

Letter To World Citizens

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“Space - the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. It's continuing mission, to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before.”

I admit it; I'm a Trekkie. It started of course many years ago with Captain Kirk, “Bones,” “Spock,” “Scotty” and the rest of the crew of the Starship Enterprise. Watching the Enterprise night after night impulsing or warping its way through the heavenly skies, that intrepid crew meeting and coping with strange, alien races, humanoid and otherwise, as a World Citizen I shared with delight in its mission of exploring “the final frontier.” Still do.

But in that engrossing glimpse into the 24th century universe, we Trekkies cannot but be acutely conscious that we are still woefully earthbound, only our minds and our hearts transported through the magic of television to the “meta-vision” world - beyond the insignificant and petty earthly “frontiers” of the 20th century, beyond the meaningless definitions and identities, surely beyond provincial nationalism and exclusive religion.

We are concerned when the wise and suave (and often piqued) Captain Jean-Luc Picard is confronted with the “Prime Directive” vs. the humane desire to aid other sentient beings in distress. We admire beautiful, perceptive Counselor Deanna Troi's extraordinary insight to human and other species foibles and contradictions as she calmly personifies peace-keeping. And Lt. Commander Data! If only we had his memory and his stability, his lightning-quick absorption of datum, his incredible strength. Emotionless, (though he acts a mean Sherlock Holmes) he seems almost a Christlike figure in his sheer reasoning power. Then Jordie, fun-loving, enthusiastic, loyal, Lt. Commander LaForge, blind at birth yet all-seeing, that engineering wizard calmly using technical terms none of us poor, backward 20th century nerds can begin to understand. We sympathize with him in his loneliness. Commander William Riker, “No. 1,” urbane, courageous, dependable and devoted; humane and beautiful Dr. Beverly Crusher, whose medical know-how and skills subtly expose today's vaunted ignorance; adventurous, brilliant and sometimes mischievous Ensign Wesley Crusher, representing the ever-optimistic youth of the world; then warrior, stoic, laconic, security chief, Lt. Worf, the Klingan, caught between species cultures yet rock solid in his loyalty to Star Fleet Command, and finally the enigmatic Quinan, the ancient one, prescient, the eternal Shaman, with knowledge beyond human ken....all are friends and precious daily companions.

What is the attraction? Not only for me, but for millions. Star Trek is obviously a powerful one world, one humanity metaphor designed to raise our consciousness to global heights, nay, to cosmic heights using the mass medium of television, each character carefully crafted to fit into a congruent whole, a system or “symphony” of specialists playing music together on a cosmic scale.

Marshall McLuhan wrote that the media itself was “the message.” By that he meant that the media and especially television finally mirrored humanity to humanity AND to each viewer all over the world. To grasp the significance of this communication breakthrough, consider only how all our cells are **directly** connected to our brain through our nervous system. With a global “nervous system” - a technosphere - our species finally has instant feed-back.

True, the TV media broadcasts much trash, violence, and sex, as well as uplifting programs: concerts, nature, sports, etc. But as Time Magazine recognized by nominating Ted Turner as “Man of the Year” for his CNN World Network, the technosphere is already in place and serving us all.

The connection between television and world citizenship is therefore superbly exemplified by programs like Star Trek where the ubiquitous media and the macrocosmic messages happily coincide.

I have met presidents, prime ministers, kings and queens, holy men, movie and stage stars in my years on the road. But I was particularly thrilled to meet Levar Burton, (Jordie LaForge), on the Paramount Lot last month on a book-selling tour of the West coast. He was delighted to receive a World Passport and promised that he would not leave the planet without it! I also presented my book, Passport To Freedom, to him. In the course of our conversation, he affirmed that he also regarded Star Trek as a powerful educational tool. I left application forms with him for the entire Enterprise Crew. (If any read these words, our WSA staff, most of whom are also Trekkies, are eagerly ready to process your World Passports also).

May the Starship Enterprise continue to deliver its prophetic and inspiring message to us Earthlings so that one day, our home planet at last rendered peaceful, we humans merit taking our rightful place in the Cosmic Order.

P.S. Maybe the “final frontier” is in reality only coming home!
