

REMARKS BY BISHOP JAMES K. MATHEWS
at the
ICA GLOBAL MEETING
Lonavale, India October 8, 1994

SACRIFICE

✓ As was indicated, I am no stranger to the ICA nor am I a stranger to India. In one of my previous incarnations, I served in Zimbabwe. They have a great greeting there in the morning - which means Good Morning. But that same word, "mangwanahe", means Tomorrow; so saying Good Morning is to say "Do you remember that tomorrow we spoke of yesterday?" When we are able to say Good Morning, we are saying "We made it into tomorrow." That is not so much an accomplishment as it is a gift. *mangwanani*

They follow that up in Zimbabwe by always asking your state of being. So they ask, "Did you sleep well?" which is a good thing to ask before you speak rather than afterwards. They do not answer that as we would. They say, "I did if you did." Do you see this depth of wisdom? "Our welfare depends on the welfare of our brothers and sisters." One cannot think of him/herself outside of community.

I consider that what I am speaking now is "ICA language." I hope you see that, in one sense, I've mastered it. Marathi is also a very beautiful language. *in the greeting is: Namaste*

✗ This is a particular day because it is the birthday of my brother Joe who was the founder of ICA. We have been celebrating birthdays in this part of the world and I was asked to say some words about the birthday of Gandhi just a week ago. I will say a word about Gandhi and then a word about my brother Joe, who arrived on earth 83 years ago today. Someone was asking what Joe would look like. Take about three inches off me and Joe stands before you. In fact, more so than you can imagine. When he died 17 years ago, I asked Lyn Mathews Edwards for something of Joe's. So she gave me something. It was this shirt. I am not clothed in my own garment but his. I hope some of that rubs off on me.

Joe was born in a little town named Breezewood in Pennsylvania. You could pass through it at that time and never know it was a town. I was born in the same town 18 months later. We grew up in a large family. "The undivided family" - that was our family. You get great benefit before you enter into that larger society by being a member of a fairly large segment of society. We grew up in Ohio, called the Midwest. Some people say that, if you are brought up in the midwest, you are unrefined. This is not so. This is an important part of our country. It is sort of medium -- everything in moderation. This is true of the language we speak; no extreme sectional accent. It is not bad to have grown up in the midwest of the United States. *already*

✓ We studied together and, for three years, it was my privilege to be an itinerant teacher and preacher with Joe. Some of the methods I see quite evident around here, we learned at the feet of a master teacher on how to chart things. When you chart, as in most of the languages you speak around here, you read from left to right and we chart from left to right. We also think from left to right unless we are from some other culture, say Jewish or Arab, it ought to be the other way - right to left or, if Chinese, up and down. I will come back to Joe in a moment. *with you*

But I was asked to say a word about Gandhi, the father of India. Gandhi was born 125 years ago. My father was born in that same year. Gandhi was born in Porbander, a town on the Arabian sea. It is called the "White City;" it was a characteristic of Porbander that houses were built of white stone. It is very easy to work but once it is built into a building, the more this stone ages, the more solid it becomes. Gandhi was born into a house with a Krishna temple on one side and another Rani temple on the other; they were Vishnavitas. His character when he was very young was soft and pliable and, like that stone, as he became mature, his life became more solid.

I was asked also to repeat the little story I told last night. On Wednesday evening of this week, I met a young man, 3 1/2 years old. I shook hands with him. His name was Vivan. I met his father also; his name was Tushkar. A week ago today in Boston, Massachusetts I met Tushkar's father, who happened to be name Arun. And exactly 40 years ago near Durban, South Africa, in what was called Phoenix Settlement - now destroyed, I met Arun's father. His name was Manilal. I stayed at his home; his wife spoke Marathi. Than 55 hears ago, I met Manilal's father. I have named five males of five generations. What is the connection among them? They all share the last name of Gandhi. So I stand before you as one who has known five generations of Gandhi. It is hard to keep up with the Ghandi's.

Never can I erase from my memory that years ago, on a cold December morning, I walked five miles from Wardha, over near Nagpur, south to the village of Sevagram. In those days, there were no roads. The site was deliberately chosen because there was no road. So if you went to Sevagram, which was where Gandhi has his Ashram, you had to walk. As we arrived at the gates of Sevagram ("village of service") out came a little man, five feet five inches in height. He had a bamboo stick in his hand and invited us to go with him on his morning walk. So it was that, for an hour, I had the privilege of walking with the father of this great country. We have a phrase: "If you talk the talk; you have to walk the walk," Thus we walked and talked together. He had just started his last great non-violent protest movement; The Indian movement against British rule.

Vinoba Bhare, who became known in his own right later on and was called India's "walking saint" had just been arrested. I remember asking Gandhi, "Don't you feel sad about Vinoba Bhare?" He said "No. When you are in pursuit of truth by non-violent means, if you offend against the law, you simply pay the penalty." This was a natural development of one engaged in a protest movement.

Do you want to hear just a bit more? I don't want to be in trouble with Jack Gilles about time. Well, some of you were late 15 minutes. If Gandhi had an appointment with someone and they were 45 minutes late, he would look at his dollar Ingersol watch and say "You have just delayed swaraj (independence or home rule) by 45 minutes." So if I say anything more, that is the kind of time I will be using. That is what you call "free" time.

In every religion of the world, there is a concept of sacrifice. All kinds of things - plants, birds and animals - are sacrificed. But about 800 B.C. there came a critical movement that started in Iran. Zoroaster protested against blood sacrifice. The same thing was happening in China with Confucius. The same thing was happening in India. To name only a few of the critics of blood sacrifice, I call also to your attention the founder of Jainism - Mahavpr. And, of course, Gautama, the founder of Buddhism.

Now sacrifice continued in all these religions but under the critique which I have mentioned. In ancient Israel, the same things was happening. Some of the prophets were saying: God demands mercy not sacrifice. What happened to sacrifice in these movements? Sacrifice was

externalized when some animal had to pay the price. It was then internalized; it was ethicized and then it was externalized once again in a new form, which meant self-sacrifice. That transformation took place all over the world from the 8th century to the 6th century BC and we are living with the results today.

When we think of Gandhi, we think of the spinning wheel. You have seen some in India's villages. Gandhi called spinning and the spinning wheel the symbols of sacrifice. He went on his great Salt March back in 1930, going from Sabarmati Ashram, near Ahmedabad, 150 miles to the sea. By the way, that was the first time I ever heard of Mahatma Gandhi. The whole world walked with him on that trip. When he got there, he built a small fire on the beach and boiled sea water down and made salt. And when he did so, he set a people free. Now technically he broke the law because the British had had a monopoly on salt manufacturing and there was a small tax on it. Everybody had to pay it. We can't live without salt. This meant that although Indian villagers never saw a British person or a ruler, every time they tasted salt they experienced British rule.

What we have here is political genius. ^{of the highest order.} Gandhi called his Salt March a *Mahayajna*; that is the Sanskrit word that means Great Sacrifice. Just as he called the spinning wheel a sacrificial symbol, so salt is also a great symbol. When he made the salt march, he declared economic and political independence from the British. You can't pay for that kind of political talent. We have no one in the world today who comes close to that kind of political talent. Since no one can get along without salt; so he spoke for everybody. When he spun cloth, he ran the mills out of business. ^{British salt} Nine million weavers could cover India's need for cloth. It took ten spinners to supply one weaver, so 100 million people were taken care of economically in his economic theory. Home-spun cloth was called *khaddar*. To wear it was a symbol of sacrifice.

No wonder when he spoke of non-violence, *satyagraha*, he said the method was infallible. Just think of saying a method is infallible. His confidence rubbed off on other people. What did he mean by that? He didn't mean that he ^{himself} was infallible but rather his method was infallible because it rested on a tripod of three ideas that are basic to Hinduism. One, *satya*, truth is That Which Is; and untruth is that which doesn't exist. When you confront truth with untruth, truth must ever prevail. When the British, in World War I, promised Dominion status or independence, ^{to India & etc.} reneged on that promise, they were clearly guilty of untruth, *a-satya*. So *satya*, the affirmation of freedom, had to win. Not only that, he said that if you practice austerity, *tapas*, such as by fasting, that, too, when perfectly performed, commands the gods. And, not only that, *yajna*, this precious word that you now know, Sacrifice, perfectly performed also commands the deity. These were his arguments for infallibility, not for himself (He was no pope), but for his method, *satyagraha*, the power of truth.

What am I driving at here? If the ICA program is not seen as *yajna* (Sacrifice), it will fail miserably. That raises an interesting question? Whose sacrifice? Who pays the price? I have news for you: You Do and those you train.

I've been talking about Gandhi's birthday but, in another sense, I have not been talking about that at all. I have been talking also about Joe's birthday because he, too, knew the meaning of sacrifice. He came along at the time and place when the kind of folk that you are were needed. Just as Gandhi devised what he called his constructive program, so is yours. What is a constructive program? Gandhi's work was directed not merely to overthrow British rule but, at the same time, a renewal movement within the whole body politic; renewal within India. So you, yourselves, know what Gandhi meant by his constructive program. When freedom came, people would be able to receive it and assume the positive responsibility to operate it. That's what his

program was about and that is the genius of the movement that my brother came to the hard way. I won't talk about Joe's commitment. It was great indeed and it finally involved his very life. He understood this and you see something of his message. This message is not static because you are not back there when Joe died. You have been developing a program built on that foundation.

A great teacher at Yale University said Joe was the greatest teacher that he ever turned out. He said Joe was a man of passion; he felt what people everywhere felt. It was pointed out last night by one dear brother here that ICA took globality seriously. It was up to that time a term thrown around. If you were erudite, you spoke about the local and the global, without knowing what you were talking about. When you take the situation of local men and women seriously and realize that when you are helping them set themselves free to build a viable society in their villages, somehow they link hands with everybody everywhere who face essentially the same issues. Now maybe you see the connection between Gandhi's program and yours. I am not comparing my brother to Gandhi. But I am saying that Joe and Gandhi knew what sacrifice means. If you don't learn that, throw in your merit badges. It isn't going to happen.

I want to say how pleased I have been to stand in for Joe. I even brought the proper costume along. I hope I have been able to get into character. Like Shakuntala here (one of the women present), the actors get into character, learn their lines, put on the costume and then it's on with the show!

and also the way a classic Indian dress