



February 25, 2013

Dear Friends

Oscars in the headlines!

Not just the awards, but the devastating episode of one celebrity shooting another, for real. One Oscar drama depicts Abraham Lincoln and his struggle to unite the people of America, even brothers, who were destructively divided over their quest to retain wealth and privilege through the exploitation of others.

Whatever the motive of Oscar the hapless 'blade-runner', the social setting is of a society where the poverty gap is so great that people live on triggers edge to protect themselves and their wealth. In both cases, the love of money remains at the root of evil. No wonder Jesus tells the rich ruler to give up his possessions in favour of the poor.

My Oscar vote goes to a lady who appeared on Breakfast TV, celebrated because she wrote to a trial judge appealing on behalf of a young man who caused the death of her husband. Her Christian faith led her to believe that healing comes through forgiveness rather than retribution.

Further to the value of healing, societal trust and forgiveness:

I read of an experiment where students were surveyed with the promise of a \$5 reward. Half of the people had their survey interrupted by an irritating personal phone call. In each case, respondents were slipped four dollars plus a \$5 bill in an envelope. Most of the control group returned the extra money, whereas those irked, did not. The experiment was repeated with the interrupted phone call followed with an **apology**. The rate of honest return was the same for both groups. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* 1 John 1:9.

In their recent book, Don Peppers and Martha Rogers discuss the merits of *"Extreme Trust"*. In addition to the above experiment, they describe the merits of organisations that go beyond the requirements of mere compliance. For instance, they tell the story of an insurance company that accrued loyalty by voluntarily returning premiums to Gulf War veterans who did not use their cars while on foreign duty. By contrast they speak of Banks who cynically rig their systems to exploit customers who make simple mistakes. In short they say that trust, loyalty and success comes when we conduct our affairs to favour the other, even if this reduces short term gain.

Having lost the lustre of our AAA economic Oscar, our nation must rediscover the value of giving 'good measure, pressed down and shaken together' not to speak of fairness, healing and justice.

Thank you for your committed service in helping people become a confessing and forgiving society, giving of self and worthy of the trust upon which we prosper.

With best regard,

Victor

"If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" 2 Chronicles 7:14