

Philanthropy and the Social Crisis

True and False Philanthropy

I

Everyone knows the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus is being tested by a lawyer, who first asks, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responds with a question and draws from him the answer that he must love God and "your neighbor as yourself." The lawyer persists: "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus then relates the story of the Good Samaritan:

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half -dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." (Luke 10:25-37, NRSV)

The passage concludes with another question: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy.", Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The Good Samaritan story can be taken at face value, and usually is; it is an "example" story. However, the respected if occasionally controversial New Testament scholar Robert W. Funk recently analyzed that passage in terms of metaphor rather than example. The reader (or hearer, to remember the context) could infer that the story provides an example of what it means to be a good neighbor. Considered as a parable, however, Funk argues that the point might be different.

First, Jesus is telling the story to people who know personally what things are like on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. His listeners can readily identify with what happened to the man. There are also people in the group who socially identify themselves with the priest and the Levite, and who feel uncomfortable because of the way those two avoid the unpleasantness. Funk assumes also that some of the other listeners were anticlerical, and found the priestly evasion of duty amusing.

But neither group in the audience would have been prepared for what Jesus said next: that the Samaritan had compassion. The Samaritan was the mortal enemy of the Jew, and Jesus was a Jew speaking to an audience of Jews. The hero of the story is the Samaritan. The Samaritan was touched by grace and did the right thing while the Jews in the story did not. Harder for us to understand, perhaps but not for Jesus's audience, was the depth

of animosity between Jews and Samaritans. "A Jew who was excessively proud of his blood line and a chauvinist about his tradition would not permit a Samaritan to touch him, much less minister to him." (Stories of such deep-seated ethnic animosity are common: in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake last December in Armenia, for example, some Azerbaijanis sent telegrams of congratulations to the Armenians; some Armenians, on the other hand, said they would refuse assistance of whatever kind offered by Azerbaijanis.)

Funk argues that to understand the story of the Good Samaritan it is necessary to be drawn into the story in such a way that "one becomes the victim in the ditch who is helped by an enemy." The religious point to the story, then as Robert Funk reads it, is not simply an answer to the question "Who is my neighbor?" or even the mandate to "Go and do likewise," but that "Mercy always comes from the quarter from which one does not and cannot expect it."

The listener to the parable of the Good Samaritan is invited into the story to explore the roles according to his own imaginative preferences; "the story is perpetually unfinished." I want to explore it that way, as a revealing source of contemporary philanthropic values, practices, and problems. My goal is to find some of the values that would mark "true" and "false" philanthropy as a guide to our own behavior. True philanthropy would be a form of behavior that we would admire and want to emulate -- a virtue. As John Dewey wrote in the early 1900s, a virtue is based on whole-heartedness, persistence, and sincerity. The absence of those qualities might also help us to know what false philanthropy might mean. Probing deep into the story of the Good Samaritan, or developing themes that lead out from it, may help us to find a firmer and subtler understanding of values and practices that we may take for granted.

Both as individuals and as organizations we have lost touch with the core values of true philanthropy. We have replaced those values with assumptions about human nature and society that leave no place for true philanthropy at all: the view of rationality that eliminates the spiritual and the transcendent; the view of psychology that reduces all human behavior to calculations of narrow self-interest; the view of economics and business that reduces all values to a "bottom line." Each of these assumptions has become so pervasive and so much a part of our way of looking at reality that phenomena such as the Good Samaritan are aberrations and make no "sense" at all.

The problem of reductionism is that we take a useful insight such as the notion of the bottom line and carry it too far, apply it too widely, interpret too much from it. Perhaps I will do that with the idea of the Good Samaritan; if so, I will have falsified what I believe to be true philanthropy. It is important to study philanthropy and to think about its practice critically if we are to be able to distinguish between the true and the false of it.

II

The study of philanthropy usually concentrates on two perspectives, that of the person who gives and that of the person in need. In the parable, the perspectives are those of the Good Samaritan and that of the person lying helpless by the roadside. There appear to be

three lessons to the story: the first is the implicit answer to the question, Who is my neighbor? A second lesson is that we should go to the aid of others even at some risk to ourselves. The third main point of the story is that we are all vulnerable; we all face the possibility of needing the help of others, even help from a hated enemy.

Most of the time, most of us go about the ordinary business of our lives and work without being directly confronted with extraordinary personal risks or moral choices. Most of us are not in desperate need (although some of us probably are, in almost every large gathering, but the despair is hidden). In large cities we develop skills of avoiding the unpleasant: we stay out of troubled neighborhoods; we even learn how to see past vagrants and other homeless people asking for handouts.

If it is difficult to put yourself imaginatively in the place of the victim in the Good Samaritan story, perhaps you might find it easier to empathize with a mugging on the streets of Manhattan. A few years ago, just before Christmas, there was a strike of the Long Island Railroad. I stayed that week in a hotel not far from my office. One evening at about six, I stopped by a bookstore on my way to the hotel. I bought a book and went on my way, my mind on the book and on other things. I walked into a wooden tunnel framed by a large construction semi-trailer on the street side, a wooden wall at the other side of the sidewalk, and a rough temporary ceiling overhead. There were no lights. Fifteen or twenty feet inside I was stopped by a young man who asked the time. I hesitated, and two other young men appeared. The three pushed me against the wall and demanded money. I glanced back down the street and saw someone crossing to the other side. (He may have been avoiding me; he may have simply been alert enough not to walk into such a trap.) The young men in front of me demanded my money and my watch. By my recollection I had four one dollar bills in my pocket; my watch was a gift from a friend; my wedding ring was my only other valuable. (I didn't think they would be much interested in the book, which was about John Calvin.) I stalled. Another young man threatened me as if he had a knife and declared that he would "cut my guts out." I was somewhat at a loss, having heard (as most of us have) that resistance is a bad idea, and that mugging victims who don't have money are likely to be killed anyway. Suddenly one of them pushed me and told me to go on my way.

I walked down the street, back into the light. As I moved away from the scene I heard them laugh. One of them said, "We sure scared the shit out of him." I stopped and went back. I was very angry. I concurred with his characterization of my reaction; I admitted that I had been frightened. One of the young men said that I wouldn't have reacted that way if I hadn't been white. As I was about to lecture him about his misguided sense of racial justice I felt a spasm in my back that took my breath away. I couldn't have lectured further even had they apologized and asked me to bring light into their you lives.

The next night at about the same hour I walked back to the hotel by the same route. As I neared the corner the wind blew off the hat of a young woman walking ahead of me. I hastened to pick it up and handed it to her. She thanked me and started on, walking directly toward the tunnel I had been caught in the night before. Feeling a bit foolish, like someone trying to build a slight act of courtesy into an invitation to have a drink and get

better acquainted, I called out to her. She hesitated. I pointed to the tunnel ahead and told her that I had gone that way the night before and had been mugged. She thanked me and crossed to the other side of the street. I looked for the young men but they were nowhere to be seen.

There are many places in this world that are dangerous as was the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. And there are thieves of infinite variety. If there is an impulse for people to come to the aid of another in distress, then it is possible to take advantage of it. There are contemporary reports of "Good Samaritan scams," tricks to lure well-meaning Good Samaritans into a trap set by decoys feigning injury or peril. All of us have heard reports of the Good Samaritan who is murdered and robbed coming to the aid of another; the message about his courage and betrayal is as important today as it was in Jesus's time. We also know of situations in which Good Samaritans were nowhere to be found: most of us have heard the story of the 38 witnesses to the assault and murder of Kitty Genovese in New York in 1964, when none of the 38 witnesses even went so far as to call the police.

When I told the story of my own experience to two friends who are lifelong New Yorkers, they explained why I had lived to tell them about it. The young muggers were in training -- The Fund Raising School, so to speak, New York style.

III

Why is it that the Good Samaritan did not turn his eyes away and pass by on the other side of the road? Why did he come to the aid of the stranger in that dangerous place? He must have assumed that the injured person was a Jew, a bitter ethnic enemy. Why did he accept the risk? In our time, the dominant assumption about human behavior is that all of us are calculators of self-interest; our self-interest motivates our actions. In the story of the Good Samaritan, however, it is clear that the calculators of self-interest are the priest and the Levite who crossed to the other side of the road and avoided the risk and inconvenience. As either of them might justify themselves in our terms, "I didn't want to get involved." The Good Samaritan put aside risk and inconvenience and became involved. In simplest moral terms, the Good Samaritan represents true philanthropy. The priest and the Levite represent not so much false philanthropy as a failure of true philanthropy.

The religious tradition says that the Good Samaritan was given a quality of compassion by God. For that to happen, one must be open to the possibility that one will find the courage to do the right thing, whatever the source or motivation. Is there a nonreligious explanation for the Good Samaritan's behavior? Is there an explanation other than that of self-interest? We want to believe that we are mature and responsible enough to do the right thing. We know that if we spend too much time calculating costs and benefits that we will immobilize ourselves, or fail to do the right thing from a simple failure of nerve.

The Good Samaritan story is part of our philanthropic tradition, I think, not because so many of us would act the way he did, but because we know in our hearts that we would

want to act that way. Learning how to do the right thing when someone else is in need is a process that begins when we are very young and that is reinforced by teaching and examples all of our lives. It is a learning process that is befogged by other claims and arguments that we should think of ourselves as Number One, and as aspiring only to be "the best" with a single-mindedness that leaves little room for anything or anyone else. Advancing and passing on philanthropic values such as the model of the Good Samaritan is a process that has been shoved aside by other claims.

The burst of legislative proposals for national service, for example, President's Bush appeals for increased voluntary service, are among the more visible signs that we may be coming to realize that a tradition of great value to our children is being lost --and that the children will suffer as a result.

At this point the evidence is more rhetorical than concrete. The Good Samaritan story reminds us most directly about the victims on our streets -- people who are homeless and hungry and children who are in peril. We hesitate, most of us, to do anything about them personally because we are afraid. The streets have become too dangerous. Fear inhibits good works.

Fear constrains the charity of those who might otherwise bring care to AIDS victims, or the generosity of those who would otherwise like to take part in a project in a deteriorating neighborhood. When the fears and tensions of race and ethnicity are added, the impulse of charity is stifled. If fear of the immediate situation constrains our individual philanthropy, many people have argued that it is also fear that motivates our collective philanthropy: fear that without philanthropy the poor and the oppressed minorities and the unemployed and the homeless will rise up and attack the rich and powerful. (We may be rich; I suspect that we are not powerful.)

The Good Samaritan story also reminds us that there are sometimes real risks in trying to help other people. If there are risks, then courage may be called for. But since the goals are to serve others, and not oneself, bravado and machismo and those other questionable masculine perversions of the virtues of honor and courage are out of place. What is needed is the quiet courage required in "the unprotected life of real encounter," as one writer put it. That quality is evident every day among those who overcome their fears and live the unprotected life.

These essays are personal statements, to some extent based on immediate experience as well as on observation and reading and reflection and discussion with others. If our experience does not validate what we are taught, sooner or later our commitment will weaken and may fail us -- we may fail ourselves as well as others -- when it is most needed. Experience in the form of the stories we tell about our lives is often insufficient to explain our behavior or what we expect of others, but theory without experience is insufficient, too. Shared experience is essential to the understanding of philanthropy.

In thinking about people who give their lives in service to others, I tend to think first in terms of the career of our eldest son. When he told us that instead of coming back to the

United States from college his year abroad in France, he was instead going to Burundi in East Africa as a volunteer for Catholic Relief services, we had two choices. We could act from our fear for his safety and try to dissuade him, or we could feel pride instead that he would want to work as a volunteer in such a place. In a sense, he had volunteered to be a Good Samaritan and our role was to try to restrain him or to encourage him to take the risk. We encouraged him. "Go," we said, "with our blessing and support."

One of the bravest people I ever knew was a conscientious objector serving as a medic in the Philippines during the last months of World War II. He never gave in to panic; he never took foolish risks; he always kept his mind on getting help to the people who were hurt. He "let himself be governed completely by the need of the man who confronted him," to paraphrase one of the commentators on the parable of the Good Samaritan. He had much opportunity by the time I met him: when another green 18-year-old replacement and I showed up to join B Company, there were only 32 men left out of a complement of 180. The medic was himself in pretty bad shape physically, as were the others. Yet none of the death and tragedy had seemed to weaken his will to serve, or to lessen his commitment to the others that depended on him.

The Good Samaritan story read as straightforward example gives a short course in responsible service to others. The Samaritan apparently asks the first ethical question, What is going on? He doesn't foolishly give the victim money and then ride on; the victim can't use money at that point. He applied First Aid (another philanthropic idea). The Samaritan then helps to get the injured man to a place where he can recover.

What if the Good Samaritan were without a mule himself? What if he were partially disabled and without the physical strength to help? What if the man's injuries were critical?

One morning two years ago I stayed at home in the morning to work on a lecture. At about noon, driving to the office, I arrived at the scene of an automobile accident seconds after it happened. Three cars were scattered about an intersection; one had apparently tried to run the light. Traffic was stopped. Some people got out of their cars and walked toward the one most seriously damaged car in the middle of the street. No one seemed injured there; the driver was getting out of the car, shaken but apparently unhurt. I stopped as I passed by the damaged second car, where I saw a young woman still behind the steering wheel. I got out and walked around to the other side; neither the door nor the window on the driver's side would open. I asked her how she was.

She said, "I think my leg is broken."

Other help arrived seconds later, including two men from a towing service truck, and just behind them, a police car. I told the policeman that the woman was injured. Thank God other help had arrived, I said to myself. I wasn't anxious to draw on my own skimpy medical background. It occurred to me that intervening in someone else's life for their benefit requires more than good will. You should know what you're doing.

A number of drivers at the scene paused and then quickly drove on. The common rationalization for their behavior would seem to come in two forms: (1) "Others are better equipped to handle this than I am," and (2) "My business is really important and I have to get on to it."

The first lesson that I drew from this is the lesson of vulnerability: two of the drivers were apparently obeying the law and minding their own business. Suddenly one of them found herself pinned behind the steering wheel, helpless, beginning to realize that she was alive but perhaps with a broken leg. Sometimes things go terribly wrong even when you are playing by the rules and minding your own business.

The second lesson from this minor automobile accident is in the nature of reciprocity in philanthropy. We are all equally vulnerable to such unpredictable and sometimes dreadful experiences. Voluntary philanthropy at its core is a response to others in such situations. The value calls for the response of the Good Samaritan even though there is not likely to be even a remote statistical connection between our action in this immediate and some later benefit. Our need for help will be remote in distance and time. When my accident occurs, somewhere else at some unpredictable time, this young woman will not be there. What I must count on instead is that someone will be there, willing and able to help, and whose help will be offered if necessary as a gift and not as an exchange.

And the third lesson is that most people will drive on, will pass to the other side of the road.

My colleague Janet Huettner pointed out to me that some recent research on motivation in philanthropy indicates that we are more likely to do the right thing if we are alone with the victim and are his only source of help than we are if others are present. The terrible indifference of the 38 witnesses to the murder of Kitty Genovese may have been no more than the easy, self-serving confidence that one of the 37 others had called the police.

IV

In the parable, the man has been robbed and can't pay for what he needs, and so the Samaritan puts the man in the care of the innkeeper long enough to get him on the way to recovery. Then the Samaritan says that he'll come back -- not to collect what is owed him by the victim but to be sure that all the innkeeper's bills are paid. And that prompts us to ask: how serious a commitment was his promise to come back? When does an act of charity end? What would happen if the Samaritan didn't return as promised? Who would pay the extra bills that would pile up if the victim's recovery took longer than expected? What if the innkeeper proved not to be trustworthy and had padded his bills? People who are street-smart often fleece those who show themselves compassionate. If the Good Samaritan was willing to put up two denarii to help this man, chances are he'd pay more when he came back.

Several other important aspects of philanthropy come to mind. For one thing, the Samaritan trusts the innkeeper to care for the victim until the victim recovers.

Philanthropy relies heavily on trust. The marketplace relies on trust, too -- especially in contracts and other formal agreements -- but all those in the marketplace are cautioned to be on their guard. Read the small print. Check references. There is evidence that we are inclined to be more trusting when we engage in philanthropy. False philanthropy is a betrayal of trust.

The role of the innkeeper (whom we will assume is also a Jew) is important for us because he represents what might be called the business interest. My sense of our common values is that we would expect the innkeeper to be trustworthy in this case, and that we would expect him to share some of the burdens of the Good Samaritan's act. The Good Samaritan, in one sense, can be thought to be acting in behalf of all of us; he is acting by a norm that we all applaud, and that we admire when we see it in ourselves. Because the Samaritan is acting for all of us, we expect others who happen into the situation to act for us, too. The innkeeper is no exception.

The most plausible reason to expect the innkeeper to take advantage of the situation and derive some righteous malice from it has already been alluded to: in the case of ethnic conflict, philanthropic values are often suppressed.

There are many Biblical stories that are harsh on the self-serving and uncharitable. To further illustrate false philanthropy the story might have related that the innkeeper bargained with the Samaritan to get three denarii rather than two, arguing that there was some doubt whether the Samaritan would return, and that two denarii might not cover his cost. One scholar explains that a denarius would be equal to a day's pay, and that bread for a day would cost one-twelfth of a denarius. We might estimate the current value of the Samaritan's gift at a hundred dollars or so. There would be a certain Dickensian quality to the story told that way -- filled with familiar images of grasping, greedy, small-minded, self-centered people indifferent to the sufferings of others and unmoved by the other people's generosity. We also know stories about those who exploit the grief and suffering of others for profit, often giving nothing in return. Some of those stories are told in a distorted way to make it easier to divide the world into Good Guys and Bad Guys.

If the first ethical question is What is going on? Then one part of the answer is that some people make a living serving people in need. It's what doctors are supposed to do, for example, and it is what some business people do. The philanthropic issue arises when the financial needs of those expected to offer the service cause them to deny it to someone because of an inability to pay.

Assume that the innkeeper does nothing to aid the victim's recovery but that the victim recovers quickly, anyway. The Samaritan returns. The Samaritan doesn't shift part of the burden to the innkeeper; the obligation was taken as the Samaritan's own. The victim expresses his appreciation to the Samaritan and to the innkeeper, not knowing the details of the arrangement, assuming that the innkeeper had also helped in his recovery or had shared the costs. The innkeeper, whose own cost and inconvenience were in fact nothing, and the Samaritan, whose generosity includes both his time and his money, receive equal praise from the victim. What should the Samaritan do? Our image of good people is that

they should be consistently good. The Samaritan is a dignified figure, a high-minded person. He set out to help the victim for the victim's sake, not for his own -- he sought neither reward nor praise nor gratitude. That being the case, it would be demeaning for him to try to sort out the misunderstanding, even if only to expose the innkeeper as a hypocrite.

I was prompted to pursue this digression because of a comment recently from a development officer of a church. He repeated the professional wisdom that everyone gets credit for a gift, and that no single individual should claim credit. Since fund raising takes place in the real world, what happens when someone does claim credit, and unjustifiably so? What happens if that someone is a prominent volunteer or contributor or even trustee?

The world of philanthropy usually involves an inescapable tension between its lofty principles and the sometimes painful reality in which those principles must be advanced.

The story raises the question of what the victim owes, and to whom. Gratitude to the Good Samaritan, certainly. If the victim had enough resources to be considered worthy of robbery, presumably the victim might be able to repay the Samaritan the two denarii. As far as we know, however, the Samaritan didn't make repayment a condition. Imagine that the Good Samaritan returned in due time and found the victim on the road to recovery, and with his wife at this side. The victim offers to repay the two denarii. The Good Samaritan might decline to accept repayment and reply, consistent with the philanthropic value of the story, "Go and do likewise."

Does the innkeeper have a right to a reasonable profit for his efforts or would we expect him to be content with breaking even? Is the innkeeper an "interested party," caught in this act of mercy whether he wants to be or not? One might imagine a situation in which the innkeeper searches the clothing of the victim for a credit card or the address of a wealthy neighbor or a bank reference. Just in case. The victim can also be thought of as a customer -- if there is no free lunch, then there is no free room at the inn. Someone will have to pay, and pay the going rate. It is easy to be generous with other people's money, but it is ethically necessary to consider them as having rights, too. On the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (or from midtown Manhattan to the South Bronx), victims may be frequent, as are those coming to the emergency rooms of inner city hospitals. At some point hospitality can no longer be sustained.

This dimension of the Good Samaritan parable brings in the notion of "corporate social responsibility." To what extent do businesses in our large cities share the responsibility for local victims who may not even be customers? In business, how does one answer the question, Who is my neighbor?

There are three principals in the parable: the thieves, the victim, and the Samaritan. In the background are the two cowardly priests and the innkeeper, surrogates for the rest of us. Should they bear part of the cost?

This new interpretation of the Good Samaritan story -- new for me, at any rate -- presses the other perspective of philanthropy, that of the person in need. The core of philanthropy is the relationship between those in need and those with resources. It also involves others: agents and passersby. The agents may seek something for themselves; the innkeeper might make a good living off the victims along the road, for example. Another agent might decide that what the community needs is a shelter for travelers who find themselves victimized. Still another agent might argue instead that what is needed is prevention of this continuing carnage on the road, and then organize a campaign to raise taxes to add mobile police units. Another agent might appear whose concern is for the families of the victims: who will tell the family that the victim needs help, where he is, and how he's coming along?

What about the thieves? Thinking about this case in contemporary terms, it is not hard to imagine the questions that must be answered. If the thieves are apprehended, what should be done with them? What if the processes of justice reveal that they were in fact guilty of assault and robbery (we might learn that there were several witnesses)? The first issue will be that of punishment. Should the thieves be sent to jail? If so, is there room for them in the jail? Perhaps this was first offense. Perhaps the thieves were young hoodlums on drugs. Can they be held responsible for their behavior when they were victims themselves of a drug pusher? In addition to the police and the courts and the penal system, there are "philanthropists" on all sides of this issues. There are those who organize to help the victims and their families; there are those whose goal is to rescue thieves from a life of crime; there are still others whose call is not for compassion or for rehabilitation but for retribution.

One reason that this retelling of the Good Samaritan story is so useful is that it tests so many of our assumptions and raises so many questions. Fund raisers tell us, for example, that the strongest motivation for someone to help another is the ability to put oneself imaginatively in the place of the other. The usual interpretation is that we will want to help someone else in trouble if we can anticipate that we might need help ourselves someday. It is as if we were all engaged in some variation of a chain letter, piling up reserves of good will that we will be able to call on when the day of crisis comes for us. Another way of thinking about the need of the other is not reciprocal at all, even indirectly. It is the simple and powerful expression of the feeling of shared suffering and sense of vulnerability: "I know how you feel; I've been there." Without some experience of suffering, even of suffering of a different kind, it is difficult to sustain compassion. (The very word "compassion" means to "suffer with" another.) The moral imagination enables us to draw on our experience for analogies that bridge our differences to a common humanity.

Maimonides said that the highest form of charity is to make someone a loan or take him into your business. The victim and the Good Samaritan presumably don't need such help. The thieves need it. The parable is not about the thieves, but over the centuries we have become concerned with preventing robbery and assault and in finding ways to change the behavior of those who commit such crimes. The moral imagination is always at work, challenging us. How many of us would be prepared to take a former thief into our business? How many of us would trust a business that employed known ex-thieves?

The concern for criminals and their victims reflects the continuing process of philanthropic development. Things that were not attended to in the past enlist volunteers today. Volunteers work with the families of those in prison. Volunteers work with the prisoners themselves, and help them find jobs once they have been released. Organizations are formed to recruit and train volunteers to work with victims and their families. The intervening experience that we take for granted is that the thieves will have paid for their crime, either by serving time in prison or by engaging in community service. Should philanthropic organizations take the lead in offering employment to ex-convicts? We still have hopes for rehabilitation, but it appears that the public need for prisons, for supervision of present and former convicts, and for rehabilitation and training and employment far exceeds the resources we are willing to commit to them.

The resources used for the thieves cannot also be used for the victims. And so the victims have organized their own advocacy groups, and volunteers work with the families to console them. Volunteers help victims to learn how to regain the use of their muscles and limbs that have been injured in the attack. Volunteers help victims through the recovery from the trauma of the experience, and help them get back to work.

Much of what we learn about these problems comes from people who are voluntarily engaged in bringing them to our attention. We might prefer to remain comfortably ignorant of the suffering of others whom we don't know: some people are sure to disturb our reverie.

Where do your own sympathies lie? How do you decide?

We are all familiar with the need to give advice. For example, a passing Good Samaritan of the scientific philanthropy school might use the occasion to give a gentle lecture while assisting the victim. "Next time," he might say, "take a different road." He might even offer more practical advice: "When you come into a neighborhood like this, don't come alone. If you have to come alone, come armed." If the Good Samaritan were a native New Yorker, advising a recent victim of a mugging, he might give these additional points of advice: Never go into an unlighted area. Always carry at least \$40 in cash. Never try to argue or reason with muggers, much less resist them physically. And never, never (my New York friend told me) go back to confront your attackers to point out the error of their ways.

The modern Samaritan might draw from popular psychology and advise the victim that he would have to pay for the service. One school of philanthropy holds that people should

not be encouraged to behave in ways that make them dependent on others. In order to discourage the victim from being a victim a second time, and to heed the advice to stay off the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, the Samaritan might consider the payment to the innkeeper a loan and ask the victim to repay it. "Don't make a habit of it," seems to be gratuitous advice in this case, but we've all been gratuitous at times. We've also voiced the warning that "I'll help you this time, but no more." We expect people to learn from their misfortune, just as children do. It tests our patience and our generosity to respond again and again to people who never seem able to make it on their own. A century ago, liberals and conservatives both believed that most of the people in need were in that condition through their own weakness and failure. That thread persists throughout the modern history of philanthropy. Good Samaritanism is all right in some circumstances, but prevention is the best answer. People have to be taught to be careful. People have to be encouraged or even compelled to take care of themselves.

What if the victim were found to be drunk, and dressed in a way that indicated that he was one of the hard-core vagrants that show up on our streets? What if we discovered that the victim was still wearing his robe, apparently on the way home from a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan? Are there some people who aren't worth helping? Would your list and mine of the undeserving be the same list? In some situations, true philanthropy would teach us, every other human being qualifies as neighbor.

The perspective we customarily bring to the philanthropic relationship is our own. We see ourselves as those who at least have the choice of being the Good Samaritan. Most of us don't come to learn more about philanthropy because we are victims of some sort. Philanthropy is about helping others, not about seeking help for ourselves. At least, that's what true philanthropy is about. Yet being a victim, knowing pain and suffering and despair, is often the experience that causes us to think philanthropically.

In order to help others, we must know the facts: facts about the situation, about the victim, about our own capability and character, about other people's responsibilities, and about the likely consequences of our own action or inaction. Yet in some of the most important situations in our lives we will have neither the time nor the information. We will have to be prepared by our past experience. Our rough values rather than our precise calculations will guide us.

Sometimes we allow for the possibility that we will find ourselves in the place of the victim, dependent on others, perhaps ashamed by our dependence, and yet desperate. It is usually hardest to feel compassion for a victim who is bitterly resentful of being rescued. From the victim's perspective appreciation and gratitude are often bile rather than honey in the mouth.

Most of our philanthropic lives are not spent at these extremes of need and emotion. But strong cases help us to see in sharper relief the values and practices and attitudes and behaviors that are the substance of philanthropy in action. The victim in the Good Samaritan story might well be the anonymous young man lying in the emergency room of a hospital, brought there by a stranger. We can understand that the medical treatment

needed could be very costly, even involving expensive equipment that requires specialists to control. If we knew the person involved, we can readily imagine our reaction. Were we close enough to him we might be ready to accept financial sacrifice to save his life or to reduce the likelihood of permanent injury. We might well feel outrage if we learned that he wasn't treated adequately because of doubts about his ability to pay.

We move from compassion for a particular individual whom we know to a concern for individuals whom we don't know to concern for a category of individuals whom we don't know. Where does individual responsibility stop and social justice begin?

VII

The argument thus far has been couched in terms of social need in crisis. My conviction is that the core of our philanthropic tradition began with core values such as those embedded in the parable of the Good Samaritan (and began long before the Christian era, of course). Over the centuries we have gradually expanded the tradition to give other values important place. For most individuals, charity remains the heart of philanthropy; that is perhaps reflected in the dominant place of organized religion as the recipient of our gifts and our service.

For most individuals it is also true that there is more to life than acts of charity. The moral imagination seems to lead us from immediate acts of mercy to acts of rehabilitation to education in its various forms as acts of prevention to efforts to improve things, even to explore new ways to enjoy life that are remote from charity, even remote from ideas of justice. Maslow's hierarchy of needs comes to mind: we rise to higher levels of awareness and understanding but the basic needs never completely go away.

Modern American philanthropy has begun to change those ancient priorities in two ways: philanthropic foundations have played a path breaking role in seeking out the underlying causes of social problems and developing solutions and reforms. Foundations and corporations have also become major influences in supporting the nonreligious part of the agenda: education, the arts, scientific research. At the source, however, where it all begins and where we find the core values that keep it all alive, is individual charity.

If there is a social crisis, however -- and I think there is a case to be made that there is -- it is a crisis not of our failures to provide adequate financial support to our universities or our research centers or our cultural institutions. It is not even a crisis of money. It is a spiritual crisis, a weakening or loss of core values such as those captured in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is not our heads or even our pocketbooks that we should be most concerned about, but our hearts. Compassion begets community.