

One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender, instead of the

unique

identities of each of us as complex

human beings.

– Franklin Thomas

THE COMING OF AGE

Proudly presented by the Baha'i community of Adelaide

The Baha'i Faith celebrates the unity and diversity of the human family, the essential harmony of all religions and the oneness of the Universal Creator

Web: www.bahai.org.au
E-mail: adelaide@sa.bahai.org.au
Phone: 8267 4407 / 0434 094170

Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Opening Music

JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS

Take heed, O concourse of the rulers of the world! There is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power the force of justice and wisdom. I, verily, affirm that there is not, and hath never been, a host more mighty than that of justice and wisdom. Blessed is the king who marcheth with the ensign of wisdom unfurled before him, and the battalions of justice massed in his rear. He verily is the ornament that adorneth the brow of peace and the countenance of security. There can be no doubt whatever that if the day-star of justice, which the clouds of tyranny have obscured, were to shed its light upon men, the face of the earth would be completely transformed.

—*Baha'u'llah, from the Baha'i writings*

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

—*General Assembly of the United Nations*

On this Human Rights Day, we launch a year-long commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The entire UN family will take part in a campaign to promote the Declaration's ideals and principles of justice and equality for everyone.

The campaign reminds us that in a world still reeling from the horrors of the Second World War, the Declaration was the first global statement of what we now take for granted -- the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings.

The extraordinary vision and determination of the drafters produced a document that for the first time set out universal human rights for all people in an individual context. Now available in more than 360 languages, the Declaration is the most translated document in the world -- a testament to its universal nature and reach.

It has inspired the constitutions of many newly independent States and many new democracies. It has become a yardstick by which we measure respect for what we know, or should know, as right and wrong.

The Declaration remains as relevant today as it did on the day it was adopted. But the fundamental freedoms enshrined in it are still not a reality for everyone. Too often, Governments lack the political will to implement international norms they have willingly accepted.

This anniversary year is an occasion to build up that will. It is a chance to ensure that these rights are a living reality -- that they are known, understood and enjoyed by everyone, everywhere. It is often those who most need their human rights protected, who also need to be informed that the Declaration exists -- and that it exists for them.

May this year reinvigorate us in that mission. Let us make the Universal Declaration of Human Rights an integral part of everyone's life.

— Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, on the occasion of the 59th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, December 10th, 2007

No matter your race
or your customs
the laws of your space
should weather all storms
for if you speak the truth
and do so within the law
passing the same to your youth
will keep the peace as before.

For within that peace
will come accord.
Then a life of ease
where all can afford,
to be treated equal.
Without any prejudices
able to again build walls
between all the races.

—Denis Davey, December, 2008

Musical Reflection

LEARN FROM THE PAST

Ye observe how the world is divided against itself, how many a land is red with blood and its very dust is caked with human gore. The fires of conflict have blazed so high that never in early times, not in the Middle Ages, not in recent centuries hath there ever been such a hideous war, a war that is even as millstones, taking for grain the skulls of men. Nay, even worse, for flourishing countries have been reduced to rubble, cities have been levelled with the ground, and many a once prosperous village hath been turned into ruin. Fathers have lost their sons, and sons their fathers. Mothers have wept away their hearts over dead children. Children have been orphaned, women left to wander, vagrants without a home.

From every aspect, humankind hath sunken low. Loud are the piercing cries of fatherless children; loud the mothers' anguished voices, reaching to the skies. And the breeding-ground of all these tragedies is prejudice: prejudice of race and nation, of religion, of political opinion; and the root cause of prejudice is blind imitation of the past – imitation in religion, in racial attitudes, in national bias, in politics. So long as this aping of the past persisteth, just so long will the foundations of the social order be blown to the four winds, just so long will humanity be continually exposed to direct peril.

—*Abdu'l-Baha, from the Baha'i writings*

Learn from the past.
Learn from the sadnesses,
The disappointments,
The tears,
The successes,
The joys.
And release them all.
Do not carry them
In your mind
And in your heart
Instead
See anew.
Feel anew.
Create wonders.
—*Words by Clear Water*

THE GOLDEN RULE

The Golden rule, the teaching that we should treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated, is an ethic variously repeated in all the great religions:

Buddhism: ‘Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.’
— *Udana-Varqa, 5:18*

Zoroastrianism: ‘That nature is only good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.’
— *Dadistan-I Dinik, 94:5*

Judaism: ‘What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law, all the rest is commentary.’
— *The Talmud, Shabbat, 31s*

Hinduism: ‘This is the sum of all true righteousness: deal with others as thou wouldst thyself be dealt by. Do nothing to thy neighbour which thou wouldst not have him do to thee after.’
— *The Mahabharata*

Christianity: ‘As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.’
— Luke 6:31

Islam: ‘No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.’
— *Sunnah*

Confucianism: ‘Surely it is the maxim of loving-kindness: Do not unto others that you would not have them do unto you.’
— *Analects, XV, 23*

Bahá’í Faith: ‘He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfil.’
— *Gleanings from the Baha’i writings*

Musical Reflection

DARE TO DREAM

A man is as great as the dreams he dreams
As great as the love he bears;
As great as the values he redeems,
And the happiness he shares.

A man is as great as the thoughts he thinks,
As the fountains at which his spirit drinks,
And the insight he has gained.

A man is as great as the truth he speaks,
As great as the help he gives,
As great as the destiny he seeks,
As great as the life he lives.

—*C. E. Flynn*

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed - "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, and rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the south. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must come true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California. But not only that - let freedom ring from Stone Mountain in Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, *Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*

—Dr. Martin Luther King, August 28, 1963, Washington, D.C.

Musical Reflection

CREATE A NEW WORLD

To develop a sense of universal responsibility — of the universal dimension of our every act and of the equal right of all others to happiness and not to suffer—is to develop an attitude of mind whereby, if we see an opportunity to benefit others, we will take it in preference to merely looking after our own self-interests. But, though, of course, we care about what is beyond our scope, we accept it as part of nature and concern ourselves with doing what we can.

An important benefit of developing such a sense of universal responsibility is that it helps us become sensitive to others — not just those closest to us. We come to see the need for caring, to care for those members of the human family who suffer most. We recognize the need to avoid causing divisiveness among our fellow beings. And we become aware of the overwhelming importance of contentment.

— *The Dalai Lama, Buddhist sentiments*

Seek for mankind that of which you are desirous for yourself, that you may be a believer; treat well as a neighbour the one who lives near you, that you may be a Muslim. That which you want for yourself seek for mankind. The most righteous of men is the one who is glad that men should have what is pleasing to himself, and who dislikes for them what is for him disagreeable. Whatever you abhor for yourself, abhor it also for others, and whatever you desire for yourself desire also for others.

—*Attributed to Muhammad, Sukhanan-i-Muhammad*

Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing, some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

—*Hebrews 13 :1-3, from the Bible*

We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.

— *Franklin Thomas*

If you sit down at set of sun
And count the acts that you have done,
And, counting, find
One self-denying deed, one word
That eased the heart of him who heard,
One glance most kind
That fell like sunshine where it went –
Then you may count that day well spent.
But if, through all the livelong day,
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay –
If through it all
You've nothing done that you can trace
That brought the sunshine to one face –
No act most small
That helped some soul and nothing cost –
Then count that day as worse than lost.
—*George Elliot*

O Children of Men!

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be manifest. Such is my counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

—*Baha'u'llah, from the Bahá'í writings*

Musical Finale

join us for the next program

Sunday the 19th of January, 11am
*Radford Auditorium,
Art Gallery of South Australia*