

September 25, 2010

Dear Friends

It's nine years since '9-11', an event that coincides with the start of my service in this office. How has the world changed? How shall we respond? I continue to ask. Security checks at the Airport are one obvious inconvenience, but of greater significance is our response to religious fundamentalism. Some have chosen to draw the battle lines of Armageddon and embraced a more fundamental stance. For others including myself, I lament further expressions of fractious inhumanity and prefer to find ways to explain why the axioms of Adventism that result in hope and joy. Living in anticipation of Christ's return is 'Good News', it really is! I relish the idea of people of different persuasions coming together to express their heritage as masterpieces of God's creation. To this end, we have sought to coordinate initiatives aimed at developing inter-personal relationships.



Two years ago we experienced our own 'ground zero'. Though not caused maliciously we have had to question our own fundamentals. Shall we rebuild in a manner that keeps us divided or shall we find architecture that brings us together? Shall we arrange our walls to separate ourselves from the public, or shall we tear down the barriers? Will the materials we use reflect materialism, how will people interpret us, as such? Should the building we build be a representative presence in our community, or be something of an apology?



For better or worse, the answer to some of those questions is being uncovered. Today the builder's boundary is being removed and we are landscaping the surrounding ground. Our intent is to enable the public to have a view of 'Eden' through our park and to see us transparently. We also want those who work in the building to connect with real people at street level. The ABC book shop will move to the front of the building, with integrated access to the office. We intend to place our literature in a position of pride and welcome members into our company. Rubbing shoulders is OK, it really is! In addition, our department of public witness will be positioned to make the display of outreach materials accessible. Our boardroom, far from being hallowed carpet, should become a meeting place for continuous learners.



As it happens, the transformation of bricks and mortar is the easy part. Though, like the renewed World Trade Centre we could end up with a revitalised icon of mere material presence. I suspect that changing ourselves will prove far more difficult.

May God give us the grace to be the personal presence with wisdom, wit and witness that we were created to be. Thank you once again for cultivating your own relational and spiritual landscape.

Yours truly

*Victor.*