



Ode to Giving

PROGRAM

OPENING MUSIC

~ *Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
& Samantha Geake*

THOUGHT

~ *from the Baha'i Writings*
~ *from Buddhist Writings*
~ *from the Jewish and Christian Bible*
~ *Dalai Lama*
~ *Shoghi Effendi from Baha'i Writings*
~ *Confucius from Analectics*
~ *Hinduism from the Bhagavad Gita*
~ *Islam from the Qu'ran*
~ *Baha'u'llah from Baha'i Writings*

MUSIC

~ *Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
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WILL

~ *Sikh writings: The Guru Granth*
~ *Lao Tzu Hua Hu Ching*
~ *Kahlil Gibran The Prophet*
~ *from the Qu'ran*
~ *from the Baha'i Writings*

MUSIC

~ ***Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
& Samantha Geake***

DEEDS

~ **Lorraine Mafi Williams, Aboriginal elder**
~ ***A Story***
~ **Sogyal Rinpoche**
~ **Frederick Morgan**
~ **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**
~ **Robert Fulgham *A Reflection***
~ **George Elliot**
~ **'Abdu'l-Baha *from the Baha'i Writings***

MUSICAL FINALE

~ ***Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
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OPENING MUSIC

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Thought

*As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to
them likewise*

Luke 6:31

O Son of Passion!

Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty; that from the well-spring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life.

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist.

How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He hath said: “Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery.”

Manifold are the verses that have been repeatedly revealed in all the Heavenly Books and the Holy Scriptures, expressive of this most subtle and lofty theme. Even as He hath revealed: “We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves.” Again He saith: “And also in your own selves: will ye not, then, behold the signs of God?” And yet again He revealeth: “And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves.” In this connection, He Who is the eternal King—may the souls of all that dwell within the mystic Tabernacle be a sacrifice unto Him—hath spoken: “He hath known God who hath known himself.

There are three kinds of persons existing in the world: one is like a drought, one who rains locally, and one who pours down everywhere.

How is a person like a drought? He gives nothing to all alike, not giving food and drink, clothing and vehicles, flowers, scents, and unguents, bed, lodging, and light, neither to recluses and Brahmins nor to wretched and needy beggars. In this way, a person is like a drought.

How is a person like a local rainfall? He is a giver to some, but to others he gives not. . . In this way, a person is like a local rainfall.

How does a person rain down everywhere? He gives to all be they recluses and Brahmins or wretched, needy beggars; he is a giver of food and drink, clothing . . . Lodging and lights. In this way a person rains down everywhere.

—

If beings knew as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would they allow the stain of meanness to obsess them and take root in their minds. Even if it were their last morsel, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared it, if there were someone to share it with. But, Bhikkhus, as beings do not know, as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they eat without having given, and the stain of meanness obsesses them and takes root in their minds.

Buddhism Itivuttakas 65 & 25

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

from the Jewish and Christian Bible

The essence of all religions is love, compassion, and tolerance. Kindness is my true religion. No matter whether you are learned or not, whether you believe in the next life or not, whether you believe in God or Buddha or some other religion or not, in day-to-day life you must be a kind person...Love, compassion and tolerance are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive. The clear proof of a person's love for God is if that person genuinely shows love to fellow human beings.

Dalai Lama

Let there be no mistake. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind . . . Is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cooperation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater . . . Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced. It constitutes a challenge, at once bold and universal, to outworn shibboleths of national creeds — creeds that have had their day and which must, in the ordinary course of events as shaped and controlled by Providence, give way . . . It calls for no less than the reconstruction . . . of the whole civilized world — a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life . . . yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.

It represents the consummation of human evolution— an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations.

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind . . . carries with it no more and no less than a solemn assertion that attainment of this final stage in this stupendous evolution is not only necessary but inevitable, that its realization is fast approaching, and that nothing short of a power that is born of God can succeed in establishing it.

Shoghi Effendi *from Baha'i Writings*

A man of humanity is one who, in seeking to establish himself, finds a foothold for others and who, desiring attainment for himself, helps others to attain.

Confucianism Analectics

The gift which is given without thought of recompense, in the belief that it ought to be made, in a fit place, at an opportune time, and to a deserving person—such a gift is Pure.

That which is given for the sake of the results it will produce, or with the hope of recompense, or grudgingly — that may truly be said to be an out come of Passion.

Hinduism Bhagavad Gita 17.20-21

Whatsoever good you expend is for parents and kinsmen, orphans, the needy, and the traveller; and whatever good you may do, God has knowledge of it.

Qu'ran

O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men.

Baha'u'llah from the Baha'i Writings

MUSIC

*Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
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Will

*Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full
of the overcoming of it.*

Helen Keller

He, the Lord, is the only Giver:
He Giveth all,
And without limit: for limitless are His Treasures.

He, the Giver, is forever Alive and Awake,
Why then hast thou, O my foolish mind,
Forsaken thy Lord?

But whom shall we castigate for this,
When He, the Lord, Himself hath bound us to our
desires?
He whose Woes the Lord Himself ends,
Nanak, he the one is content, by the Guru's Grace.

Sikh writings: *The Guru Granth*

If you wish to become a person of Tao,
then study that which serves the nature of life,
and offer it to the world.
Allow your devotion to learning the Taoist way to be
complete.
Partial practice and partial discipline won't do:
You can't know the body by studying the fingers,
and you can't understand the universe by learning
one science.
If you study the whole of the Tao wholeheartedly,
then everything in your life will reflect it.

Lao Tzu *Hua Hu Ching*

Then said a rich man: **Speak to us of Giving.**

And he answered:

You give but little when you give of your possessions.

It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.

For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard for fear you may need them tomorrow?

And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the over-prudent dog burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?

And what is fear of need but need itself?

Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable?

There are those who give little of the much which they have – and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.

And there are those who have little and give it all.

These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.

There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.

And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.

And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue;

They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.

Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.

It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding;

And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving

And is there aught you would withhold?
All you have shall some day be given;
Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours
and not your inheritors'.

You often say, "I would give but only to the deserving."
The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your
pasture.

They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.
Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights
is worthy of all else from you.

And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life
deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.

And what desert greater shall there be, than that which lies
in the courage and the confidence, nay the charity, of receiving?

And who are you that men should rend their bosom and
unveil their pride, that you may see their worth naked and their
pride unabashed?

See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an
instrument of giving.

For in truth it is life that gives unto life – while you, who
deem yourself a giver, are but a witness.

And you receivers – and you are all receivers – assume no
weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon
him who gives.

Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;
For to be over-mindful of your debt is to doubt his
generosity who has the free-hearted earth for mother, and God
for father.

Kahlil Gibran *The Prophet*.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

They ask you about the spoils. Say: ‘The spoils belong to Allah and the Apostle. Therefore have fear of Allah and end your disputes. Obey Allah and His apostle, if you are true believers.’

The true believers are those whose hearts are filled with awe at the mention of Allah, and whose faith grows stronger as they listen to His revelations. They are those who put their trust in their Lord, pray steadfastly, and bestow in alms of that which We have given them. Such are the true believers. They shall be exalted and forgiven by their Lord, and a generous provision shall be made for them.

from the Qu’ran

○ Son of My Handmaid!

Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. Yet to be poor in all save God is a wondrous gift, belittle not the value thereof, for in the end it will make thee rich in God and thus thou shalt know the meaning of the utterance, “In truth ye are the poor,” and the holy words, “God is the all-possessing,” shall even as the true morn break forth gloriously resplendent upon the horizon of the lover’s heart, and abide secure on the throne of wealth.

Baha’u’llah from the Baha’i Writings

MUSIC

*Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
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Deed

*I want to fashion a rainbow that arcs through the sky
and iron out the dilemmas between you and I*

Jack Davis

When humanity is in chaos like it is now, the simplest teaching given by the aboriginals is to respect each other. Nobody is better than anybody else. Love one another. Especially in these times of chaos. And I don't just mean the love between husband and wife. I mean the humanity love as well. And just the caring towards each other. No discrimination. No racism. Everybody is equal. And that is what God wants us to do.

You see we believe there is a God in heaven, just like everybody else. But we believe that God is the pure illuminating light of love. It's a Being. God's not a man or a woman. It's a Beautiful Being of love. And all humanity should know that and love each other that's the ultimate aim of humanity.

Lorraine Mafi Williams, Senior Aboriginal elder

A Story

As the old man walked the beach at dawn he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Catching up with the youth he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun. "But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish" countered the other. "How can your efforts make any difference?" The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and threw it to the safety of the waves.

"It makes a difference to this one."

Compassion is not simply a sense of sympathy or caring for the person suffering, not simply a warmth of heart toward the person before you, or a sharp clarity of recognition of their needs and pain — it is also a sustained and practical determination to do whatever is possible and necessary to help alleviate their suffering.

Sogyal Rinpoche

Dear Agnes, you were dying and you knew it. We stood there. One at each side of the bed looked down at you who smiled still through your pain. You held each with a hand, and said: “You two are surely happy, you’re looking so damn well,” and gave the hands a squeeze. Well, we smiled back, holding our tears, and told you that we were happy indeed, and tried to share it with you. Perhaps we did, because later on you said, “If we just keep on loving, we’ll come out right.” That is a message I’ve thought of often since, for when we left you (the last time, and we knew it) we brought with us the blessing of your words and your last look that will not be forgotten.

Frederick Morgan

What great poverty!
Are we aware of that?
Do we know what fear is?
Do we know the lonely?
Do we know the unwanted and the unloved?
Do we know the hungry?
Do we really know what hunger is?

I'll give you an example of what hunger is.
A child got a piece of bread from a Sister.
(He had not eaten for some time.) I saw that child eating
the bread slowly, crumb by crumb.

I said to him, "I know you are hungry. Why don't
you eat the bread up?"

The little one answered, "I want it to last longer!"

He was afraid that when he finished the bread,
his hunger would come back again. And so he ate it
crumb by crumb!

The other child next to him, was not even eating. I
thought that he had finished his bread. But the little one
said, "But my father is sick, I'm very hungry, but my
father is sick, and I think he would love to have this
piece of bread."

That good little child was willing to go without
food to be able to give his father the joy of having a
little piece of bread.

The poor are great people!
They don't need our sympathy.
They aren't asking us to feel sorry for them.
They are great people!
They deserve our love!

Not long ago, some sisters and I went out and picked up four or five people off the streets. One of them was in terrible condition, so I told the sisters, "I'll take care of her." And I tried to do all that I could for her, all that my love of Jesus could do.

When I put her in bed, she took hold of my hand. There was a beautiful smile on her face. She said only, "Thank you!" And then she died.

She gave me much more than I had ever given her. She gave me her grateful love. I couldn't help but examine myself. I said, "If I were she, what would I have done?" And my answer was sincere, "I would have tried to draw some attention to myself by saying, 'I'm hungry, I'm cold, I'm dying!'"

But she had courage, and she had love to give to me, instead of keeping it to herself, instead of being focused on herself. These are very admirable things!

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

A Reflection by Robert Fulgham

There is a person who has profoundly disturbed my peace of mind for a long time. She doesn't even know me, but she continually goes around minding my business. We have very little in common. She is an old woman, an Albanian . . . She is a Roman Catholic nun who lives in poverty in India. I disagree with her on fundamental issues of population control, the place of women in the world and in the church, and I am turned off by her naïve statements about "what good wants." She stands at the centre of great contradictory notions and strong forces that shape human destiny. She drives me crazy. I get upset every time I hear her name or read her words or see her face. I don't even want to talk about her.

In the studio where I work, there is a wash basin. Above the wash basin is a mirror. I stop at this place several times each day to tidy up and look at myself in the mirror. Alongside the mirror is a photograph of the troublesome woman. Each time I look in the mirror at myself, I also look at her face. In it I have seen more than I can tell; and from what I see, I understand more than I can say.

The photograph was taken in Oslo, Norway, on the 10th of December, in 1980. this is what happened there:

A small, stooped woman in a faded blue sari and worn sandals received an award. From the hand of a king. An award funded from the will of the inventor of dynamite. In a great glittering hall of velvet and gold and crystal. Surrounded by the noble and famous in formal black and in elegant gowns. The rich, the powerful, the brilliant, the talented of the world in attendance. And there at the centre of it all—a little old lady in sari and sandals. Mother Teresa, of India. Servant of the poor and sick and dying. To her, the Nobel Peace Prize.

No shah or president or king or general or scientist or pope; no banker or merchant or cartel or oil company or ayatollah holds the key to as much power as she has. None is as rich. For hers is the invincible weapon against the evils of this earth: the caring heart. And hers are the everlasting riches of this life: the wealth of the compassionate spirit.

To cut through the smog of helpless cynicism, to take only the tool of uncompromising love; to make manifest the capacity for healing humanity's wounds; to make the story of the Good Samaritan a living reality; and to live so true a life as to shine out from the back streets of Calcutta takes courage and faith we cannot admit in ourselves and cannot be without.

I do not speak her language. Yet the eloquence of her life speaks to me. And I am chastised and blessed at the same time. I do not believe one person can do much in this world. Yet there she stood, in Oslo, affecting the world around. I do not believe in her version of God. But the power of her faith shames me. And I believe in Mother Teresa.

Some years later, at a grand conference of quantum physicists and religious mystics at the Oberoi Towers Hotel in Bombay, I saw that face again. Standing by the door at the rear of the hall, I sensed a presence beside me. And there she was alone. Come to speak to the conference as its guest. She looked at me and smiled. I see her face still.

She strode to the rostrum and changed the agenda of the conference from intellectual inquiry to moral activism. She said, in a firm voice to the awed assembly: "We can do, not great things; only small things with great love."

The contradictions of her life and faith are nothing compared to my own. And while I wrestle with frustration about the impotence of the individual, she goes right on changing the world. While I *wish* for more power and resources, she *uses* her power and resources to do what she can do at the moment.

She upsets me, disturbs me, shames me. *What does she have that I do not?*

If ever there is truly peace on earth, goodwill to men, it will be because of women like Mother Teresa. Peace is not something you wish for; it's something you *make*, something you *do*, something you *are*, and something you *give away* WITH GREAT LOVE!

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

Let all your striving be for this, to become the source of life and immortality, and peace and comfort and joy, to every human soul, whether one known to you or a stranger, one opposed to you or on your side. Look ye not upon the purity or impurity of his nature: look ye upon the all-embracing mercy of the Lord, the light of Whose grace hath embosomed the whole earth and all who dwell thereon, and in the plenitude of Whose bounty are immersed both the wise and the ignorant. Stranger and friend alike are seated at the table of His favour. Even as the believer, the denier who turneth away from God, doth at the same time cup his hands and drink from the sea of His bestowals.

‘Abdu’l-Baha from the Baha’i Writings

MUSICAL FINALE

***Robert Cooper, Paul Cooper, Mark Bandick
and Samantha Geake***

Please join us for refreshments after the program

2004 SOUL FOOD SCHEDULE

*Every third Sunday of the month
11:00am-12:00pm
Art Gallery of South Australia*

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|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 19 September | Peace - Planet Dreams |
| 17 October | A Sense of Hours |
| 21 November | Changeless Light upon Light |
| 19 December | The Indelible Future |

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