



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 54/56 CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR WORLD ORDER

An address by The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, to the Assembly of The National Council of The Churches of Christ in the United States of America, Boston, Massachusetts, December 2, 1954.

Some centuries before the Christian era, a Greek philosopher proclaimed to all who would listen that "Man is the measure of all things." In this age of gadgets and geophysics, that wisdom is worth recalling. The recognition of the individual man as the fundamental criterion of all things temporal, of institutions and social orders, has been one of the great liberating forces of history. Among its monuments in Western civilization are the achievements of the Renaissance, of the great humanist movements, and of liberal democracy.

Today, however, too often government, and particularly, of course, totalitarian government has taken the measure of man, and reduced him in the process to the level of a machine. Man, of course, must bear some share of the responsibility for this when they measure themselves by any but the highest standards.

The besetting danger of democratic societies has always been that men may, like the prodigal son, sell themselves "short." It is all too easy to accept the shoddy and second-rate in place of that which is first-class; to be satisfied with counterfeits, so long as they promise to pass muster with a majority; and then to seek to evade the inevitable emptiness which these things produce by ingenious escapisms. There is a world of difference between tolerance and indifference. "I couldn't care less" is the slogan of the voluntarily disinherited who in art seek the contemporary in place of the timeless, and in politics seek the safe in place of the enduring.

When men lower their sights and reduce their standards in this way, they become increasingly forgetful of their true nature and unaware of their full possibilities. This makes it easier for them to be treated as pawns to be used merely for the achievement of some ulterior political purpose.

It is sobering to recognize how frequently, today, in democracies as well as elsewhere, the very