

HEALING THE WORLD

by David E. Christensen (with Foreword by Sheila Simon)
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(Book review by Ronald J. Glossop--January 20, 2006)

David Christensen writes this book as a follow-up to Senator Paul Simon's 2003 book HEALING AMERICA, something that Paul Simon was not able to do because of his death. As Sheila Simon says in the Foreword, "My father, Paul Simon, had great respect for Dave Christensen. Dad valued Dave's opinions enough to ask Dave for feedback on one of Dad's last books. Dave's book is based in part on Dad's work"

Although Christensen starts from Paul Simon's ideas and quotes him extensively in this book, he does not hesitate to go beyond them. He notes that Simon "did not mention world government" (p. 5) in his books, but there is no doubt that Christensen believes that the big problems of our time (war and militarism, unrestrained economic exploitation of the poor, and widespread destruction of the environment) require Limited World Government for their solution (pp. 8, 23, 31-32, 64, 77, 89-90, 103, 146, 167).

"HEALING THE WORLD is not meant to be a scholarly book" (p. 5), but it is nevertheless full of facts and insights about the human situation, helping the reader to see where we are now in the context of our human history and what we would be able to do in the future if we use our intelligence and adopt wise policies. It is full of quotations highlighting critical ideas, appendices succinctly summarizing important points, and references on where to go to get more detailed information. The reader is educated and challenged to think about our present situation and the three major problems of war, growing economic disparity due to corporate power and greed, and ruination of the environment. An important part of the book is the clear and engaging manner in which these three big problems are presented.

Then the proposed solution of Limited World Government and the historical evolution toward it is described along with three scenarios of how we can go from where we are now to where we want to be. These three possible paths to world government are (1) modify the U.N., (2) have a worldwide "people's initiative," and (3) create a world federation only of democracies (pp. 113-24). Christensen also lists and responds in turn to the various obstacles to implementing world government including opposition from the military, short-term materialistic egoistic thinking, resistance from those who presently hold power, antagonism from religious fundamentalists, fear that a leveling of incomes would occur, voter apathy and cynicism, and wide differences in culture (pp. 125-35).

Throughout the book there is a strong moral tone. Here is one sample: "If we are to achieve a better world for our children and those who follow, the most important change must come in our hearts and minds. *We must* do things that will enhance the lives of all people, not just ourselves. Changes must give every family some chance of improvement, especially for the children. Changes should not further aggrandize or enrich corporations, CEOs, or particular national governments. *We must* do better than those who came before and our own generations have done so far in solving problems reasonably. And whatever we do, we must do it with fairness and justice--without rancor or violence--to unlock untold opportunities for our children and those who follow in all parts of the world" (p. 124).

Most uplifting is Christensen's chapter titled "Nineteen Hopeful Signs" (pp. 136-140) that support his hope and optimism against those who say that world government is not possible no matter how useful it would be in improving the human condition. He notes, "If masses of people were keenly interested in world government after World War II, it can happen again" (p. 136).

Given all the worthwhile quotations and the many ideas and materials presented, one must be especially grateful for the index which facilitates finding them again. HEALING THE WORLD is the kind of book of information and inspiration that world federalists will cherish for themselves and will also want to give to their friends.