

Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in all mankind." If this was true of the distant and divided world of which Donne wrote four centuries ago, how much more true is it today!

This interdependence of our world, this utter reliance of one part of our humanity upon each other part, this inability to extricate ourselves from the fate and fortune of our fellow human beings, is the central fact of our society and of our life upon this globe today.

What then does this mean in terms of the obligations falling upon the various parts of our interdependent society? It gives, I suggest, to each of our communities, nations and people a special obligation for mutual aid and co-operation, though obviously it will differ in extent and degree according to the nature of the fortunes we enjoy.

Certainly this fact of interdependence places upon the favoured peoples of the world the obligation to remember what they owe to other nations and people less fortunate than themselves.

As Franklin Roosevelt once said:

"It is literally true that the self-supporting man or woman has become as extinct as the man of the stone age. Without the help of thousands of others, any one of us would die, naked and starved. Consider the bread upon our table, the clothes upon our backs, the luxuries that make life pleasant; how many men worked in sunlit fields, in dark mines, in the fierce heat of molten metal, and among the looms and wheels of countless factories to create them for our use and enjoyment."

The advanced stage of our social wellbeing today in North America and in Western Europe is the product of a rich and great inheritance in which we have been able to draw upon all the cultures of the past and all the resources of the world in which we live.

The fact that certain nations and peoples have been able to build upon the foundations of these discoveries a more healthy and prosperous society than certain others, does not diminish but rather increases the obligation resting upon them to share with the less favoured peoples and societies the benefits and the dividends of their social progress.

The cornerstone of principle upon which the policies of the United Nations in the social welfare field are based is this belief, which provides the impetus and inspiration for the programmes of international action in the social field. These international health and social welfare programmes, coupled with technical and other forms of assistance are helping to drive back slowly, but I hope surely, the hideous giants of disease and ignorance and poverty in the less-developed lands.