The heart is more crooked and deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick - incurable. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

The best of men are struggling, with the best of intentions, to grapple with the mega-problems created by a disparate, conflicting world - a world of dictators and democrats, conservatives and liberals, revolutionaries and reactionists, religionists and atheists, super-rich and debt-laden, fundamentalists and evolutionists, idealists and activists.

It’s a disparate world indeed! And they are all seeking a way. But ...

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (King Solomon - Proverbs 14:12)

It would be wrong to criticize the sincere efforts of leaders to grapple with problems, but the tragedy is that the nations are increasingly rejecting the precepts of God, and are trying to tackle a complex world in the power of their own rational minds.

It would be wrong to blame globalisation for all the poverty of the world. The causes of economic destitution are many, but very often it is corruption, “politics,” or simply bad decisions that leaders make.

What must be admitted is that in spite of our advances and hi-tech, the poor are becoming poorer; and there is an awful

amount of misery out there.

Many will argue that “the poor you will always have with you,” and that progress cannot be held up because of those who cannot keep up.

True! And it’s also true that the World Trade Organisation and the World Economic Forums are not charity organisations. Their heavyweights are multinationals with vested interests.

Globalists claim that the opening up of world trade brings many advantages to the developing world. They say that isolation and tight international trade causes developing nations to fall behind, and to be deprived of a decent slice of the economic cake.

Competitive trading may be good for the economy, but it can be very vicious when commercial ventures are not based on the Bible’s principles of righteousness, unselfishness and genuine concern for the well-being of our fellow-men.

Examine the products in your supermarkets, for instance, and you will see that most manufacturers are concerned about your money, not your health. The oil producers, are not concerned for your comfort and convenience. They’re after your money.

Most multinationals are not concerned to provide the very best in quality; their main aim is to extract your money. Most banks say they are there to serve their customers, but we all know they are motivated by the company’s demand for greater profits.

You have been told that credit cards are designed for your convenience! But those who pay off their credit regularly, and in full, don’t bring much profit to the institution, do they? And so the debt traps are expanding by the minute? The Bible is so very true:

“The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender’s slave.” (Proverbs 22:7)

Our present world is up to the eyeballs in debt; both governments, and individuals. World debt is now calculated in the trillions.

We cannot blame globalism for every disaster, nor can we expect globalism to solve every problem. We cannot blame

leaders for seeking to provide answers to the problems, nor can we expect human intelligence to usher in a truly righteous new world order.

“I know, O Yahweh, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his own steps.” (Jeremiah 10:23)

We can appreciate the great efforts of organisations such as the UN Commission on Refugees, the World Food Program, and the World Health Organisation. But it’s true that relief organisations are often ham-strung by the complacency and self-centredness of the nations. Good intentions are often thwarted by selfish motives.

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (King Solomon - Proverbs 14:12)

The fact is that the world is on a rollercoaster, heading for the Great Depression, and the Great Tribulation. Man needs the Almighty God to direct his steps, and to deliver him from his self-induced disaster!

“For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” (Psalm 1:6)

RELIGION NOT THE ANSWER!

In August 2000, more than 1,500 religious leaders from over 100 countries and all religions, gathered in New York for a four-day Peace Summit aimed at forging a relationship with the United Nations, in an effort to advance the cause of peace and humanity.

While it is right that all religions should reject intolerance, racism, fanaticism, violence and terrorism, the answer to the world’s warring, discrimination and exploitation is not in the hands of the “united religions.” A gathering of disparate religions simply does not have a true unity or mandate.

ANOTHER COMMITTEE IS NOT THE ANSWER!

Dr Henri Spaack, an early planner of the European Common Market, and a secretary-general of NATO, said in one of his speeches:

“We do not want another committee. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man, and be he God or devil, we will receive him.”

THE WORLD NEEDS A SAVIOUR!

The day is coming when the world will receive a Satan-possessed man - that evil one, the Antichrist. And I am sure most of my readers will agree that we don't need a devil.

What we need is a Saviour; but any saviour less than the Almighty will not do. We need God's Anointed One. We need Him individually; every nation needs Him.

GOD'S SOLUTION FOR OUR TROUBLED WORLD IS THE PERSON OF THE MESSIAH - JESUS CHRIST.



It is the Messiah who will displace all injustice and unrighteousness. It is the Messiah who will establish truth

and peace; it is He who will restore our environment and install a true spiritual-social regime where prosperity and holiness embrace. And Jesus, Y'shua the Messiah - the eternal Yahweh - is the One who will return soon to reign "from shore to shore."

"Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy before Yahweh, for He is coming; for He is coming to judge the earth! He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in His faithfulness." (Psalm 96:12-13)

"For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet." (1 Corinthians 15:25)

Until He returns, our unjust economic system will continue to get worse; our political systems will become more totalitarian; our religious systems will become apostate, and more intolerant. Until Messiah comes, social conditions will deteriorate.

Exploitation, dictatorship and persecution are marks of history, and they are, tragically, realities of the present world order. And so alarming conditions have been prophesied for these end times:

"But realize this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without natural affection, unloving, unforgiving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips,, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of sensual pleasures rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness (spiritual life), although they have denied its power." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Because of the exploding wickedness in the world, God has appointed a day of judgment:

"He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31)

That day is called the Great Tribulation.

"Then there will be great tribulation, such as has never occurred since the beginning of the world until now; and there will be nothing like it again." (Matthew 24:21)

That is the seven-year mega-disaster. In fact, it will be a

period of disaster upon disaster; it includes earthquakes, cyclones, famine, plagues, pestilences, wars, nuclear destruction, scorching heat, poisoned rivers and oceans, asteroids or comets hitting the earth, a worldwide satanic dictatorship, great persecution, and much more.

That is not good news for our present corrupt and violent society. But friend, this is not the end! There is good news ...

JESUS THE MESSIAH IS COMING TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE

The Heavenly Master is coming before the Tribulation, to receive and to deliver His people. He says to all who trust in Him and confess Him as their Saviour:

“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s House are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:1-3)

How will this happen?

The Bible makes it clear:

“For the Master Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. Then the dead in Christ - those who died in union with the Messiah - shall rise first.

“Then we, the living believers who remain, will simultaneously be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Master in the air. And so we will be with the Master for ever.” (2 Thessalonians 4:16-17)