



Lead Not Dominate, by William Clinton

From the dawn of human society up to the present time, we have been bedeviled by a persistent curse: the compulsion people feel to define the meaning of their lives in positive terms with reference to those who are like them racially, tribally, culturally, religiously, politically, and by negative reference to those who are different. People then feel compelled to oppress those who are different when they are small and powerless enough not to prevent it. Increasingly wider circles of interdependence, however, have taught people to accept the humanity of those they once degraded. Indeed, the whole course of human history can be seen as a constant struggle to expand the definition of who is "us" and shrink the definition of who is "them." From the dawn of time until the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it was never really possible to build a global community of cooperation, in which we celebrate, not just tolerate, our diversity, on the simple theory that our differences make life interesting, but our common humanity matters more. [...] We have no choice but to learn to live together, to choose cooperation over conflict, to give expression to our common humanity by following simple rules: everyone deserves a chance, everyone has a role to play, we all do better when we work together, we're not as different as we think. We do not yet have the institutions to run that kind of world. That is the work of politics, and in that work there will always be differences of opinion, conflicts of interest and values, and as we see today even in the simple evaluation of the evidence. But, on balance, I think the world is moving in the right direction because it has become inconceivable that we can solve the problems of the world without solving them together. All of us should do our part to see that it happens as soon as possible. -- William J. Clinton, in _US Should Lead Not Dominate_ (more [http://www.clintonpresidentialcenter.com/lead_not%20dominate_2002.html])