



HEAL THE WORLD—NOW!

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I have been interested in this invitation to a certain campaign on my Yahoo home page that says SILENCE THE HATE, which encourages users to get involved at supporting a movement calling for decisive actions against popular prejudicial, divisive concepts like racism, xenophobia and homophobia. I admire whoever launched this in Singapore mainly because he was brave enough to silence the hate, literally. Apparently, his intentions have been born out of a genuine desire to change the world and make it a much better place.

Search the internet and you will easily find videos of unjustified bigotry in whatever form. It could be against old people being openly disrespected by young people, gay members of the community being victims of hate crimes, or worse, handicapped individuals being accorded no respect or consideration. Heck, even animals do not always feel secure anymore. One can only ask: Where has the world gone to? Have our values and philosophies so dramatically changed that we no longer feel it is necessary to feel compassion for our fellowmen and fellow creatures?

I fear even more for my children because they have to live much longer than I do and are therefore going to witness to even more atrocious acts. Kindness to others has been overtaken by competition and the inconvenience of time being too short. Many of us no longer find it fulfilling to stop and smell the flowers because the flowers have simply ceased blooming. It would be much easier to stop and smell the garbage, if the biological hazard of doing so doesn't stop you first.

We have been wrapped in fear and exhaustion from the world's cares and concerns. We no longer find it profitable to stare at the sky and dream of more beautiful things because huge skyscrapers have invaded our horizons in ever increasing numbers. Our ancestors had never dreamed of appreciating the beauty of butterflies in cages, sanctuaries, if you will. We have too few of those while the prairies and meadows get lost in concrete progress and development.

When is it ever going to stop? I recall a song that has the lyrics: They paved paradise and put up a parking lot. Although the song had been meant to be a cry for the environment, it could very well serve as a cry for all that makes us human, too. Many in the world have forsaken ancient values to give way to modernization. The virtual Tower of Babel has grown in large proportions because we no longer see eye to eye and seem to talk in different languages increasingly. Let us join hands in silencing the hate. We were meant to live in this world peacefully together, not extinguish one another in utter hatred.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What philosophies on life do you adhere to?
2. Do you think there's still hope for the world to ever find peace? Why or why not?
3. Is mankind on the road to perdition? How can this be averted?
4. Are ancient values still practicable today? Why or why not?
5. Do you think the writer is being pessimistic or realistic? Justify your answer.