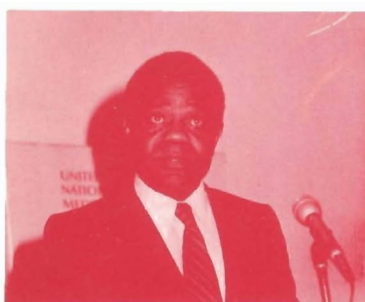


INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THANKSGIVING 1977



*A celebration at U.N. Headquarters with music,
slides and reflections on the theme of thanksgiving.*

*21 November 1977
United Nations, New York*

INSIDE FRONT COVER
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INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF THANKSGIVING 1977

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photos: Lloyd Hart

Printed as a special supplement to the United Nations Meditation Group Bulletin.

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INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF THANKSGIVING 1977

21 November 1977
Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium

Opening meditation:
Sri Chinmoy, Director
United Nations Meditation Group

Speakers:

H.E. Mr. Zenon Rossides
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Cyprus
to the United Nations

Sister Elizabeth Espersen, SSMN,
Thanks-Giving Square Foundation
Dallas, Texas

H.E. Mr. Ignace Karuhije
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Rwanda
to the United Nations

H.E. Lic. Julio Asensio-Wunderlich
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Guatemala
to the United Nations

Dr. Robert G. Muller
Director, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General
for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination
United Nations

“World Gratitude” Song by Sri Chinmoy:
U.N. Meditation Group Singers

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H.E. Mr. Zenon Rossides, Permanent Representative of Cyprus: Dear friends, it gives me great pleasure to say to you a few words on this occasion with regard more particularly to the meaning of spirituality in the United Nations and in the world at large. We are in a period of crisis in the world. Many problems which arise all over the world remain unsolved because we are at a point when wars can no longer solve problems. Now with the advance of technology that makes major wars impossible because of the nuclear weapon, which is the ultimate weapon that would be used in any major war, problems therefore have to be solved otherwise than by the use of force. We're not in an age of force and domination and something must take the place of that force and domination. Force and domination are unjust; we know they are unjust, but we do not proceed to replace them by something more logical and more adapted to our times. And what is logical to adopt is the Charter of the United Nations.

We do not, however, always comply with the Charter, and that is the problem. We do not comply with the Charter because we are using our intellect and our intellect may be directed in the wrong way by momentum from the past: the structure of states is made for war. The defense department is the most heavily supplied with money. Therefore, the objective is preparation for war. And we are still in preparation for a war that



H.E. Mr. Zenon Rossides
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Cyprus
to the United Nations

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we know cannot take place. Every year 400 billion dollars is being spent on armaments, wasting resources that are needed so badly for development and other important things. So in this critical situation we know that the intellect cannot help much because we hear statements in the General Assembly that are all very good and directed in the right way. But at the same time we see contrary actions by those very persons who make the statements in a most disappointing contradiction of self and disrespect for truth. As a matter of fact, if we say one thing and do the other, it means that we have no respect for truth. Therefore, degradation of moral values result and in an age which requires peace, cooperation and love, we find antagonism and preparation for war instead.

Now this situation, which is contradictory in itself, creates lack of virtue. Now, how can we improve the moral values? By teaching? No, man cannot be taught. If he is using his intellect, his intellect is directed to self-interest. And the short-term self-interest, not the long-term, is domination, aggrandisement and other selfish things. But in the long run these things are counterproductive. What was considered before "long run," now has come to be considered "short run" because the progress of technology is such that unless there are moral principles and ethical values to guide humanity, the world is going to its destruction, no matter what games people think they are winning in the meanwhile. So any nation that believes that by use of force it can attain its own objectives, those objectives are of no value because they will perish with the general destruction towards which we are heading. But

also, that very nation which is trying by force to obtain advances is one of the first to perish. Therefore, the ideas of the past, a past of scientific ignorance and, therefore, of ignorance of the moral values that are now required for survival, is no longer with us.

We have to adapt ourselves to the means of our times. The greatest scientists today are those who speak of the need for spirituality in order to improve our conditions. Science with its technology cannot go further. As a matter of fact, it has gone too far and requires a corresponding advance in moral principles. Now we come to spirituality. Man is made of body, intellect and spirit. Usually, people don't think of this; they think only of the body and mind. Intellect is the function of the brain based on actual, concrete facts. Spirit is something far above that. It is the communion of the individual man with the universe. This little planet on which we are living is in communion with the stars and with constellations, is one whole, one harmony, taking part in that harmony. This world exists by the harmony and balance of the universe. Therefore, every individual who lives on this globe is connected with that balance and harmony of the universe. It's part of his life, it's part of his inward instincts. That's why we have the feeling of justice. Who taught us justice? It was inherent in man because it is part of the balance and harmony of the universe. Justice is destroyed when the intellect, by its exercise in the wrong direction, follows the wrong idea of self-interest. This destroys the sense of justice, destroys the balance and harmony. And the only way for humanity to save itself is to turn to the spiritual element in man, so that

through spirituality he will rise above the present level of intellectual degradation of man to the higher levels of spiritual communion with the universal laws, with the universal flow which is a moral flow, which is a positive flow, which is against everything negative, which is against war, against antagonism, against all the elements which are now dominating humanity and will lead to our destruction.

Therefore, I attach great importance to these spiritual gatherings because the hope of mankind surviving is through the rise of spirituality. And we have had, I'm glad to say, great signs, great indications during recent events of the prevalence of the spirit in the world. One of the greatest events is that President Carter was elected, overwhelmingly elected, although an unknown personality at the time that he was a candidate—because his platform was one of moral principles and religious tenets. Upon those principles he won the election. This is a significant event with regard to which direction the people of the United States wish to go. They wish to go on the right course of moral principles as enunciated by President Carter. Indeed, President Carter finds difficulty because he has to fight against the existing situations. But that does not matter. The effort will succeed. Whatever happens, the fact remains that the United States has elected, by an overwhelming majority, a man who stands for moral principles. This is the first time this has happened in the history of mankind, I should think. And this is due to the fact that President Carter is a man of spirituality. He is deeply religious and he has shown it on many occasions and now in this last event, the meeting in Jerusalem of two leaders.

of two conflicting nations. The religious, spiritual element that brought the meeting about was independent of the political situations. The spiritual element that prevailed in their meeting is another sign that we are moving towards greater spirituality.

That is why I want to commend what you are doing here. Part of spirituality is meditation. Only by meditation, by letting your soul go up to higher levels, can you see the practical things of life more clearly, with more understanding, and move more in the right direction and that is the direction of love, cooperation and peace. These three elements imply also forgiveness. If you have no forgiveness, you can have no love, because all men make mistakes. The world is full of mistakes. Therefore, we must have love, forgiveness, understanding and cooperation, and this comes through meditation, through the spiritual element. Thank you.

Sister Elizabeth Espersen, SSMN, of the Thanks-Giving Square Foundation: I give thanks that you are, and I wish you peace.

I come on behalf of a tiny place in the heart of Dallas, Texas. Thanks-Giving Square would not even be a pinprick on the world's map: it is a small, but very beautiful park, only three acres in size, with a lovely non-denominational chapel and "Hall of Thanksgiving." When people enter the park, the busy mood of downtown Dallas seems to disappear; they stop their business, and move more slowly, and they begin to smile . . . I come on behalf of this tiny place where people smile.

I am humbled to be here, for this is a great place, a global center where the vision of man is dreamed into the future shape of his destiny. Statesmen and kings, presidents and patriarchs, ambassadors and makers of peace have peopled this place; it is hallowed by their memory and presence. Yet I dare to come here, for the place that I come from, though tiny, possesses great vision. It is a vision called "*thanks-giving*," and it lies at the heart of life. The United Nations, of course, shares this vision profoundly, calling it "*peace*."

Here peace is the effort made, the goal sought, the life led. And peace will happen only when the *united* dimension of the global community is understood and achieved. Gratitude is the parallel thrust of Thanks-Giving Square, for from the first, we have understood the universal dimension



Sister Elizabeth Espersen, SSMN,
Thanks-Giving Square Foundation
Dallas, Texas

of grateful living. Every culture, every religious tradition grasps the meaning and the need for gratitude. And so we come together in a singleness of vision. It is right that we do so, for the peace of the United Nations and the gratitude of Thanks-Giving Square resonate with a meaning beyond great or tiny places.

We are here today to be about an International Thanksgiving, and so it is significant to look at the symbolism that has traditionally characterized this theme. Thanksgiving is a "harvesting of life," full and abundant life. Let us reflect then, on the meaning of harvest imagery.

Seed is the beginning of harvest; all that lives is seed come to fruition. Peace, as a dynamic force among men, begins as a seed: the quiet calming of violence and violation in individual hearts, so that compassion and care can take over. Gratitude, too, begins as a seed, a tiny burgeoning acknowledgement in one's heart of gift received. And gift evokes response beyond the self, the simple realization of the other: thank *you*. Peace and gratitude transform the heart, just as the seed dies and is transformed into new life. It disappears into our Mother Earth so that what is only potential might become a reality.

The potential continues in *flower*. We all know the delicacy and beauty, the joy and promise with which a flower can touch even the hardest heart. When we see the flowering bough we know the fruit will be rich. Peace flowers in promise, for the peacemaker reaches out . . . and another shares his peace. It, too, is a delicate thing: to be cherished and cultivated with respect, held gently in hands that are reverent, in lives that are true. Gratefulness also comes to flower, for it is a joy-

like quality that moves hearts, even physically, in an expanding affirmation of life. It leads always toward *yes*, and positive acceptance of others. Both peace and thanksgiving are gestures of promise.

Harvest ripens finally to *fruit*, an abundance comes full circle, a transformation realized. Neither peace nor gratitude occur in isolation; they are never promises in a vacuum. They happen between men and among nations, providing a matured matrix for rich living. When peace and thanksgiving exist in our hearts, we possess an inexhaustible strength that reaches out again and again in relational trust. It is the gesture of a plentiful heart. That is why, too, when we break the fruit open, we find again the tiny seed: there are ever new possibilities of "no more war," of "giving thanks to God."

This is the vision, then, that marks Thanksgiving Square, that tiny place from which I come. It is also the vision of this great place where we gather. Perhaps it is most significant to realize that peace and gratitude become one when pushed to the ultimate totality and unconditionality of *Yes*. *Yes* is the real word that men of peace and grateful hearts live out:

"To say YES to life . . .

"YES even to that element in one which is most unwilling to let itself be transformed from a temptation into a strength . . .

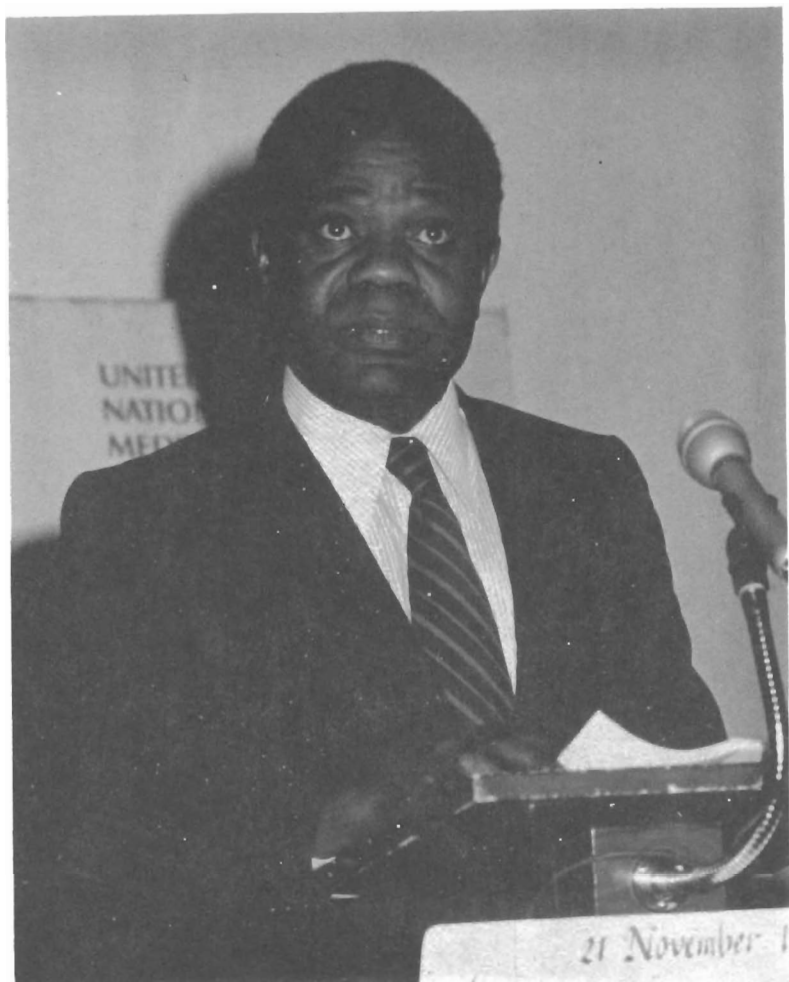
"You dare your YES—and experience a meaning. You repeat your YES—and all things acquire meaning. When everything has a meaning, how can you live anything but a YES?"

—Dag Hammarskjöld

The "Hall of Thanks-Giving" at the Square acknowledges the historical "yes" of our forefathers; the bells of the Square daily resound in a joyous affirmation of life; and the upward spiraling of the glory window captures in color and light one final great word of the man of peace for whom this auditorium is named:

"For all that has been—thanks; for all that will be, YES!"

—Dag Hammarskjöld



H.E. Mr. Ignace Karuhije
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Rwanda
to the United Nations

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S.E. M. Ignace Karuhije, Représentant permanent du Rwanda auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies: D'après la structure sociale dans mon pays, tous les membres du clan—ou famille élargie—sont frères parce qu'ils ont un même père juridique. Ils forment une entité étroite et cohérente qui, par solidarité active en toute matière, doit participer à des activités collectives.

Si j'ai commencé mon intervention par cette référence au régime clanique de ma société, c'est pour exprimer ma reconnaissance aux organisateurs de cette réunion qui me donnent ainsi l'occasion de me joindre aux autres frères pour la célébration de cette action de grâce au sein de notre grande famille des Nations Unies. Je m'associe avec d'autant plus de ferveur qu'il y a exactement quinze ans que mon pays, le Rwanda, après avoir accédé à la souveraineté nationale quelques mois auparavant, a commencé son dialogue avec les autres pays du monde par son entrée dans l'Organisation des Nations Unies.

Ce dialogue de solidarité et de coopération avec les autres Nations, nous l'avons poursuivi et renforcé jusqu'aujourd'hui à la lumière de la devise de notre pays: *Liberté, Coopération, Progrès*.

Avant de poursuivre ce thème, dois-je, peut-être avant tout vous présenter le pays. Pour les touristes, le Rwanda est connu comme le "Pays aux mille collines", le pays aux cinq volcans dont le plus élevé atteint l'altitude de 4500m.. C'est aussi le pays des vingt-trois lacs aux eaux calmes

et limpides dont le plus bas et le plus beau est le Lac Kivu, situé à 1400m d'altitude, appelé également la Côte d'Azur africaine. Pour les géographes, c'est la source du Nil avec ses rivières dont l'Akagera est la source importante la plus méridionale.

Les démographes estiment que quatre millions et demi d'âmes sur un territoire de 26.338km², à raison d'une moyenne de 160 habitants au km² constituent un grave problème pour ce pays sans grandes ressources naturelles connues et surtout enclavé entre l'Ouganda au Nord, le Burundi au Sud, la République-Unie de Tanzanie à l'Est et le Zaïre à l'Ouest. Pourtant, un peuple dynamique y vit dans la paix et l'unité nationale, ainsi que dans l'entente et la coopération avec ses voisins.

Dois-je rappeler que les relations entre le Rwanda et l'Organisation internationale ne datent pas des quinze dernières années seulement car en effet depuis 1919, après la défaite de l'Allemagne, le Rwanda fut sous l'autorité du Conseil Supérieur des Puissances alliées d'abord et ensuite de la Société des Nations qui en confièrent le mandat à la Belgique et ce jusqu'au régime de Tutelle de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en 1946.

Le rôle des Nations Unies sera encore plus déterminant pour conduire le pays à l'indépendance en 1962. Je ne serais pas étonné de rencontrer parmi vous de ceux qui auraient participé aux diverses missions de l'ONU au Rwanda.

J'ai dit, au début de mon intervention, sous quels signes la République Rwandaise était née et poursuit actuellement sa marche: *Liberté, Coopération, Progrès.*

Liberté: Comme beaucoup d'autres pays, le Rwanda a connu également les douleurs de

l'enfantement. Le Rwanda a dû passer par des révolutions pour conquérir sa liberté: Révolution interne contre le régime féodal en place, depuis des millénaires jusqu'en 1959, et révolution contre l'occupation coloniale, cette dernière étant plus pacifique car elle était la suite et l'aboutissement de la première. Mais les deux étaient intimement liées du fait que la révolution de novembre 1959 était issue du système traditionnel que la colonisation avait renforcé sans toujours l'améliorer.

La Révolution contre le système féodal répondait à une quête de liberté et de bonheur pour la majorité de la population, dans un besoin de restructuration et d'équilibre des rôles dans la société. Celle-ci se termina en 1961 par l'abolition de la monarchie et la proclamation de la République, et l'issue fut la possibilité offerte par la démocratie de voir d'autres figures accéder au pouvoir.

Tandis que la levée de la Tutelle et la proclamation de l'Indépendance en juillet 1962 parachevaient l'avènement du peuple réel au Rwanda.

Ainsi une grande page de l'histoire du Rwanda était tournée et il ne restait au peuple qu'à affirmer sa liberté pour son avenir.

Coopération: Sur le plan intérieur, tout programme a toujours visé l'intérêt des masses populaires. Mais celles-ci, à leur tour, ont manifesté une mentalité et une conscience nationales propres à un peuple déterminé à se rendre maître de son destin.

Sur le plan régional, le Rwanda a toujours cherché la complémentarité. Au point de vue géographique, le Rwanda est situé dans ce que les géographes ont appelé le "Grand Graben Africain", c'est-à-dire parmi les pays qui bordent les

Grands Lacs: Victoria, Edouard, Albert, Kivu, Tanganika . . . à savoir l'Ouganda, le Zaïre, le Rwanda, le Burundi, la Tanzanie et même plus loin le Kenya et la Zambie. Les peuples environnant ces lacs sont des éléments naturels, des peuples frères du point de vue humain, culturel et économique, et par conséquent proches et complémentaires. Nous avons toujours souhaité lutter contre l'enclavement, l'autarcie, l'isolement. Dans ce contexte, le plus riche est utile à tous les autres, le plus pauvre participe au développement de tous, les menaces faisant place au travail.

Notre volonté de coopération a déjà donné naissance à la "Communauté économique des Pays des Grands Lacs" entre le Rwanda, le Burundi et le Zaïre d'abord et d'autres pourront s'y joindre. Dernièrement encore est née "l'Association pour la mise en valeur du bassin de l'Akagera" entre le Rwanda, le Burundi et la Tanzanie, en attendant d'autres adhérents intéressés. Cette dernière association a été rendue possible par la coopération technique de notre Organisation.

Sur le plan international, tant du point de vue politique qu'économique, le Rwanda s'est toujours joint à toutes les bonnes volontés en vue de rapprocher ou réconcilier ceux que les conflits ont séparés. Et nous sommes heureux de constater que la même coopération bilatérale et multilatérale nous ait été accordée.

Progrès: L'objectif défini dans les textes de base tels que le Manifeste du Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement ou le Plan Nationale pour le Développement est une meilleure société et un mieux-être grâce à un élan généreux et unanime de toute la population.

Ce progrès doit se traduire dans des programmes concrets. Ainsi par exemple, pour ne citer que quelques exemples récents :

—l'année 1974: Année de l'Agriculture

—l'année 1975: Augmentation de la Production

—l'année 1976: Année du Mouvement National pour le Développement

—l'année 1977: Année de l'Habitat

A cela, il faut ajouter l'institution des "Travaux Communautaires de développement", une fois par semaine et par tous les citoyens valides depuis le Chef de l'Etat jusqu'au plus humble des habitants de la campagne. Dans les investissements requis par le Plan de Développement, ces travaux représenteront jusqu'à 60%, potentialité qui a été d'ailleurs sous-estimée dans les calculs ayant conduit à la fixation des performances du Plan.

Voilà, Chers Amis, qui serez indulgents envers moi pour avoir parlé de mon pays avec plus d'enthousiasme qu'il n'en fallait et d'avoir sans doute dépassé le temps m'imparti.

Les problèmes sont nombreux et les obstacles quasi insurmontables. Mais, nous avons espoir car il y a quinze ans nous n'aurions jamais espéré en arriver là.

Mais nous travaillons sous la protection du Tout-Puissant et nous croyons en Son action directe sur nos succès, les échecs étant dûs à notre imperfection humaine.

Je termine en rendant grâce à l'Eternel qui nous a guidés constamment à travers les difficultés et les écueils de tous ordres. Je Lui demande pour mon pays, ses dirigeants et son peuple de nous dispenser Ses bénédictions et de nous guider dans la sagesse.

H.E. Mr. Ignace Karuhije, Permanent Representative of Rwanda (English translation by Ms. Yvette Ripplinger): According to the social structure of my country, all members of the clan—the enlarged family—are brothers because they all have the same legal father. They are a close and coherent entity which, through the exercise of active solidarity in all matters, must be able to participate in collective activity.

The reason why I have begun my speech with this reference to the clan-structured regime of my society is because I wish to express to the organisers of this meeting my gratitude for giving me this opportunity to join my other brothers in celebrating this Thanksgiving within our big United Nations family. I associate myself with this event with even greater enthusiasm in view of the fact that exactly fifteen years ago my country, Rwanda, after having achieved national sovereignty a few months earlier, began a dialogue with other countries in the world by joining the membership of the United Nations. This dialogue of solidarity and cooperation with other nations, we have pursued and reinforced until today, in the light of our country's motto: "Liberty, Cooperation, Progress."

Before continuing on this theme, I should perhaps first of all introduce my country to you. For tourists, Rwanda is known as "the country of the thousand hills," the country of the five volcanoes, the highest of which is 14,760 feet high. It is also

the country of the twenty-three lakes of calm and limpid waters, the lowest and most beautiful of which is Lake Kivu, which is situated at an altitude of 4,592 feet and is also called the African Côte d'Azur. For the geography experts, its rivers are the source of the Nile, with the Akagera River being the most important eastern source.

The demographers are of the opinion that 4.5 million inhabitants on a territory of 10,272 square miles, representing an average of 160 inhabitants per square kilometer (approximately 220 per square mile), present a very serious problem for that country, which possesses no recognised great natural resources and is surrounded principally by Uganda on the north, Burundi on the south, the United Republic of Tanzania on the east and Zaire on the west. Yet a dynamic people lives there in peace and national unity, as well as in harmony and cooperation with its neighbours.

May I remind you that the relations between Rwanda and the United Nations have not existed for the past fifteen years only; in fact, after the defeat of Germany, Rwanda was placed first under the authority of the Higher Council of the Allied Powers, then under that of the League of Nations, which entrusted its mandate to Belgium, a situation which lasted up to the United Nations Trusteeship regime in 1946.

The United Nations played an even more important role in leading this country towards independence in 1962. I would not be surprised to find among you some who have participated in the various United Nations missions that were sent to Rwanda.

I have said, at the beginning of my speech, under what signs the Rwandese Republic was

born and under which it is presently pursuing its march: "Liberty, Cooperation, Progress."

Liberty. Like many other countries, Rwanda has also known the pangs of being born. Rwanda has had to go through revolutions to achieve its freedom: an internal revolution against the feudal regime which prevailed in the country for thousands of years, up to 1959, and a revolution against colonial occupation, the latter being of a much more peaceful nature, since it was the follow-up and the end result of the first one. Both, however, were intimately connected, in view of the fact that the revolution of November 1959 was the outcome of the traditional system which had been consolidated—yet never improved—by colonization.

The revolution against the feudal system was in answer to the wish of the majority of the population for liberty and happiness, born from the need for reconstruction and for balance in the various roles to be played by its society. It ended in 1961 with the abolition of the monarchy and the proclamation of the Republic and resulted in a democracy which offered to other public figures the possibility of acceding to power. The termination of the United Nations trusteeship and the proclamation of independence in July 1962 brought to its final conclusion the advent of the real people in Rwanda. Thus, an important page of Rwanda's history was turned and what was left to the people was to affirm their freedom to dispose of their own future.

Cooperation. At the domestic level, all programmes have always been planned in order to promote the interests of the masses. But the masses themselves, in turn, have shown the kind

of mental attitude and degree of national conscience that characterize a people determined to be master of their own fate.

At the regional level, Rwanda has always looked for complementarity. From a geographical viewpoint, Rwanda is situated in what the geographers have called "the Great African Graben," that is to say, in the midst of the countries bordering the Great Lakes—Victoria, Edward, Albert, Kivu, and Tanganyika—which are Uganda, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and, further, Kenya and Zambia. The people living around those lakes are the natural elements; they are brothers from the human, cultural and economic viewpoint, and therefore, are close to and complement each other. We have always wanted to fight against land-locking, autocracy and isolation. In this context, the richest amongst us is useful to all the others, while the poorest participates in the development of all, threats having been replaced by cooperative labour.

Our desire for cooperation has already given birth to the Economic Community of the Countries of the Great Lakes, first established between Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire, and to which other countries may adhere. Also recently created is the Association for the Development of the Akagera Basin, between Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, which is expecting the membership of other interested parties. This latter association was made possible through the technical cooperation programme of the United Nations.

At the international level, from both the political and economic viewpoints, Rwanda has always been associated with all parties of good will endeavouring to bring closer or to reconcile

those who have been separated by conflicts. And we are happy to acknowledge that the same type of bilateral and multilateral cooperation has been granted to us.

Progress. The objective which is defined in our basic documents, such as the Manifesto of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development or the National Development Plan, is the institution of a better society and better way of life, thanks to the generous and unanimous cooperation of the whole population. This progress must be translated into concrete programmes, such as the few I am going to indicate as recent examples:

—The year 1974, which was the year for Agriculture;

—The year 1975, which was devoted to the Increase of Productivity;

—The year 1976, which was the year of the National Movement for Development;

—The year 1977, which is the year for Settlements (Habitat).

To that we must add the institution of Community Work for Development, which is done once a week by all citizens in good health, from the Chief of State to the most humble inhabitants of the rural areas. In forecasting the investments needed by the Development Plan, this type of work will represent up to 60 per cent, a potential which, by the way, was underestimated in the calculations that were made when the Plan of Performances was being established.

So here you are my dear friends who, I am sure, will look upon me with indulgence for having spoken of my country with more enthusiasm than perhaps was required and for having

gone, I am sure, beyond the time allocated to me. Our problems are numerous and the obstacles almost insurmountable. But we are full of hope, for fifteen years ago we never thought that we would have come to this point. But we are working under the protection of the Almighty and we believe in His direct Influence upon our success, since failures are due to our human imperfections.

I shall conclude in offering thanks to the eternal God, who has ceaselessly guided us through difficulties and pitfalls of all kinds. I ask Him in the name of my country, its leaders and its people to grant us His benedictions and to guide us to wisdom.



Dr. Robert G. Muller
Director, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General
for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination
United Nations

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Dr. Robert Muller, Deputy Under-Secretary-General: Thanks-Giving Square is a very beautiful place situated in the heart of Dallas, amid gigantic skyscrapers. It is dwarfed by the masses of steel, concrete, glass and aluminum that jut into the air all around it. Nevertheless it manages to prove that smallness with a soul can be greater than girth without meaning. While the skyscrapers monotonously look alike, this place abounds with individual features, forms and symbolisms. A chance has been given to practically every conceivable gradient, shape and geometric line. The most interesting and impressive symbolism is the chapel built in the form of a spiral.

Those who conceived Thanks-Giving Square had considered many ideas, including that of a Tree of Life. The concept finally retained was suggested by a monk, Brother David Steindl-Rast, a great friend of the United Nations. Remember the admirable meditation he composed and read here in the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium two years ago on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the world organization. He suggested the idea of the spiral which comes from the Orient and is a mysterious, thought-challenging symbol of infinity. As you stand inside, outside or under the chapel, you are taken by its spirit. In your mind you continue to draw the spiral and you see that it proceeds endlessly into the infinitely large, encompassing the entire universe! Such is the nature of a simple spiral. Its concept was born in the East, in

India, where it was given a cosmic significance long before western mathematicians became intrigued by it. In Dallas, it is thus a symbol of East-West brotherhood on the American soil.

There is another notable symbol: the stained windows of the chapel come from Chartres, where they were made by the descendants of the craftsmen who fashioned the marvellous glass mosaics of the glorious cathedral.

One other feature is particularly moving to me, for it is a dream of mine that has come true: during my many years in the United States I have often regretted the absence of the sound of European bells. Since childhood I loved the soul-stirring, crystalline voice of morning bells, which seemed to come from heaven at that very special moment when the day is born again. Bells too represent vibrations which from the tiniest human community on Earth reach into the infinite, as a spiral does for the eye and the mind. Bells call the people to prayer and gratefulness for daily life as it is so beautifully represented in the famous French painting the "Angelus" by Millet. Today three magnificent bells cast in Annecy, France, adorn Thanks-Giving Square and try to awaken the souls of the people and the skyscrapers.

There is only one rectangular shape in the Square: the altar on which stands a beautiful, massive glass candelabrum from Ireland. The Hall of Thanks-Giving under the chapel offers the sight of immaculate white columns donated by various civic associations. Behind these columns flows sky-blue illuminated water. In the center of the Hall, right under the nexus of the spiral, stands a permanent exhibit where you can see a plaque offered by the United Nations Meditation Group.

Thus, the name of the United Nations is present in the temple and world peace will benefit from the prayers of the visitors. That is good, for Thanksgiving Square receives the visit of innumerable people who are thus reminded of the human dream of peace and oneness which we are trying to achieve in the world organization.

It is most interesting to observe the visitors. There are many people from Dallas, especially young people who work in the skyscrapers and who come to dream, relax or have their luncheon in the Square, sitting on benches or stone walls, under a tree or near a waterfall. It is enough to be there for a half hour to see how each of them interprets the place in his own way, attuned to his soul, sentiments and inclinations. When we were saying goodbye to the chapel a hippie was sitting there immersed in deep meditation, a prayerbook resting on his lap. I asked the attendant who had been the last person registered in her visitors' book. She said:

"It was a little boy who had come a few days ago to pray to God for rain for the farmers. He came back today to thank God for having made it rain yesterday!" And she added that she could tell dozens of similar moving human stories.

Thanks-Giving Square is a place where you can feel the fundamental urge of the human being to be grateful for the gift of life, that unique, mysterious outcropping from darkness and the void, that flowering of "existence" under sunlight and the stars. Yes, out of a cell, of a seed, as from the center of a spiral or the impact of a sound, we are grown into a cosmos, a universe of our own, sentient, seeing, feeling, thinking, linked mysteriously with the rest of the universe, capable of loving

and encompassing the entire world in our heart, to feel in ourselves the divine and to lift ourselves to the Godhead on our own volition. You can feel this in the Square. It is something very unique, and I am grateful that the United Nations has been associated with it.

We will help the World Thanksgiving Center by collecting the etymologies and origins of the words "thanks" and "gratitude" in all languages. We will also collect sayings on Thanksgiving by famous people, by our Secretaries-General, by Albert Schweitzer, Gandhi, Pablo Casals, Martin Luther King and others. We thus hope that the spirit of thanksgiving for life will continue to expand and encompass the entire planet, thus helping the cause of peace to be illumined in the hearts and souls of men, unlocking mysteriously the immense force which resides in love, prayer and meditation.

H.E. Lic. Julio Asensio-Wunderlich, Permanent Representative of Guatemala: Let me begin by reading a wonderful concept that I found on a U.N. Meditation Group brochure. For it says: "The outer message of the United Nations is Peace. The inner message of the United Nations is Love. The inmost message of the United Nations is Oneness." And I think this is very appropriate for my brief comments.

Guatemala is a small country located in Central America. We are blessed by many things that God has given us, but nothing is free. And, therefore, we also have had to undergo some considerable suffering. It was just over a year ago that my country was shaken, broken by a terrible earthquake that is one of the worst that had been felt in this continent. We had some 75,000 people die. We had some 20,000 persons that were wounded and many of them are permanently crippled, as many were wounded by the falling of the tile roofs and wooden beams of their homes. Many people had to flee their homes during that earthquake.

The world was informed of this terrible natural catastrophe on the very first day, which was the fourth of February of last year. And it was just a few hours later that we in Guatemala received the love of the people of the United Nations, of the world. This love was represented by all sorts of efforts to help our people overcome the tragic circumstances. If the inner message of the United



H.E. Lic. Julio Asensio-Wunderlich
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Guatemala
to the United Nations

Nations is love, that message was expressed loudly in Guatemala in February of last year. And if the inmost message of the United Nations is oneness, then oneness was also present when people of every part of the world of all ages, little boys and little girls from schools throughout the world, sent letters, toys and assistance. I personally give more importance to the little tokens of love and oneness that we received than the massive help sent by governments and by international assistance, without which, of course, we would not have been able to stand on our feet.

When 200,000 houses were destroyed and thousands were left to live in a makeshift tent from a blanket or a piece of plastic, they were thankful to God that they had been able to live through this. The situation has since become considerably better because of the blessing of our climate, our soil and our excellent crops that were not damaged during that terrible catastrophe. So I think that it is most appropriate that in moments of meditation we should meditate on the way the world reacts in a moment of catastrophe of this sort, which means suffering for a people in a certain part of the world.

It was mentioned just a minute ago that Guatemala is the centre of the Mayan civilization that was in our country a few thousand years ago. The name "Indian" for the natives comes from the fact that Columbus thought he was discovering India when he came here. Our Indian population has become divided into several small tribes that all derive from the Mayans and other civilizations near the center of the continent. We have to offer the world the remnants of that civilization, which was extremely advanced. It was one of the most

advanced of the ages. They had a calendar better than today's calendar and they built tremendous pyramids in the peculiar Mayan architectural style.

These people also have a great belief in peace and hope. That is why we have our country. When the Spaniards came to conquer it, they didn't fight so much against the conquerors but blended with them. This is true of all of Latin America. I always like to express to the North American audiences the fact that while the United States was colonized by people especially from England and the English section of Europe, and then from northern Europe, who came to the United States with their wives, families and belongings to find a new way of life, Latin America was conquered by armies. The men that came were not permitted to bring their wives. The Indian opposition was not so very strong because they were peaceful Indians, and so they blended with the Spanish conquistadors. That is our Latin American race, in which we have the peacefulness of the Indian and perhaps some of the characteristics of the Spanish race.

I do wish that groups like yours would consider now and then the differences that exist between your way of thinking and ours, so that you would better understand us. The ideal would be, of course, for everyone to visit some part of Latin America, so that you would become acquainted with us, with our way of being, with our way of living, without the tremendously fast pace that one finds in some of the more developed countries, without so much competition and difficulty, and without so much materialism. Our concept of life is more that of living life because life is worth

living per se, as it is, and not necessarily wanting to get money and things that money can buy, while perhaps looking for love, that can give everything. Thank you.

Statement received from H.E. Mr. Tan Sri Zaiton Ibrahim, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the Thanksgiving Dinner offered by the U.N. Meditation Group the evening of 21 November: Thanksgiving is a custom which is peculiar to the United States and, I believe, also to Canada. It started more than three hundred years ago. In other countries the occasion could come under the common terminology of harvest festivals, which are really, as the name suggests, celebrations of the harvests, an event for a lot of fun and merriment as well as for thanking the Lord for His bounteous gifts. Harvest celebrations are not peculiar to the United States and Canada but are also practised in many parts of the world in many forms. It is during such celebrations that one finds manifestations of cultural and traditional dances, songs and other similar performances. Unfortunately, under the pressure of modern life and modern techniques of agriculture, harvest festivals are slowly dying away.

In Malaysia, for instance, while no doubt such occasions were frequently held in the past, nowadays they are virtually non-existent. However, much research has been done and many of the traditional songs, dances and other cultural activities common to such celebrations are being revived and performed on suitable occasions, so that Malaysians can be aware and be proud of their rich cultural heritage.

I would very much have liked to have been present at this International Thanksgiving Dinner

organised by the United Nations Meditation Group, to which I would like to offer my sincere congratulations for organising a special dinner for the occasion. Unfortunately, other commitments prevented me from joining the guests this evening to celebrate this auspicious and solemn occasion. However, I join them, in absentia, to thank the Lord for His bounteous generosity and to pray for His continued Blessings for happiness and prosperity for all the peoples of the world.



Delegates and staff enjoy themselves at an International Thanksgiving Dinner offered by the U.N. Meditation Group that evening as an expression of gratitude to all those who so kindly participated in its activities during 1977 (photo by Richard Howard).

♩ = 104

O WORLD GRATITUDE DAY

words & music by Sri Chinmoy

First musical staff with treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a common time signature. It begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. A fermata is placed over the final note, with the word "Five" written above it. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Second musical staff, continuing the melody from the first staff. It ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Third musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Fourth musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Fifth musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Sixth musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Seventh musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Eighth musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Ninth musical staff, continuing the melody. It includes a double bar line and a repeat sign. Below the staff is a dashed line.

Da capo without repeat

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the Heart-Home
of the World-Body

We Believe

...and we hold that each man has the potentiality of reaching the Ultimate Truth. We also believe that man cannot and will not remain imperfect forever. Each man is an instrument of God. When the hour strikes, each individual soul listens to the inner dictates of God. When man listens to God, his imperfections are turned into perfections, his ignorance into knowledge, his searching mind into revealing light and his uncertain reality into all-fulfilling Divinity.

-United Nations Meditation Group

The United Nations Meditation Group is an association of U.N. delegates, staff, NGO representatives and accredited press correspondents.

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