

After the Millennium Development Goals, What?

A lecture by Pete Ondeng

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Some of you may not know that for me this is a sort of homecoming. I left Illinois about twenty years ago to go back to Africa. I want to go back a little and tell you how I came to the States and the events that led me to return to Kenya. I want to share with you a little of the journey I've walked over those twenty or so years that have passed since I left this place, how it has shaped me, how the Lord has used my life, and then use that as an entry point into the interesting and sometimes controversial subject of the Millennium Development Goals.

In 1978, I left Kenya to come to the States on what I considered a miracle. I'm from a family of eight children, and for reasons I'm not even sure I understand today, my parents put me through an American missionary school. Because the school was using an American curriculum and consisted of mostly American students, I was exposed to American life quite early. In tenth grade, two years before I was to graduate, a very close friend of mine, whose name was Clark Whitson, returned to the United States with his family for a furlough. Clark Whitson died. He died a horrible death; he was thrown off a roof and electrocuted. He died on the way to the hospital. It was a real shock, a real loss, and for me it was devastating.

We continued on for two years and finished our high school education, and most of my friends prepared to go back to America. For me and a few others, it was a question of what to do next because we could not easily fit back into the Kenyan system. I had gone through this American system, yet we did not have the resources for me to come to America. Then out of the blue the family of Clark Whitson approached me and said that they wanted to use the money they had set aside to put Clark through school for me. With that gift I came to the United States and spent my college years here. I was in Texas, in a Christian University of about 2500 students called Hardin-Simmons University. There I studied accounting, and eventually got my certification as a CPA.

Now at that point my life was headed towards an accountant position. My ambition was to become a partner in what have been called the Big 8 firms. After I passed the exam I was invited by the McDonald's Corporation to come right here to Oakbrook, Illinois to work as an internal auditor. For me it was a chance not only to start my professional life here in America, but also to see the country. I traveled extensively throughout the United States auditing restaurants, and ate many, many more hamburgers than I care to talk about today; nevertheless, it was a wonderful experience for me.

I am sharing this story to tell you that it is very common for students from the Third World to go to Europe or to the United States to study, and, aware of the challenges they have left behind, decide to stay in America. You've heard about it; it's called the "brain drain". In Africa and some parts of Asia you find that the biggest export we have are our brains. People are trained and they are shipped out. Right now Kenya is going through a crisis. Some countries are faced with health problems because all their trained health workers are taking jobs overseas, in the UK, the US and other places. As I came to the end of my second year with McDonald's, I had the opportunity to stay here and work. And I was offered an opportunity to climb up the ranks with McDonald's, partly due to an affirmative action program.

Yet the Lord began to speak to me and convicted me that the gifts that had brought me to America needed to be applied back where I came from. So I decided to go back to Kenya, where for the last twenty or thirty years of my life I have been working in the field that many of us have come to know as development. It is a term that has become so common. I have worked with organizations like USAID, donor organizations, and consulting firms; I've had the opportunity to head a microfinance organization, which is also a development organization dealing with poverty and trying to lift people out of its hardships.

In the Netherlands, my family and I had the opportunity to spend four years working with businesses and other organizations across the African continent. For me it was a real eye-opener to the hardships of our continent. Living outside, and yet working on the continent, one foot out and one foot in, created an opportunity to see firsthand what so many of our people don't get to see because they lie in so many little corners of this continent. But to span across it wakes you up. And it causes you to ask some very hard questions, especially when you have the privilege and opportunity to be outside and see how the rest of the world works, the efficiencies of modern economies.

For me, the questions were Why Africa? I'm sure some of you have asked that question. Why? Why is Africa falling behind, and why has it remained behind? These issues disturb me. I'm going to come back a little bit later and try to address some of these thoughts and what led me to where I am today with the organization that I'm with.

Over time I have participated in programs that have set out with ambitious targets to try to change the human condition on our continent. And I want to be very honest with you and confess that when you've been through this over twenty years like I have, it is not difficult to become just a little bit cynical. Sometimes I use my financial background as an analogy for this. If you came to me with your spreadsheet, and proposed a project that is going to make a certain profit, have a cash flow that will look like this, and this is how the future is going to look, my first reference point is not going to be your future projection. I'm going to say, show me your history. And when I look at your history it will show me what your future is likely to be. Your history is an indicator of the direction in which you are moving. A river will continue to flow in a certain direction until something diverts it. Unless something stands in the way, or a dam is deliberately built, there is no reason why this river should not continue in its present course.

And I have asked this question: what has happened, or what has changed, that would cause us to believe that the future of Africa—I realize that development that is not just about Africa, but I'm going to focus on Africa, because that's my stomping ground and that's what I know best—why should I believe that the future of Africa will be different from the past? And why should I expect, if I'm going to continue doing the same things I've always done, that the results will be somehow different in the future?

What I see, what I witness is disturbing to me. Sometimes I feel like we're in a quicksand, where the more you shake and wriggle around, the deeper you seem to sink. It was in this context that I began to wonder, where is the African voice? I challenge some of you to go to Google to look up any topic on Africa. Choose any topic. Culture. Agriculture. Poverty. History. See how little of what is out there is written by Africans. This disturbed me. It disturbed me deeply, because I see that what is defining our thinking, what is defining our direction, the discourse and discussions and perspectives, are everything but our own. And so it was in the face of that challenge that I set out to write my book. I'm not going to spend much time on it, but I felt prompted to read part of it to you this evening because it basically reflects the thinking that has caused this subject to be more than just a topic that I deal with, but a life commitment.

Let me share with you a couple paragraphs from the introduction of the book, which go something like this:

"In this book I share some personal, heartfelt convictions about the continent with which I find my identity so intrinsically intertwined. Africa is not some removed subject that I can dissect without cutting my own self open. I find it difficult to talk about Africa without talking about myself. For I am, in a way, the subject. For better or for worse, I am inseparable from the continent. If Africa is in crisis, I am in crisis.

"Every time I point an accusing finger, I find the finger pointing back at me as the culprit, the problem, and strangely, even the solution. When I search for whom to blame for our woes, I find that I cannot absolve myself from at least part of the blame. When I ask who holds the key to

Africa's escape from the dungeon of poverty and backwardness, I find, to my great surprise, that the key is in my hand. And whenever I have dared to ask the troubling question, 'Does anybody out there really care?' the answer has come bouncing back to me like an echo: 'How much do *you* care?'"

In 2001 something happened in Africa which caught my attention and that of many people. A handful of African heads of state came together to launch an initiative called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD was a pan-African movement, initiated by the political leadership of Africa, which was essentially saying: We are trying to change the paradigms that have defined Africa's relationship with the rest of the world. Now what are we changing from and to? We are turning away from what has always been traditionally the donor-recipient relationship, the subservient relationship that Africa has historically had with its development partners around the world, to one of partnership and mutual accountability. The essence of this new partnership was to create a new framework for development where it was Africans who set their own priorities. That was principle number one.

The second principle was that the initiative would be African-led, and the third was that for the first time African leaders were starting to talk about the issue of governance from a point of view of responsibility. What do I mean by that? For many years, we have read about and seen the World Bank, the IMF, and all manner of people relating with Africa as donors or financiers, talking about the corruption of our leaders, our governments' problems, and saying, if you do this, we will do that. If you don't do that, we'll wipe this out. It's always been something forced on the African continent. Good governance, as many people refer to it, seems to be very, very scarce in many African countries. Many people have blamed the woes of Africa on its leadership, and I do not hesitate to say that leadership has been a major problem in Africa. But this initiative, NEPAD, began to stir in the continent something which seemed to say that we don't need to be told anymore that we need good governance. We are telling ourselves that we need good governance.

This initiative was started in about 5 member states, expanded, and soon there was a group of 20 heads of state of Africa. They formed a committee to meet on a quarterly basis and begin to chart a new path of economic development for the continent. They talked about integrating markets, cross-border infrastructure, issues of broader intercontinental relations, business, civil society, but most importantly, Africa and the rest of the world. It created a framework in which Africa would negotiate its own position with the rest of the world.

That was in 2001. On paper, it made a lot of sense. For the first time we were talking about responsibility, which many people felt was missing in the whole development story of our continent. Now somewhere along the way, as these things happened, there was a drift. I think that the attention span of people in development is always very short, and as NEPAD began to move towards project implementation, it began to suck the energy away from the broader issues that were supposed to galvanize a new spirit of development.

In 2004 something else happened, which to me was tragic, because only three years into NEPAD, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the UK came up with a new initiative called the Commission for Africa. The Commission for Africa was put together by the Prime Minister to "go back to the drawing board" and come up with the big push, something to address once and for all "the African problem." They put together a high-level commission of people, including heads of state, some from Africa, and they began a process of putting together a document to define how they would help Africa.

I sat in a meeting of heads of state. There were a number of NEPAD presidents there, because I was working within the NEPAD framework as head of the East Africa secretariat. In this meeting, some questions were being asked by members of a panel. The chairman of the committee was the president of Nigeria, and somebody asked him, "Mr. President, what can you tell us about this initiative of Tony Blair?" I expected him to say, "We're going to call Tony Blair and have him come

with what he's doing and see how we can integrate it into what we're doing." But that was not the response he gave. His response was, "I understand that what the Prime Minister is doing is not going to interfere with us. Let's wait and see what they're going to do."

What this did was allow for parallel discussions on Africa to go on, one initiated by Africans, another initiated by a European head of state. And over time, the Commission for Africa began to gain momentum, the media picked it up, concerts, Bono...2005 became known as the Year of Africa. The Year of Africa was the big "Make Poverty History" year. It was going to be the big push, and as this went on, NEPAD began to sort of recede out of sight. Finally, the big document was launched, and there it was, the document that was supposed to define how to fix Africa. A big thick document, which essentially said: "Business as usual."

Why? Because it said the solution, how we are going to help Africa, is to increase our aid. We need to double aid, put more money into it. We need to commit ourselves to invest more. And here again I ask the question: Is there something that has fundamentally changed, that would convince you that history, the trends that we've been walking with, are going to change because of what is being done here? If we have not changed our thinking, our approach, why should we expect different results?

This is the challenge that I put before you, and that I put before myself, as I consider, where are we heading with this thing called development? And it is now in this context that I find myself once again, saying, been there, done that. There's nothing new under the sun. We have done the aid thing, we have gone through the various programs and initiatives, and the results we've seen are basically a trend where the rich countries continue to get richer, and the poor countries—and once again I confine myself to Africa—continue to get poorer despite their enormous mineral resources. They continue to get poorer, not just in dollar terms, but even poorer in spirit, I daresay. Even harder to be lifted up. Finding themselves in a trap of poverty that requires new thinking. This is where I often quote Albert Einstein, who said, "The problems we face today cannot be solved at the level of thinking we were at when we created them."

The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). You've heard about them. The MDGs were basically committed to in September 2000, at the largest ever gathering of heads of state [at the United Nations], where they signed what is known as the Millennium Declaration. The presidents, and ministers, and so on, came together to sign a declaration. I'm sure that if you went to the United Nations and asked, show me the room where they signed that declaration, you would be surprised to see so many declarations have been signed over the decades just sitting there gathering dust. But anyway, here was a declaration, endorsed, like I said, by one of the largest gatherings of heads of state in history. 189 countries signed up to work toward some goals that were then framed as a roadmap and quantified for achievement by the year 2015.

The MDGs are framed as a compact, almost as a unified commitment. All these countries from the north and south are saying they recognize the contributions that the developed countries can make to trade, development assistance, debt relief, access to essential medicines and technology transfer.

What were these MDGs that we committed ourselves to? I'm not going to pass judgment on them at this point, I simply want to present them so that we can ask ourselves the hard questions and see what role we have to play and where it is that we're trying to go.

There were essentially eight goals. Now remember these are global commitments that are being made by countries to address what people are saying is an inexcusable situation in the world.

The first one was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. It sounds very noble, very straightforward: eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. If you were to travel around the world to some of these “hunger hotspots,” as they call them, you would be amazed at how much suffering human beings go through. So goal number 1 was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

2. To achieve universal primary education
3. To promote gender equality and empower women
4. To reduce child mortality
5. To improve maternal health
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. To ensure environmental sustainability
8. To develop a global partnership for development

Those were the goals. Those were the goals that the world came together and said they would commit themselves to. And it is those goals, it is in that framework that I dare to ask the question which perhaps sounds like I’ve already made a conclusion, After the MDGs, what next?

Many of you are studying development. You are going to get into nonprofit organizations, some of you will work in governments, some of you are going to work overseas, some of you will work with fundraising and other aspects of international development, and I want to believe that the reason you want to go into development is to improve the human condition. To improve life, to see results. And that’s why I keep coming back and asking myself, what has changed or what must change?

What, perhaps is the best way to put it, must change in order for us to see a different result from what we have seen in the past?

10 Key Lessons We Haven’t Learned

Let me lead us now through a discussion on a few points that I think will help us to see the path that has brought us to where we are, and I frame this as the 10 key lessons that we haven’t learned. I could have said the ten mistakes that we have been making, or I could have said the 10 most important this-and-that, but I say the ten lessons we haven’t learned because we keep doing the same thing and it keeps producing the same results. These are not in any particular order. These are my thoughts, and perhaps we could have come up with 20; I chose 10.

There are no “big push” solutions

Lesson number 1 that we haven’t learned is that there is no big push solution to ending poverty. I don’t know how many of you got caught up with the Year of Africa movement, Live 8, the concerts, the Make Poverty History year. Big push solutions generally end as quickly as they start. In this particular situation, the big push by Tony Blair ended with a bang. Literally. Because on the eve of the G8 meeting where they were going to discuss the document and endorse this whole big commitment to Africa—I believe on the very morning when it was beginning—bombs went off in the London Underground system. With that bang—which I also just barely missed, because I was in London in the Underground at the time—attention shifted instantly from what had been an African agenda to a terrorist agenda.

Now I can understand the immediacy, of course this was an urgent situation, but I can tell you that although we try to come up with “big push” solutions year in and year out, and though on the logical front it seems to make sense, there is no such thing. Yet somehow we keep going back to it.

Genuine transformation takes time

Lesson number 2 that we haven't learned is that genuine transformation takes time. I could have said there is no quick fix solution. I used to work for USAID, which is the US government agency for international development, and I can tell you that one of the realities of working with donor aid is that we tend to define development almost like a project. So you define your projects, you come up with a five-year plan, and you go in and do this project. The budget is defined, the activities are defined, and after two or three years there's an evaluation. The evaluation will either indicate that you are seeing results, things are working, or that things are not working. This is very typical. It's a reality that we're faced with, that after five years or so, the money dries up, or attention shifts to something else. And before you know it, we don't see results because we don't give transformation enough time to take hold.

More money is not the answer

Number 3 I've already spoken about: that more money, which is time and again the solution that is thrown at the problem, is not the answer. I want to share a passage from the book of Mark, chapter 6, where Jesus feeds 5,000 people. One key lesson that comes out of that passage involves how the disciples face this massive problem, 5000 people sitting there, and they tell Jesus, "Get rid of these people." And Jesus turns to them and says, "No. You feed them." Their response to him was the response that so many of us come up with every time there's a situation like this: feeding these people requires money. Money is going to solve this problem. So money either becomes the solution, or the excuse for inactivity. Can you see that? The disciples reminded Jesus that it would take eight months of a man's wages to address this problem. That of course is an excuse that Jesus ignored, and he went on to show them that if you will take what you have, and release that to God, he is able to take it so much further.

The poor are not stupid

It sounds a bit harsh, but the poor are not stupid. Why do I say this? It is a lesson that we don't seem to learn. I speak for myself as much as I speak for many other people who want to be effective or who want to see change in the world, who come up with what we call top-down solutions. The mistake is not so much that you come up with solutions, the mistake is that we don't take time to listen to the people we're trying to "develop". Top-down solutions, in my opinion, do not work. I almost feel like saying they never work. Top-down solutions often only last as long as the person pushing it down is there to keep it going. You will push something, and as soon as you leave, it will collapse if it is not owned by the people, embraced by those who are being assisted, driven by those who want to keep it going.

Let me give you an example. Many years ago I was given a consultancy assignment for the Netherlands embassy in Kenya. They were designing a micro-enterprise project in western Kenya. Like many of these projects there was a presumption of what the results would be, what the needs were. So the interventions were going to be this and that, from credit, to training, to marketing assistance, to working with small businesses to help them become larger businesses. The assumption was that if we just intervene like this, we will help them grow, and these will be the industrialists of tomorrow. What did we discover when we went out to do this study? It was surprising even to me to find out that the people this program was aiming to assist had no intention, leave alone interest, in growing vertically. Many of them would tell you, "I am not in this business because I want to be in this business, I am in this business because I can't find a job. And not only is it because I can't find a job, if I would be so lucky as to have some money, or to earn some good money, I'm not putting it in this thing, I'm going to put it somewhere else." So we come to development with these presumptions that so often result in resources being wasted because we don't take time to listen to those we are trying to assist.

For every man, a different shoe size

Our next key lesson is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Again and again we will see it in development: it's similar to the big push, where people want to step into human situations and say let's address the problem this way because it worked in this other place. For example, the structural adjustment program was initiated by the World Bank and the IMF back in the early 80s.

The argument at that time was that if we can just get the policies and the macro-level frameworks of these countries right, if the environment can be primed for business, then economies will take off, jobs will be created, and these countries will eventually rise out of poverty. It was not a bad argument. But what a loaded thing. Because what they proceeded to do was to come up with a prescription that the countries would have to adhere to in order to “qualify” for assistance and funding, and these countries were already so dependent on these institutions. They were told, you must go through this list of prescriptions. Liberalize interest rates. Privatize this. Open up your markets. Reduce your exchange rates. Open up this way. Let the market forces take hold. I’m simplifying it, but essentially, certain prescriptions were applied across the board from country to country, and those countries that jumped on board were patted as the good countries, and those countries that resisted or went in different directions were the bad countries. Ten years of this experiment, and the World Bank and IMF themselves admitted, whoops, what a mistake. And how damaging this process was to so many of these countries. Having acknowledged that it was such a mistake, what did we do? We did not go back to try to rectify the problem, we simply moved on to the next solution. Moved on to the next fad, as I call them sometimes. What else can we come up with, since that didn’t work? There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all.

What you sow is what you reap

What you sow is what you reap. I’m using simple words that probably won’t make it into economics books, but actually what we get out of the other end of the pipe is what we put in on this end over here. For many years what we have put into development—and this was especially true during the Cold War years—was fomented conflict. In fact we encouraged corruption, and brought about all kinds of results that we should not be surprised to see.

What a man thinks, so is he...

Why do I put this here as a lesson we don’t learn? I wish I could take all of you with me to a little project that I’m involved with in one of the biggest slums in Africa, Kibera slum in Kenya. You may have heard of it. It’s a horrible place for anybody. It’s a place where people live in such squalor, such filth, and such destitution, that even if you go there many times you walk away shaking your head at how deep the human condition can get. The slum has developed over time as people migrate from the rural areas to the urban in search of jobs. These are people who struggled with lack of resources and didn’t have support structures and they went on to have children, who have had children. So you’re talking about second and third generations of people without water, without proper sanitation, children growing up, running around, many of them not being educated. I ask, when a person growing up in such a situation wakes up in the morning and looks in the mirror, what do they see? They reinforce who they are, their mindset reinforces what they think of themselves and what they think of the rest of the world. Sometimes I tell myself, if I want to change the condition of the people in my community, I must begin with this. Because as I think so I am. As I continue to think, so I remain. And if you truly believe that, then you must ask yourself, why would I bother to continue to intervene from outside if this has not changed? I don’t believe that you can transform Africa or any group of people living in poverty if they do not believe that they are created in the image of God, that they have rights, that they can in fact live a life like the people on the other side of the tracks. It’s challenge I throw out to you, to myself, to the church. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he, and as he continues to think, so he remains.

Without a vision, the people perish

Without a vision, people perish. I had the opportunity to sit in a meeting where the president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, was the guest of honor. A man I admire greatly. Thabo Mbeki was invited to speak to a group of about 400 senior South African business people. He stood up, and in a speech that lasted no more than ten minutes, he asked a question to the people there: If we were to come back together five years from now, what would we want to be talking about? What would be the issues of that time and how would they differ from what we’re talking about today? He went on to say, “Let me share with you what I see.” (At that particular point he was about to leave to go to Liberia to witness the handing over of Charles Taylor—Charles Taylor the dictator, the butcher, who was finally handing power over to his vice president.) And he said, “This kind of thing will have been a thing of the past. I see an Africa which will have put down its guns, which

will have stopped fighting itself, and will be talking about development and economics." I must confess to you, I listened to him talking and I found it difficult to absorb. Here I am as an African working, existing, struggling, and I had not caught this vision. How do you work for something that you have not seen? Here was a man saying, "I see, this is what I'm working towards." Do we see, even those of us who want to interact with the suffering of this world? As you interact with the issues of Africa, do you see an Africa that is progressing? Or do you see an Africa that is perennially in need, that needs to be continually supported? Because if we cannot see it, we are not going to actually work towards it. For lack of a vision, people perish.

Where there is a will...

And of course, where there's a will, there's a way. Dr. Robinson told you that I work with Professor Jeffery Sachs. Jeffery Sachs is one of those people who evokes one emotion or another. You agree with him or you disagree with him. I want to say one thing I admire about Professor Sachs. It's his audacity to believe such a thing and to begin to act towards it, even if the rest of the world doesn't follow him. I think that sometimes is really admirable. One of the things that he has been championing, and which has led him to set up and to work towards this Millennium Village initiative that he and I are involved with, is an argument that investment is important and investment is not forthcoming from those countries that are committed to investment. That part of the problem, a big part of the problem, is that we make promises as developed countries, but actually do not have the will to follow through. So countries come, Britain, the United States, and so on, and sign up to commit so much of their GNP towards international aid. But truth be told, it's not about development, it's about self-interest, it's about home businesses, it's about all manner of things except that. What Sachs has been championing has been, let us try to push these countries to do in action what they're committed to on paper. He believes that if the will was there, we would see results. Whether or not money is the primary reason, it is a secondary question right now, but I think it's a point that is worthy of consideration.

The greatest of these...love

I want to throw to you now the last one. This one does not sound economic. This is the bottom line, if you will. I'm talking to an audience of people who I hope I've stirred by asking the question, what has changed? Or what must change if we are to see change? If something does not change, please continue to do what you do but don't expect different results. If it's about a job, about securing yourself a good contract, go ahead and do it, but let us not talk about seeing change in the world if something that we're going to do here is the same thing we've been doing all along. This to me is where the challenge comes to the Christian. This is where I speak now as a Christian because even as I talk of *Africa's Moment*, we talk of making poverty history and all this kind of thing—nothing is going to change until we change. We cannot change the results out there until we ourselves are transformed. What is this transformation that I'm talking about?

I had an argument with a woman who I've never met to this day. I wrote a book, and gave it to somebody to edit for me. This woman who lives in Pennsylvania edited the book. After reading and editing the book she says to me, "Pete, I now have read this book as a reader and I'm struggling to find out what it is that you're proposing here. You've analyzed the African problem, you've talked with emotion and passion about the issues, you've used examples about your relatives, and at the end of it, what is different?" I had to step back, and it took me probably six months of reflection, frustration, and even discouragement, because I said to myself, Is it really just business as usual? It sounds so simple that it's almost embarrassing. I talk about this with some people, and the first question they ask is, What's the answer? I tell you that I don't have a sound-bite answer to the problem of poverty. What I do have is an example. An example of what God did for mankind. I put before you a challenge as members of the Wheaton community, to ask yourselves, what is it that stands in our way in this realm of development? Is it not that compassion as mission is missing from this story?

I will close with a final quote. After six months of struggling with this issue, a book that was supposed to be dealing with conflicts in Africa, dealing with issues of trade and injustice, dealing with the issues of poverty and AIDS, ended this way: "And now I will show you a more excellent

way." Without a genuine respect and compassion for people, hope becomes just another word in the dictionary. The message is so simple that it lends itself easily to ridicule. And yet who can escape the glare of its truth? "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but I have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and knowledge, and have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor, and surrender my body to the flames, but I have no love, I gain nothing." It's almost as though this passage was written for us today, in this subject matter. "Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, love keeps no record of wrongs, love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease, where there are tongues, they will be stilled, where there is knowledge, it will pass away, but now these three remain; faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love."

A little boy was sitting in the living room with his father, who was trying to read the newspaper at the end of a long, hard day. The little boy was playing there and he wanted to show his dad whatever he was doing. He said, "Daddy, look what we made in school!" and the father would say, "Very good, now go and play a game." A few minutes later the little boy would come running back and he'd say, "Daddy, can you help me do this?" and he'd help him do it, and then brush him aside. It kept going on like this until finally the father couldn't take it anymore, and he reached into a magazine and tore out a page with a picture of the world on it. And he proceeded to tear it into shreds. Then he handed the bits of paper to the little boy and said, "Son, I want you to go to your room, and put the world back together." The boy rushed off to his room, excited at the challenge. The father leaned back, knowing he'd won the battle. He could even take a nap now. After five minutes the little boy came running back, and said, "Daddy, here's the world put back together." And sure enough here was the piece of paper, crudely but correctly glued back together. The father looked at his son and said, "Son, how did you do that so quickly? How in the world did you put the world back together?" And the boy looked at his father and said, "Daddy, it was easy. You see, on the back of the page there was a picture of a man, and I knew that if I could get the man right, the whole world would be right."