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Speech: At the Crossroads - You Can Make a Difference

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① At The Crossroads - You can note

A Difference

5th Avenue Presbyterian Church Gospel Fund Campaign

Preamble. It is a very great honour to have been invited to keynote this important fund raising campaign.

I have to confess that I agreed to come really only because my old friend Dr. Oscar McGonard asked me. We must owe him a debt like him a huge debt for all the support he gave us during our struggle to be victorious policy of apartheid particularly when he was a leading light in the W.C.C. I told him that I was quite despondent which reminds of the occasion when I was honoured in a small Dutch village when the village school was named after me. That's not the point of the story. The school was celebrating its 40th anniversary. I was there when I heard of a parade for the festivities a little girl came up to me & asked "were you here when the school started?" I know I was past it but had not thought quite so obviously.

I have recently been intrigued to note how God the omnipotent the omniscient one quite extraordinarily a perfect advent of human kind seemed always determined to have a follow-up ^{mission} wherever he would make. This after the emergence of ~~the~~ the first couple that made them to be God's viceroys God's standing, representatives or made in God's image. And so from then on the human couple would bear rule, have dominion over the rest of God's creation, to preserve it to cherish it as God's stewards so that women

for the environment, for pollution for the want of
replenishment of irreplaceable natural resources would not be
but a passing fad but a profound theological religious
concern. To be unmindful of the environment would not
just be a political inappropriateness but a religious
misdeed, a sin. We were meant to preserve
all of creation gently, compassionately, carefully as
a religious obligation as part of what it means to
be human to be created in God's image to care for
all creation all that is in it as coming from the
hand of God for the earth is the Lord's - all that
is in it. We were entrusted with the stewardship
of the gifts of God's immeasurable bounty, all an
overflowing gushing of the divine generosity. In the
~~primordial~~ times of the beginning the story relates
that there was a wonderful primordial harmony
peace friendliness togetherness so much so was
such the case that there was no bloodshed
amazingly not even for religious sacrificial
purposes. Everyone everything was vegetarian.
There was no God's intention no conflict only
an idyllic harmony peace.

In the other story of the beginning too Adam
& Eve are set to till the soil to keep at
bay the encroaching desert to be creators
with God bringing forth offspring as God had
brought them into being so rather go
upholders of cultivated civilised existence
human partners with the awesome potential
of history sweep so hurriedly away through
their exercise of the divine gift of freedom

3 of the creaturely autonomy to say yes -
nay to the divine offer of love, to obey or to refuse
to obey with God the omnipotent omnipotent, powerless
to intervene except thru a rejectable offer of
grace when we were about to make our choice
with its catalytic consequences. I had a
deep reverence for our freedom so deep that
I had much rather we went freely to hell than
compel us to go to heaven. And so things
were out of joint alienation disharmony blood shed
murder conflict, disintegration where formerly there had
been love, forgiveness peace harmony, family.

God's dream was shattered. Things fell apart.
There was a brokenness crying out for reconciliation
at one-ments to accomplish, to restore things to
what they were at the beginning. God sought
God's laboratory the patriarchs after the people
of Israel. He said to Moses "I will go to
Pharaoh & tell him to let my people go - Mo
God you can't be serious. Please here you want
to escape his clutches & you want me to do
what - go back there

Isaiah it amazing the trouble God took to
persuade Moses as if he God by hunged crucially
on his participation. It has seemed to be
thus always. God looking for a way to persuade
a reluctant fellow worker, or a sceptical one.
Just recall how God sought to persuade a
reluctant returning wayward Jeremiah, offering
him extraordinarily that he was no other thought
but had been part of the divine plan for all of time.

How mindblowing to think that none of us is an effect thought is an accident. Some of us might look like accidents but none is.

Knock knock! Who's there? Gabriel, ~~the~~ Gabriel who? He's a hazel. He's Mary. (Who. Mary God would like you to be the mother of his son. What - do you think in this village you can't even scratch yourself with out everybody thinking it + you would be for a what - an unmarried mother. No sorry for a decent girl try next door.' We would have up a creek had that been her reply. Nocefully she said 'Behold the handmaid of the lord. Let it be unto me according to thy word.' The whole universe breathed a serene sigh of relief & the imagination could happen.

God is the same yesterday today & forever. Thus God blesses us so that we may be a blessing to others pour God's gifts & graces unostentatiously on us so that we may be conduits to pass them on to others. You all know how we have been told that the Dead Sea receives fresh water, but does not pass it on & thus becomes brackish & dead.

God has no one but you to help God realize God's dream to make all things new & restore the primordial harmony when we were family living in a delicate network of interdependence.

God's dream of us reaching we are family,
That is no sentimental rambling figure of speech. It's
probably the most reduced thing Jesus of us that we
are sisters & brothers with God as our Father, Mother,
If the ethic of family pertained we would be appalled
at something to rectify the situation where we can
spend ~~and~~ obscene amounts on ^{luxury} budget of death
& destruction when a small fraction would enable
our sisters & brothers everywhere to have
clean water enough to eat in proper housing &
sanitation with adequate health care & education
for the ethic of family says from each according to
their ability to each as their need we would
be appalled & do something about it that we
were contemplating dropping bombs on our
sisters & brothers members of our family so
nonchalantly so casually.

In this family all being there are on
outside - black & white who ^{poss} created a world
educated men & women. Mr young, fair & straight
Sharon, Jeffrey, Peter, Rick & Martha, Fred,
Craig & Mercedes, George Bush, Saddam Hussein
all belong all ^{to} children in this family.

May God bless you as you raise funds
open yourselves to the divine generosity
to become more ~~more~~ who you are God's
fellow workers, God partners to help God
realize his dream, for God has ~~now~~
but you & without you God will not act
we without God cannot ~~do~~ anything.

God's dream of us reaching we are family,
That is no sentimental rambling figure of speech. It's
probably the most radical thing Jesus of Nazareth
ever said. Brothers & sisters, when I look at you, Fr. Mother,
to be ethnic family persecuted we would be appalled
to do something to rectify the situation where we can
spend such obscene amounts on ^{defense} budget of death
& destruction when a small fraction would enable
our sisters & brothers everywhere to have
clean water enough to eat in proper housing &
sanitation with adequate health care & education
for the ethnic family says from each according to
their ability to each according to their need we would
be appalled to do something about it that we
were contemplating dropping bombs on our
sisters & brothers members of our family so
nonchalantly so casually.

In this family all being there are on
outside - black & white who possess created with
educated men & women. Dr. Young, Jay & Jay, Lt.
Sharon, Bryant, Butch, Ric, a Mother, Fred,
Craig, & Mercedes, George Bush, Saddam Hussein
all belong all ^{to} children in this family.

May God bless you as you raise funds
open yourselves to the divine generosity
to become more than who you are God's
fellow workers, God partners to help God
realize his dream, for God has won
but you & without you God will not win
we without God cannot flourish.

At the Crossroads-You can make a difference

5th Avenue Presbyterian Church Capital Grand Campaign

Preamble

It is a very great honour to have been invited to keynote this important fund raising campaign and have to confess that I agreed to come really only because my old friend Dr. Oscar McCloud asked me. We in South Africa owe him and others like him a huge debt for all the support he gave us during our struggle against the vicious policy of apartheid particularly when he was a leading light in the W.C.C. I told him that I was quite decrepit, which reminds me of the occasion when I was honoured in a small Dutch village when the village school was named after me. That's not the point of the story. The school was celebrating its 400th year anniversary and when Leah and I arrived for the festivities a little girl came up to me and asked, "Were you here when the school started?" I knew I was past it but had not thought quite so obviously.

I have recently been intrigued to note how God the omnipotent, the omniscient one, quite extraordinarily after the advent of human kind seemed always determined to have a human fellow worker, partner, collaborator, in whatever divine project God sought to undertake. Thus after the emergence of the first couple, God made them to be God's viceroys, God's stand-ins, God's representatives as made in God's image.

And so from then on this human couple would bear rule, have dominion over the rest of God's creation to preserve it, to cherish it as God's stewards so that concern for the environment, for pollution, for the wanton depletion of

irreplaceable natural resources would not be but a passing fad but a profound theological, religious concern. To be unmindful of the environment would not just be a political impropriety but a religious misdemeanor, a sin. We were meant to preserve all of creation gently, compassionately, caringly as a religious obligation, as part of what it means to be human, to be created in God's image, to care for all creation and all that is in, as coming from the hand of God for the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it." We were entrusted with the stewardship of the gifts of God's immeasurable bounty, all an overflowing, gushing of the divine generosity. In the times of the beginning, the story relates that there was a wonderful primordial harmony, peace, friendliness, togetherness, so much so was this the case that there was no bloodshed, amazingly, not even for religious sacrificial purposes. Everyone, everything was vegetarian. There was in God's intention no conflict only an idyllic harmony and peace.

In the other story of the beginning too, Adam and Eve are set to till the earth, to keep at bay the encroaching desert, to be co-creators with God, bringing forth offspring as God had brought them into being as nurturers, upholders of cultivated, civilized existence, human partners with the awesome potential of having things going horribly awry through their exercise of the divine gift of freedom, of the creaturely autonomy to say yea or nay to the divine offer of love, to obey or to refuse to obey, with God the omnipotent, impotent, powerless to intervene expect through a rejectable offer of grace when we were about to make our choice with its cataclysmic consequences.

God had a deep reverence for our freedom, so deep that God had much rather we went freely to hell than compel us to go to heaven. And so things were out of joint, alienation, disharmony, bloodshed, murder, conflict, disintegration where formerly there had been love, togetherness, peace, harmony, family. God's dream was shattered. Things fell apart. There was a brokenness crying out for reconciliation at one ^{ment} ~~wants~~ to accomplish to restore things to what they were at the beginning. God sought out God's collaborators ^{the} the patriarchs and then people of Israel. "Hi Moses". 'Hi God'. "Will you go to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go". 'No- God you can't be serious. I came here, you know, to escape his clutches and you want me to do what-go back there?'

Isn't it amazing the trouble God took to persuade Moses as if the Exodus hinged crucially on his participation. It has seemed to be thus always God looking for and having to persuade a reluctant fellow worker or a skeptical one. Just recall how God sought to persuade a reluctant, retiring, sensitive Jeremiah, assuring him extraordinarily that he was no afterthought but had been part of the divine plan from all eternity. How mind-blowing to think that none of us is an afterthought, is an accident. Some of us might look like accidents but none is.

"Knock, Knock." 'Who's there?' "Gabriel." 'Gabriel who?' "The Archangel. Hi Mary." 'Hallo.' "Mary, God would like you to be the mother of his Son." 'What-do you know that in this village you can't even scratch yourself without everybody knowing it and you want me to be what-an unmarried mother. No, sorry, I'm a decent girl, try next door.' We would have been up a creek had that been her reply. Mercifully she replied, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord-be

it unto me according to your word.” And the whole universe breathed a cosmic sigh of relief and the incarnation could happen.

God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Thus God blesses us so that we may be a blessing to others, pours God’s gifts and graces unstintingly on us so that we may be conduits to pass them on to others. You all know how we have been told that the Dead Sea receives fresh water, but does not pass it on and thus becomes brackish and dead. God has no one but you to help God realize God’s dream to make all things new and restore the primordial harmony, when we were family living in a delicate network of interdependence.

God’s dream is of us realizing we are family. That is no sentimental mamby pamby figure of speech. It’s probably the most radical thing Jesus said of us, that we are sisters and brothers with God as our Father and Mother. If the ethic of family prevailed we would be appalled and do something to rectify the situation where we can spend such obscene amounts on a defense budget of death and destruction when a small fraction would enable our sisters and brothers everywhere to have clean water, enough to eat, with proper housing and sanitation, with adequate healthcare and education. For the ethic of family says from each according to their ability to each according to their need. We would be appalled and do something about it that we were contemplating dropping bombs on our sisters and brothers, members of our family so nonchalantly, so casually.

In this family all belong, there are no outsiders-black and white, rich and poor, educated and not educated, men and women, old and young, gay and straight, Sharon and Arafat, Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland,

Iraqis and Americans, George Bush and Saddam Hussein. All belong all are God's children in this family.

May God bless you as you raise funds. Open yourselves to the divine generosity to become more and more who you are God's fellow workers, God's partners, to help God realize his dream. **For God has no one but you and without you God will not as we without God cannot unless Christ.**

to paraphrase St Theresa of Avila
 God has no arms but yours, no eyes, no feet
 no mouth no ears to here

you will be helped to become more Godlike
 to be compassionate as God a compassionate
 to forgive as ~~God~~ if forgives to let your
 sun shine on good & bad, rain fall on righteous
 & evil, to love our enemies & bless those who
 curse you

To see as God sees, to hear as God hears
 to see in this one down out here, this Afghan, Iraqi
 whatever, to see the features of the one who
 feed in as much as you