

INTERNATIONALISM

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Presented to 2005 AACE Spring Conference

April 22, 2005

I. INTRO

A. Definitions

- Secular meaning: The belief that cooperation among nations will advance the common welfare; the state of being international.

B. The international community.

- Just as the world of matter is made up of some 104 chemical elements (theoretically there are another 50 or so possible but highly unstable elements), so the world of men is made up of (strange coincidence!) some 150 nations, of which 132 constitute the UN.
 - And just as in the world of matter there are highly stable and highly unstable elements, so in the world of men there are stable and unstable nations. (Charles H. Malik, Former chmn. of the UN General Assembly)
- Every nation possesses its particular gift to the world. They are all "members one of another."
 - The Hebrews developed wonderful insight into the nature and purpose of Almighty God.
 - The Greeks have raised all the questions that tease human mind and have suggested some answers. They also gave a sense of the beautiful and a capacity for clear, logical thought.
 - France amplified upon this sense of beauty and clear expression and applied them to modern circumstances.
 - Great Britain contributed political experience and wisdom.
 - Russia contributed an understanding of suffering.
 - The U.S. has demonstrated how to unify various peoples from around the globe and has shown a sense of international mission and responsibility.
- Hugo's prophecy: "There will rise...first the United States of Europe, then the United States of the World.' (Inscription on the wall in his bedroom)

C. The importance of the notion.

- "He who knows only England, does not know England at all."
 - A culture, a context, a frame of reference are absolutely necessary for full understanding of a problem.
- The greatest scourge of humanity has been selfish tribalism.
 - Internationalism may be, outside of Christianity which is eminently international, the only effective antidote against it.
- The greatest danger in the world is the clinging to our provincial identities and refuse to learn from a stranger--and a world of strangers is a world of enemies.
 - If our divided world is not to go up in smoke, if it is truly to become a global village, then we must become world citizens. We must find our personal identities with others.
 - The 100% American, or Russian, or..., is an enemy to all of us. We need an element of world citizenship in each person.
- Quand notre coeur doit battre au rythme des pulsations du monde, pouvons-nous accepter de rétrécir nos horizons aux limites d'un lieu géographique, ce lieu fût-il la Patrie? (Le p[re]tre Ambroise)

II. ELEMENTS FAVORING INTERNATIONALISM

A. Media

- Even in the recent past we used to learn of international matters thru the study of history and geography, as well as reading newspaper reports. This contributed to a highly structured, even rigid approach, in which it was convenient to categorize events or nations in somewhat ideological terms. However, the media, with its instant and on the spot reporting, has loosened up our categories. Our view is much more "blurred", impressionistic--and also involved. We find out how so very similar we all are and develop an appreciation and sympathy for others.

"When I was a boy, it was unusual for an American, or a person of any nationality, to know much about foreigners. Those who did were specialists--diplomats, explorers, journalists, anthropologists. And they usually knew a lot about just a few groups of foreigners...Now look what has happened. Thanks to modern communications, we have seen sights and heard sounds from virtually every square mile of the land mass of this planet. Millions of us have actually visited more exotic places than had many explorers during my childhood. So we know for certain that there are no potential human enemies anywhere who are anything but human beings almost exactly as ourselves. They need food. How amazing. They love their children. How amazing. They obey their leaders. How amazing. They think like their neighbors. How amazing. Thanks to modern communications, we now have something whenever had before: reason to mourn deeply the death or wounding of any human being on any side in any war." (Kurt Vonnegut, Jr, Author)
- Electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of "time" and "space" and pours upon us instantly and continuously the concerns of all other men. It has reconstituted dialogue on a global scale. Its message is Total Change, ending psychic, social, economic, and political parochialism. The old civic, state and national groupings have become unworkable. (Marshall McLuhan)
- In an electric information environment, minority groups can no longer be contained--ignored. Too many people know too much about each other. Our new environment compels commitment and participation. We have irrevocably become involved with, and responsible for, each other. (Marshall McLuhan)
 - This has developed in us a social conscience on an international scale.
 - "We understand that all men's welfare is our business. We are the first who blame ourselves when a million Chinese starve; who consider it our task, as the scoffer said, to provide Hottentots with milk; the first, perhaps since Christ himself and his immediate followers, who have said and really MEANT: One world, one race of man." (Davidman)

B. Knowledge

- Knowledge has in our time, triumphed and is triumphing over prejudice and over bigotry. The civilized and Christian world is fast learning the great lesson, that the difference of nation does not necessarily imply hostility, and that all contact need not be war. The whole world is becoming a common field for intellect to act in. (Daniel Webster)
- The language of science is universal, and perhaps scientists have been the most international of all professions in their outlook...Every time you scientists make a major invention, we politicians have to invent a new institution to cope with it--and almost invariably, these days, it must be an international institution. (J.F.Kennedy)
- Education broadens the mind--especially the liberal arts and humanities.
 - The basic purpose of a liberal-arts education is to liberate the human being to exercise his potential to the fullest. And that means tearing down some of the walls of provincialism with which a person grows up.

C. Business

- The pencil is a classic example of interdependence. There are 15 to 18 ingredients in it, among them graphite, which comes from Sri Lanka; zinc, which comes from, among other places, Russia; a wax which comes from Mexico; pumice which comes from Italy. Then it gets into ships

that are registered in Liberia that carry all these materials which are made in Japan. A pencil involves far more than just a piece of wood with lead in it. It symbolizes the working together with different nations in the world.

- Our economy is a global one and local economies are fully interdependent.
 - "Without question. We are in the process of transitioning out of automobiles--and steel and appliances and textiles and apparel and shoes and all of those industrial tasks that we used to do. As Third World countries take up those tasks, we let them go and we move on to new tasks. It's occurring globally. All the developed countries are de-industrializing--absolutely all of them... What's happening is that the whole globe is in a process of sorting out who's going to make what. It's a redistribution of labor and production..."(John Naisbit, Business Analyst, 1983)
- But caution: "As we move toward wider and wider economic unification of the world, we must see to it that economic boundaries are not allowed to coincide with political ones lest freedom vanish. And all our educational activities must stress the powers which rule our lives on this earth, against the close-knit tribalism of the economic super-state. (Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy)

III. IMPEDIMENTS TO INTERNATIONALISM

A. The ideals of nationalism and patriotism.

- Toute race, tout art a son hypocrisie...Ces mensonges s'accommodent B l'esprit de chaque race; ils varient de l'un B l'autre: ce sont eux qui rendent si difficile aux peuples de se comprendre, et qui m'Amme leur rendent si facile de se mépriser mutuellement. La vérité est la m'Amme chez tous; mais chaque peuple a son mensonge qu'il nomme son idéalisme. (R.Rolland)
- Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all others, because you were born in it... You'll never have a quiet world till you knock patriotism out of the human race. (B.B.Shaw)
 - Nationality is often silly. Every nation believes that the Divine Providence has a sneaking kindness for it. (Emerson)
 - Some patriotism is good, of course, but it must be counterbalanced with a strong mixture of internationalism. Otherwise it may become a stupefying drug.
- I fear patriotism has almost become a religion in this country; the flag is too easily equated with the Bible and the cross as a symbol of faith. This is dangerous business.
 - The stronger the patriot, the less interested he is in world evangelization.
 - As WORLD CHRISTIANS, it is imperative that the love of our country is never placed ahead of--our love for God and our commitment to spread the Gospel worldwide.

B. Self-centeredness and the immediate entourage.

- People usually see themselves thru their limited experience in a small orbit of family, relatives, friends, and fellow workers. Such a viewpoint imposes blindness on their grasp of a wider world. It also narrows their view of their own narrow circles, for their circles of relations are shaped by the broader universal forces at play which can easily pass us by unrecognized. The limited self cannot be perceived correctly except in its broad context. This broader context therefore is essential to escape from a limited and false vision of the world.
 - "Many people know so little about what is beyond their short range of experience. They look within themselves--and find nothing! Therefore they conclude that there is nothing outside themselves, either." (Helen Keller)
 - Unconsciously, we prefer white people to dark (or vice versa), or those who speak English to those who use other languages. This ego-centrism and does not foster greater understanding among peoples.

C. A "fundamentalist" frame of mind.

- The biggest impediment to internationalism is the "fundamentalist" frame of mind.
 - They usually conform, in matters of public policy, to pressures of popular, economic, or political power. Usually they do not try to say much as Christians concerning the social problems of the day. When they do, they most frequently come down on the side where the pressures of power dictate.
 - White fundamentalists in the South are usually segregationists and opposed to labor unions. In the Midwest they are against the United Nations.
 - In the midst of an economy geared to military preparations they oppose any effort to curtail the arms race or move toward international conciliation.

IV. GREAT INTERNATIONALISTS

A. The stoics.

- For most Stoics, we are all derived from the same God, we are all brothers. Our spiritual kinship transcends boundaries of race and state and social class. We are all members of the same cosmos; all citizens of the universe.
 - "Ibi patria ubi bene." My fatherland is where I feel well."

B. Montaigne.

- J'estime tous les hommes mes compatriotes et embrasse un Polonais comme un Français, postulant cette liaison nationale B l'universelle et commune. (Montaigne)

C. Voltaire.

- "He who seeks truth should be of no country." (Voltaire)

D. Gandhi

- "My nationalism is intense internationalism. I am sick of the strife between nations and religions." (Gandhi)

E. Einstein.

- "Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind." (Einstein)

F. Paul.

- He was the product of three cultures--Hebrew, Roman, and Greek. He was the champion of the Gentiles who were despised by the Jews. Had it not been for him, Christianity might still be an obscure Jewish sect.

V. HOW TO BECOME MORE INTERNATIONALLY MINDED

A. Strive to be flexible.

- Si fueris Romae. Romano vivito more; // Si fueris alibi, vivito sicut ibi. (St Ambrose's advice to St Augustine) [When in Rome, live as the Romans do; when elsewhere, live as they live elsewhere.]
- If need be, radically change the way you view things.
 - Usually we see the world thru a pattern of concepts that we have inherited. Sometimes these windows need cleaning: so much so that almost we may be seeing the windows that we have constructed rather than the world outside. By rearranging the windows as well as by cleaning them, we could get a better view of the real world beyond. Certainly we may be grateful to our ancestors who have built these windows thru which we see. Without them we should be walled up within the confines of our immediate experience or that of our small circle--as their ancestors

before them had been. Yet it is not impious of us to ask occasionally whether we might not see better by enlarging a window here or there, or even replacing it with new ones of a different shape. (W.C.Smith)

- Represent mankind rather than your race.

B. Travel and live abroad.

- To know a foreign country at all, you must not only have lived in it and in your own, but also have lived in at least another. (S.Maugham)
- As the traveler who has once been from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own. (Margaret Mead)
- Whenever I travel overseas, I am struck anew by the world's incredible diversity, and the churches overseas are now beginning to show that cultural self-expression. For too long they were bound up in Western ways (as the early church had been bound in Jewish ways) so that hymns, dress, architecture, and church names were the same around the world. Now indigenous churches are bursting out with their own spontaneous expressions of worship to God. I must guard against picturing the Body of Christ as composed only of American or British cells; it is far grander and more luxuriant than that. (Dr P. Brand)

C. Become a citizen of the Kingdom

- The task of constructing even that minimum degree of world fellowship that will be necessary for man to survive at all is far too great to be accomplished on any other than a religious basis. From no other source than his faith...can man muster the energy, devotion, vision, resolution, capacity to survive disappointment that will be necessary--that are necessary--for this challenge. (W.C.Smith)

D. Caution: Don't go overboard.

- Men must love and be loyal to their families and their peoples in order to preserve them. Only if they think their own things are good can they rest content with them. A father must prefer his child to other children, a citizen his country to others. That is why there are myths--to justify these attachments. And a man needs a place and opinions by which to orient himself. This is strongly asserted by those who talk about the importance of roots. The problem of getting along with outsiders is secondary to, and sometimes in conflict with, having an inside, a people, a culture, a way of life. A very great narrowness is not compatible with the health of an individual or a people, whereas with great openness it is hard to avoid decomposition. (Allan Bloom)
- A man's feet must be planted in his country, but his eyes should survey the world. (Santayana)