

**A MESSAGE ON YOUR GOD-GIVEN WORTH**

**A DIVERSITY OF VALUES**

***Be not conformed! Be transformed!***

***By George Foster***



IN 1998 I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SPEAKING to churches in the nation of Belarus. I loved describing our worth as human beings to people who had been taught under the Soviet system that we are not created by God, and that the value of humanity is not individual, but only collective.

After a service, the pastor asked my friend and translator, Bela, to tell me, “Many times I have seen my people listening to God’s Word. Today they drank in every word.”

It’s wonderful to know and believe that our worth is established by the Master Artist, God Himself. The author of life gives us dignity, ability, and value, and has made each of us unique in some way. Each person has a singular identity and a distinct contribution to make that no one else can duplicate.

**We tend to measure up or give up.**

We set stereotypical images of what success and beauty are, and either strive to measure up or we give up and conclude that we are ugly failures who don’t have what it takes. In reality, we need to think less about images and more about substance. We need to dedicate ourselves—just as we—are to God and allow Him to make us all we can be with the unique strengths and weaknesses, abilities and disabilities that we have. We are not one of 101 look-alike Dalmatians. We are not one of 101 musicians assembled to play the oboe in unison. We are part of a symphony orchestra that requires a wide variety of sounds and rhythms.

**God values diversity.**

As I travel the world seeking to provide pastoral care to missionaries, I admire the beauty, intelligence and ability of people from many races and nations. I’m impressed by the characteristics of whole cultures and also by the individuality of the men, women and children who make up those cultures. (No, Asians don’t all look alike.)

Diversity is wonderful—unless we are the one who feels different, odd, and excluded! Truth is, many of us wish that we were not so unique. We would prefer to be like everyone else. It’s so comfortable to fit in with the crowd and with the prescribed image of what is acceptable, attractive, smart and cool. But let’s face it: If all we do is conform to the others, what do we add? We’re just one more.

Paul said if we want to know and experience God’s good, perfect, acceptable will, we must *not be conformed* to this world, but *be transformed* by renewing our mind. If we insist on conforming, let it be this way: “... be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29).

## **Something unique**

Our real value to any group is not only that we have something in common with the others, but that we bring something unique that no one else brings. You can't imagine what that unique quality is? Others may have told you, but you didn't believe them. Maybe people admire your talent, kindness, friendliness, sincerity, compassion, understanding, tenacity, courage, generosity, willingness to serve, desire to be supportive, ability to encourage and challenge, or other qualities not mentioned here.

## **You can do it!**

Never allow yourself to think that you are not intelligent enough or capable enough to do excellent work and be of value to your God, your self, your family and to society. It's not always the most capable people who do the best job. The willing ones who persevere are often the ones whom God chooses to get the job done. Sometimes the ability to overcome perceived disabilities is the greatest ability of all. With perseverance, come: experience, character, and hope. These qualities enable us to surpass those who have coasted along on their good looks and pleasing personalities. You don't have to be equipped to do God's will for another person; you *are* equipped to do God's will for you!

## **God gives you value. Give it back to God!**

You are worth more than you think. Your value is not determined by how much you earn or accumulate. It has nothing to do with your personal appearance or ability. It doesn't matter what family you come from, where you live, or who you know. It is not defined by your popularity, productivity or personality. It is not relative or comparative. It cannot be increased or diminished. Your Creator gives you infinite value. You are as valuable as everyone and no less valuable than anyone. Now go to work and transform the infinite value He has given you into useful value that you can give back to Him.