

CHARITY

Charity creates a multitude of sins. Oscar Wilde

Charity degrades those who receive it and hardens those who dispense it. Georges Sand

And now abideth, faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. Bible, Corinthians/13-13

The Road to Hell is paved with good Intentions. Saint Bernard de Clairvaux

By masking all sorts of social problems, charity worsens them. Jack Basuk

My name is Daniel Bates. As far as I can discern I am an unknown, despite being a very wealthy individual. Indeed, my fortune is so vast I really have no idea how rich I am. I think I must be the richest individual alive. Further, despite endowing my closest friends and family with more than sufficient funds to allow them to live as freely and luxuriously as they wish and by donating to all sorts of worthy causes, every assistance I proffer does not come close to making a dent in my prosperity. My yearly income more than offsets my contributions.

If the truth be told, I have no idea how I got to be so wealthy. I should know, since my previous profession was as a chartered accountant. I had been making a comfortable living. Nothing extraordinary! My investment portfolio consisted mostly of safe conservative stocks and bonds that provided dividends which when added to my regular income allowed for a contented and happy life style.

Then one day everything changed radically. My assets increased in value to an unbelievable extent. My small accounting company was bombarded by offers to buy it and eventually was purchased at a ridiculously high price, something I could not fathom. Every speculation I made turned out to be profitable to an unreasonable extent. It did not seem to matter whether it was in real estate, manufacturing, natural resources, financial institutions such as Insurance or Banks, Entertainment and Travel Industries or any and all sorts of Services.

As a result of all this I concluded that there must be a reason for it. I simply did not know what it was.

Eron and Petrof, inhabitants of a distant world, were inordinately pleased with their efforts to make Daniel Bates rich and powerful. He was the focal point of an experiment that they had given much thought to. Perhaps, not enough! The experiment was based on their observation that in no other world was there such disparity between the haves and have-nots. They wished to see what would occur if this disparity were erased using Daniel Bates as a means to achieve this. He had been chosen because of his personality featuring integrity, honesty, kindness, hard work, charitable actions, and a non-boastful nature marked by silence on his accomplishments with never a nasty word about anyone. While not an intellectual in the usual sense, he was well-read and had more than a passing interest in science, technology, economics and the fine arts.

He was an accomplished amateur musician. As for his family, he was a devoted father and husband, always ready to provide them with the necessities and many luxuries. His affection for them was amply returned. His neighbours and co-workers were equally impressed by his cooperative attitude. In other words, he was a rare individual that everyone regarded with hardly any feelings whatsoever, either positive or negative. One reason was that he was a silent and non-argumentative person, so that no one ever knew what he was thinking. He was the invisible man. It was all these attributes that endeared him to Eron and Petrof. He had been chosen by them to fulfill certain tasks.

What they did was an unprecedented experiment. While, as yet, Daniel Bates doesn't comprehend it, he is the only person in the world that owns all its wealth. Through the devious efforts of Eron and Petrof, every previously wealthy person had lost their fortunes and had become what is often described as middle class. Due to the herculean efforts of Daniel, although he did not realize it, using charitable means, all the poor and needy had their standard of living raised to that of the middle class. What Eron and Petrof were trying to achieve was an egalitarian world. They succeeded. Of course there were malcontents and those with a predisposition to violence. Dissent was not an option. They were simply eliminated by isolating them to another planet that was not inhabited.

I still cannot figure out how and why I was able to amass such wealth. However, I have come to realize that I am able to use it to secure a world that is safe, where justice prevails and no one has wealth that was not earned. Also, I have come to understand that I have unlimited power, something that I never wanted nor strived for. This is most disturbing. Yet it has given me the ability to accomplish much good, especially for the poor, disenfranchised and seriously ill. Again, it is not clear how or why I was and am able to achieve these momentous results. I appreciate that these powers that I now possess can easily cause my downfall.

Eron started to have some misgivings about what he and Petrof had initiated. "We have created an egalitarian world or so we think. It is not really one. After all, there is one person who is not the exact equal in terms of wealth and power with the rest of the population. He has become aware that he has absolute power. Previous tyrants not only sought absolute authority, they also wanted to be well known as such so that they could be feared universally. This is not the case with Daniel Bates. Yet while he does not strive for publicity, his future behaviour is unpredictable and uncertain. I suggest that his wealth and power be removed and that all the good he has perpetuated be continued by the judicious use of the technology already in place." Petrof agreed and the changes were immediately implemented.

After a period of time Eron and Petrof returned to evaluate their experiment. They were sorely disappointed. Stasis had absorbed the world. Nothing new, creative or adventuresome had occurred. Curiosity disappeared. In other words the world had become a boring, immobile place. They felt that their experiment had been a waste of time and effort. There was no passion, no future and no evolution. Perhaps they had erred when they had exiled the non-violent malcontents and had removed power and wealth from Daniel Bates. Humans had become nothing more than complacent, contented and compliant guinea pigs.

Jack Basuk, Nov. 15, 2012

