

Unitarian Church Service Script

Title: Battlestar Galactica's Big Question: Is Humanity Worth Saving?

Date: Sunday, August 30, 2009

Speaker: Lyla Miklos

Service Leader: Val Ramsay

Music: Pamela Marques, Anne Marie Pavlov, Nathalie Pasche, Matthew Badal-Badalian, Alexa Badal-Badalian, and Lyla Miklos

Readers: John Mitchell, Tim Versteeg, Lee Desjardins, and Mel Rutherford

1. OVERTURE

[The sound crew will play orchestral score selections from the Battlestar Galactica soundtrack by Bear McCreary before the service starts.]

2. BELL

VAL: Please quietly take your seats and enjoy our Gathering Music. Let us now bring our minds and hearts into focus as we worship together this morning.

3. GATHERING MUSIC

All Along The Watchtower by Bob Dylan

Anne Marie Pavlov (Vocals and Guitar)

ANNE MARIE: *"There must be some way out of here," said the joker to the thief. "There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief. Businessmen, they drink my wine. Plowmen dig my earth. None of them along the line know what any of it is worth."*

"No reason to get excited," the thief, he kindly spoke, "There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke. But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate. So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late."

All along the watchtower, princes kept the view, while all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too. Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl, two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.

4. WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

VAL: Good Morning! Welcome to the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton. Whoever you are, whomever you love, wherever you are in your search for meaning, today you are the people of this congregation, and you are welcome in this house of worship.

My name is Val Ramsay. I have been a member of this church for over 30 years and will be your service leader this morning.

Our announcements are a celebration of all the joyous work we do for this place we all love and cherish.

[Read announcements.]

We are blessed in this congregation with wonderful music and today is no exception. Our Music Ministry today will be provided by Anne-Marie Pavlov, Pamela Marques, Nathalie Pasche, and Lyla Miklos.

If you have a Joy or Sorrow you would like shared with the congregation during today's service please write it out and leave it on the table by the east Sanctuary doors before the Offertory Music ends.

This service is also piped into the lobby where there are comfortable chairs for you and your children if you have to step out of the sanctuary to feel more comfortable, but would still like to hear the service.

After our worship please join our Fellowship in the lobby.

Our speaker today is Lyla Miklos. Lyla has been a part of the Hamilton First community for nearly a decade and is the Co-Chair of our Church Services Committee. Lyla is a publicist, activist, writer, broadcaster, and performer. Her passion for pop culture has inspired her to explore from our pulpit the deeper spiritual messages found in Star Trek, Wonder Woman, Buffy, Xena, Lost, and Harry Potter. Her sermon this morning is entitled "Battlestar Galactica's Big Question: Is Humanity Worth Saving?".

Battlestar Galactica was originally a short-lived Sci-Fi TV series first conceived by Glen Larson in 1978. The show followed the human survivors of a genocide caused by a robotic alien race called the Cylons in a galaxy far away in a world much like our own. In 2003 television producers Ronald D. Moore and David Eick decided to launch a re-imagining of Battlestar Galactica. This time the cause of humanity's genocide is man's own creation. Their former robotic slave race - The Cylons. After the first Cylon War, Humans and Cylons, live in relative peace for nearly 50 years. Until the Cylons launch a surprise attack which results in a nuclear holocaust that nearly annihilates the entire human race. Humanity is reduced to just a few thousand souls living on a rag tag collection of space ships. While fighting for survival and clinging on to hope the remaining humans search the universe for their new home. A planet their sacred texts tell them their ancestors originated from – Earth.

5. CHALICE LIGHTING/OPENING WORDS

**From the Battlestar Galactica Miniseries (2003) by Ronald D. Moore
[Reader: John Mitchell]**

VAL: The Unitarian Universalists ritual of lighting the chalice in our worship services marks our entry into sacred space.

I would like to ask Lyla Miklos to light our chalice. As Lyla lights our chalice John Mitchell will read today's Opening Words.

Our opening words come from the 2003 Battlestar Galactica Miniseries. This is a speech Commander William Adama gives at the decommissioning ceremony of his ship – The Galactica – just before the Cylons strike.

Adama: *Why are we as a people worth saving?*

Look at us. We tell ourselves we're noble, intelligent creatures. Children of the Lords of Kobol. But we'll still let people go to bed hungry because it costs too much to feed the poor. We still commit murder for greed or spite or jealousy and we visit all of our sins upon our children.

We refuse to take responsibility for what we've done. Like we did with the Cylons. We decided to play god. Create life. And when that life turned against us, we comforted ourselves in the knowledge that it wasn't really our fault, not really. It was the Cylons that were flawed.

But the truth is, we're the flawed creation. We're the ones that tried to manufacture life and make it serve us.

But you don't play God and then wipe your hands of what you've created. Sooner or later the day comes when you can't hide from what you've done anymore.

6. PRELUDE

Hello by Amy Lee, Ben Moody and David Hodges

Pamela Marques (Vocals and Piano) and Nathalie Pasche (Vocals and Violin)

VAL: Our Music Ministers will now share with us our Prelude.

PAM: *Playground school bell rings again
Rain clouds come to play again
Has no one told you she's not breathing?
Hello I'm your mind giving you someone to talk to
Hello*

*If I smile and don't believe
Soon I know I'll wake from this dream
Don't try to fix me, I'm not broken
Hello I am the lie living for you so you can hide
Don't cry*

*Suddenly I know I'm not sleeping
Hello I'm still here
All that's left of yesterday*

7. READING

**From the Battlestar Galactica episode "Crossroads – Part 2" by Mark Verheiden
[Reader: Tim Versteeg]**

VAL: Tim Versteeg will give our reading this morning, which comes from the Battlestar Galactica episode "Crossroads – Part 2". Our reading is taken from a speech Lee Adama makes when he takes the stand at the trial of former President Gaius Baltar, who has been charged with war crimes.

Lee: *The President issued a blanket pardon. They were all forgiven. No questions asked.*

*Colonel Tigh. Colonel Tigh used suicide bombers, killed dozens of people. Forgiven.
Lieutenant Agathon and Chief Tyrol. They murdered an officer on the Pegasus. Forgiven. The
Admiral? The Admiral instituted a military coup d'etat against the President. Forgiven.*

*And me? Well, where do I begin? I shot down a civilian passenger ship, the Olympic Carrier.
Over a thousand people on board. Forgiven. I raised my weapon to a superior officer,
committed an act of mutiny. Forgiven.*

And then on the very day when Baltar surrendered to those Cylons, I, as Commander of Pegasus, jumped away. I left everybody on that planet alone, undefended, for months!

I even tried to persuade the Admiral never to return. To abandon you all there for good. If I'd had my way, nobody would've made it off that planet.

I'm the coward. I'm the traitor. I'm forgiven.

I'd say we're very forgiving of mistakes. We make our own laws now, our own justice.

We've been pretty creative at finding ways to let people off the hook for everything from theft to murder. And we've had to be.

Because... Because we're not a civilization anymore. We are a gang. And we're on the run. And we have to fight to survive. We have to break rules. We have to bend laws. We have to improvise.

But not this time, no. Not this time. Not for Gaius Baltar. No. You, you have to die. You have to die, because... Well, because we don't like you very much. Because you're arrogant. Because you're weak. Because you're a coward. And we the mob, we want to throw you out the airlock because you didn't stand up to the Cylons, and get yourself killed in the process. That's justice now.

You should've been killed back on New Caprica, but since you had the temerity to live, we're gonna execute you now. That's justice!

This case... This case is built on emotion. on anger, bitterness, vengeance. But most of all, it is built on shame. It's about the shame of what we did to ourselves back on that planet. And it's about the guilt of those of us who ran away. Who ran away. And we are trying to dump all that guilt and all that shame onto one man, and then flush him out the airlock and hope that that just gets rid of it all. So that we can live with ourselves. But that won't work. That won't work. That's not justice. Not to me. Not to me.

8. OFFERTORY WORDS

From The Battlestar Galactica episode "Home – Part 2" by Ronald D. Moore

VAL: Our offering is a reminder of the spirit of generosity that is at the heart of our religious community. In sharing our financial resources we ensure the continued existence of our church. Your financial contributions make a difference. We thank you for giving as generously as you are able.

Please join me in reading together our offertory words, which can be found in your order of service. They come from the Battlestar Galactica episode "Home – Part 2".

ALL: *Our strength and our only hope as a people, is to remain undivided. We haven't always done all we could to insure that. Many people believe that the scriptures, the letters from the gods, will lead us to salvation. Maybe they will. But "the gods shall lift those who lift each other".*

9. OFFERTORY MUSIC

Still by Alanis Morissette

Lyla Miklos (Vocals), Pamela Marques (Piano and Vocals), Anne Marie Pavlov (Guitar and Vocals), and Nathalie Pasche (Vocals and Percussion)

VAL: We will now prepare to receive our offering while we listen to our Offertory Music.

LYLA: *I am the harm which you inflict
I am your brilliance and frustration
I'm the nuclear bombs if they're to hit
I'm your immaturity and your indignance*

*I am your misfits and your praised
I am your doubt and your conviction
I am your charity and your rape
I am your grasping and expectation*

*I see you averting your glances
I see you cheering on the war
I see you ignoring your children
And I love you still
And I love you still*

*I am your joy and your regret
I am your fury and your elation
I am your yearning and your sweat
I am your faithless and your religion*

*I see you altering history
I see you abusing the land
I see you and your selective amnesia
And I love you still
And I love you still*

*I am your tragedy and your fortune
I am your crisis and delight
I am your profits and your prophets
I am your art, I am your bytes
I am your death and your decisions
I am your passion and your plights
I am your sickness and convalescence
I am your weapons and your light*

*I see you holding your grudges
I see you gunning them down
I see you silencing your sisters
And I love you still
And I love you still*

*I see you lie to your country
I see you forcing them out
I see you blaming each other
And I love you still
And I love you still*

10. MEDIATION IN WORDS

From the Battlestar Galactica episode "Faith" by Seamus Kevin Fahey

[Reader: Lee Desjardins]

VAL: This is our time as a church community to come together to celebrate and grieve with our fellow congregants, supporting each other through both our struggles and our victories. This time in our worship is when we embrace the silence to reflect on the words and music we hear.

I have some Joys and Sorrows to share with you today.

[Read written joys and sorrows.]

After the meditation in words, we will join together in silence and, after the silence, during the musical meditation, you are invited to come forward, and light a candle.

I kindly ask Lee Desjardins to come forward to give us our meditative reading. Our reading comes from the Battlestar Galactica episode "Faith". It is a conversation between President Laura Roslin and fellow cancer patient Emily Kowalski.

Emily: *I had an experience that made me rethink all my preconceptions. It happened the night after Doctor Cottle told me that my cancer had spread to my liver and I'd never be leaving this place. I was on a ferry crossing a river, and as we were approaching the other side I saw all these people standing on the bank. And we got closer, and I recognized them. My parents. My sister Kathy, who died when I was twelve. My husband, my girls. I... I was scared for a moment. You know, how is this happening? But then I... I felt it. This ... presence. Hovering all around me. Warm. Loving, and... It said, "Don't be scared, Emily. I'm with you. Hold my hand and we'll cross over together." Maybe Baltar's stumbled onto something. You know, he talks about the river that separates our world from the next. That... That there's more to this existence than we can see with our naked eye. There's a power that we can't begin to understand.*

Roslin: *But this God that Baltar refers to, it is the Cylon God. You know that, don't you?*

Emily: *If He's the one and true God, He belongs to all of us. Otherwise, He's not much of a God, is He?*

Roslin: *Exactly. He isn't much of a God. He's a fantasy.*

Emily: *Oh, Laura. And the Lords of Kobol are real? Reigning from a metaphysical mountaintop in those silly outfits? Zeus handing out fates out of an urn like...like they were lottery tickets. You're gonna work on a tylium ship, you're gonna be an Admiral, your family's gonna be evaporated in an attack on the Colonies, but you'll survive for three more years in a moldy compartment on a freighter till your body starts to eat itself up alive. Those are the Gods that you worship? Capricious, vindictive?*

Roslin: *But they're not meant to be taken literally. They're metaphors, Emily.*

Emily: *I don't need metaphors. I need answers.*

Roslin: *You're like my mother. She wasn't satisfied with metaphors either. She was convinced that Aphrodite herself was gonna swoop her away when she died. And she believed it. Even after the doloxan and the radiation failed to stop her cancer. She was a teacher, she was ...*

Oh, she was something to behold. ... In the head of a classroom, and ... And her students. Her students loved her. They... They'd walk through fire for her. And then you see this woman who seemed so eternal, she ... withered away, and I find myself having to change her diaper because she couldn't even... And at the moment she died, there was no gleaming fields of Elysium stretched out before her, there was this... Dark, black abyss. And she was just terrified. She was so scared... I'm sorry...

Emily: *Laura. Laura, you were terrified. You saw only darkness. You can't possibly know what your mother experienced. You're, you're still searching.*

11. MEDITATION IN SILENCE

[Wait one minute. Then indicate to the Musicians that they may begin.]

12. MEDITATION IN MUSIC

Cold Water by Damien Rice

Anne Marie Pavlov (Vocals and Guitar), Pamela Marques (Vocals and Piano), Lyla Miklos (Vocals and Percussion), and Nathalie Pasche (Vocals and Violin)

ANNE MARIE: *cold cold water surrounds me now
and all i've got is your hand
lord can you hear me now?
or am i lost?*

PAM: *no one's daughter allow me that
and i can't let go of your hand
lord, can you hear me now?
or am i lost?*

LYLA: *don't you know i love you
and i always have
hallelujah*

ANNE MARIE, PAM, LYLA AND NATHALIE: *will you come with me?
cold cold water surrounds me now
and all i've got is your hand
lord.. can you hear me?
or am i lost?*

13. ONE LAST CANDLE

[Light the "Last Candle"]

VAL: I lit one last candle for all those joys and sorrows, which remain in our hearts until the time comes to speak them aloud. Whatever our level of sharing, may this community be a blessing and support to us all.

14. UNISON WORDS OF SUPPORT

From the Battlestar Galactica episode "The Hub" by Jane Espenson

VAL: Please join me in reading together our unison words of support, which are taken from the Battlestar Galactica episode "The Hub". They can be found in your order of service.

ALL: *The harder it is to recognize someone's right to draw breath, the more crucial it is. If humanity is going to prove itself worthy of surviving, it can't do it on a case-by-case basis. A bad man feels his death just as keenly as a good man.*

15. HYMN #205 – Amazing Grace (John Newton & Virginia Harmony)

VAL: Please stand if you are able and let us join together in worship by singing hymn number #205 from your gray hymnal entitled “Amazing Grace”.

ALL: *Amazing grace!
How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fear relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed*

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.*

*When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we'd first begun*

16. SERMON: Battlestar Galactica's Big Question: Is Humanity Worth Saving?

LYLA: Is Humanity worth saving?

I knew that it was Battlestar Galactica's BIG QUESTION but I didn't know the answer to the question when I submitted my service proposal.

All summer I have been fixated on this question.

This very daunting question.

When I began, the only answers I could find to this question were negative ones.

A conversation from the 2003 Miniseries between Adama, Commander of the Battlestar Galactica, and Leoben, a Cylon designed to look human, kept replaying in my mind.

LEOBEN: Suspicion and distrust. That's how you live your life, right? Never trusting your fellow man. Sounds like a sad state of affairs to me.

ADAMA: I've learned to live with it.

LEOBEN: Amazing what a man will learn to live with isn't it? Suspicion, distrust, war, hatred,

jealousy, revenge, cruelty, sadism -- a man can get used to anything.

ADAMA: You're a scavenger/philosopher I take it.

LEOBEN: Just an observer of human nature. A man in my line of work tends to see things that don't get mentioned in polite society. You see people at their worst, their most desperate. Humanity isn't a pretty race when you get right down to it. We're never more than one step away from beating each other with clubs like savages fighting over a scrap of meat.

(beat)

You know, we probably deserve what's happened to us. The Cylons might be God's retribution for our many sins.

ADAMA: Maybe they are. Or maybe they're just a penance we have to endure.

LEOBEN: Hubris. That's Man's greatest flaw. His belief that he and he alone is chosen of God. That only Man has a soul. But what if God decided he'd made a mistake? What if he decided that Man was a flawed and imperfect creature? What if he decided to give souls to another creature?

(beat)

Like the Cylons.

ADAMA: Somehow, I doubt that.

LEOBEN: Why? Because they're different than us? Because they're the outsiders.

ADAMA: Because God didn't create the Cylons. We did. And I'm pretty sure we didn't include a soul in their programming.

LEOBEN: But what if they do now? What if they've changed in the last four decades?

ADAMA: Changed into what?

LEOBEN: People. What if they've developed a culture, a society, an entire way of life?

ADAMA: You mean what if they're imitating a culture, a society, a way of life. In the end, they're still just devices. Things. Pieces of technology that've gotten out of control. They're not people.

LEOBEN: You're not even interested in knowing the truth are you?

ADAMA: Let me tell you something. After today -- after using nuclear weapons against defenseless civilians, after murdering people by the millions -- I don't give a damn who the Cylons are now or what the "truth" is about their souls. All I know is that they're murderers and killers and they're trying to destroy us.

(beat)

So today's gonna be the first day of a new war. And this time we're going to finish the job. No

armistice, no peace treaty, no mercy. This time we track them down and kill them. All of them. Until there's not one single Cylon left alive in the universe. And if God has a problem with that, he can sort it out on Judgment Day.

(long beat)

LEOBEN: And that's why God wants the Cylons to destroy mankind. Because as long as there's a human race, there's going to be a man out there like you. I don't think the Cylons hate you, Adama... I think they fear you... 1.

Welcome to the world of Battlestar Galactica folks!

Star Trek's humanistic hope for the future has been thrown out the air lock.

Instead of showing us as we hope to be we are shown as we are.

I kept thinking about what Rev. Brock had told us in June while preparing this service. That inspiring services answer three questions: Is there hope? Is there love? And is there something to believe in that is bigger than ourselves?

The more I delved into the question is Humanity worth saving the more and more my answers to the questions Rev. Brock posed were NO. Open the newspaper. Watch the news. Tune into the radio. Log on to the web.

Over and over again we are confronted with images and stories and sounds of violence and hate committed by fellow human beings.

Humanity seem to live in a perpetual state of conflict where when all else fails we will grab a sword and fight for family, home, country, politics, religion, ideals, . . . and on it goes. We have such a predisposition as a species towards using violence to solve our problems it seems to be almost ingrained into our DNA.

I watched the Steven Spielberg film **MUNICH** over the summer. Based on true events it follows a black ops assassination team sanctioned by then Israeli Prime Minister Golda Mier to seek revenge on the Terrorists behind the murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Golda makes the decision to abandon the ideals of her faith and conscious by seeking vengeance against those who harmed her people. In the film she states: "Every civilization finds it necessary to negotiate compromises with its own values. Forget peace for now. We have to show them we're strong." 2.

At first the men assigned to this task find it very hard to kill their fellow man no matter how evil their government have told them these people are. The taking of a human life takes away a little piece of theirs too. But with each murder their humanity slowly starts to shed away until they are so desensitized to the violence they no longer have any sense of respect for those they kill or themselves.

Two of the Israeli assassins argue at one point in the film . . .

AVNER: Unless we learn to act like them we will never defeat them.

ROBERT: We act like them all the time. Do you think the Palestinians invented bloodshed? We are supposed to be righteous. That's a beautiful thing. And we're losing it. If I lose that, that's everything. That's my soul. ³

Avner the head of the Israeli assassination team concludes by the film's end that all the terrorists they have eliminated have been replaced by others who are even more evil, desperate and violent than the ones they killed. What was the point? Violence simply begets more violence. Hate and vengeance leads to more hate and more vengeance seekers.

Canadian writer Deborah Ellis edited and compiled a book entitled **THREE WISHES: PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI CHILDREN SPEAK**.

In the introduction to her book she writes . . .

"The war in the Middle East has been going on for so long, and in so many forms, that it often seems as if it will continue forever. But war, like almost everything else humans do, is a choice. Creating weapons is a choice. Allowing a child to go hungry or to drink poisoned water is a choice. Sitting on the sidelines and doing nothing to stop something that's wrong is a choice." ⁴

Here are some interviews from her book . . .

Danielle an eight-year-old Israeli girl says, "I don't know why the Palestinians are so angry with us. We're nice people. I don't know any Palestinians. If I could meet a Palestinian girl my age, we could play together. That way she could see that I'm nice and friendly and she won't want to blow me up." ⁵

Hakim a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy who has both his legs in casts due to gunshot wounds inflicted on him by Israeli soldiers says, "I don't know any Israelis. I don't want to know any. They are not the same as me. They only care about killing. The grown-ups value their own children, but they think everyone else's children have no value. My three wishes? I have only one wish. To get well soon, so I can go back to fighting the Israelis." ⁶

Asif a fifteen-year-old Jewish boy says, "Some people use God as an easy way to explain things. They say, "This is what God wants us to do," like "God wants us to fight this war," "God wants us to kill these people", and "God is on our side". It's an easy way to say "I'm not responsible for what I do." If you decide to do something, you have to live with the consequences, not God." ⁷

Ronald D. Moore and David Eick's re-imagining of Battlestar Galactica was created in the political and cultural climate of a post 9/11 America. An America now filled with a crushing sense of doubt about their place in our global community.

One year after 9/11 the CBC had an entire day of programming dedicated to the anniversary. Multiple documentaries and interviews were aired. One of the most revealing moments was in the documentary **UNTOLD STORIES: CANADA ON SEPTEMBER 11TH**. Then Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien talked about how he responded to the crisis. He said something that stayed with me for some time to come.

Reflecting on the privilege and power we have in the West, he said "You cannot exercise your powers to the point of humiliation for the others. And that is what the Western world – not only the Americans, the Western world – has to realize. Because they are human beings, too. When you're powerful like you are, you guys, this is the time to be nice," The Prime Minister

also said that if the gap between rich and poor continues to grow, there will be "long-term consequences" within a few decades. "And necessarily, we're looked upon as being arrogant, self-satisfied, greedy and with no limits. And the 11th of September is an occasion for me to realize it even more". 8.

Chretein got a lot of flack for his comments, but his comments were surprisingly on point. When you are the most powerful nation on the globe it behooves you to not act like the schoolyard bully of planet Earth.

The hardest question to ask after 9/11 was WHY, because the answers ultimately kept leading right back to us and that made it sting even more.

What Battlestar Galactica kept saying over and over again is that we are the Other we are the Cylons.

Now, I don't want everyone to slit their wrists after my service and see nothing but a black abyss when they think about humanity's future. I needed to be able to answer this question – Is Humanity Worth Saving? - with a resounding YES. So all summer everywhere I went I'd ask friends that question. I watch movies and theatre while thinking about that question. I'd listen to music and read books while pondering that question.

For example, on stage at the Shaw Festival this summer I saw Stephen Sondheim's SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE. The musical explores the role of the artist and the power of art. In the poignant song MOVE ON Dot says to her son George, "Look at what you want. Not at where you are. Not at what you'll be. Look at the things you've done for me. Opened up my eyes. Taught me how to see. Just keep moving on. Anything you do, let it come from you. Then it will be new." 9.

Another character in the show says, "there are only two worthwhile things to leave behind when you depart this world: children and art". 10.

The musical made me think about the answer my friend Chris Borst gave to the BIG QUESTION. He said, "If humanity can create the HALLELUJAH CHORUS I guess it's a species worth saving."

Since March of this year I have been working for the Hamilton Public School Board going from school library to school library weeding out the collections and doing inventory. Every library is a temple to humanity's creativity and desire for knowledge.

Every now and again as I go through a library's books I'll find something I MUST take home and read. One such book was **WE ARE ALL BORN FREE: THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN PICTURES**. The book has well know children's illustrators depict each article of the Declaration with all royalties from the sale of the book going to Amnesty International. The Declaration was first proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

I was especially tickled by one of the forwards at the beginning of the book. It was written by David Tennant the 10th actor to play the iconic role of Doctor Who, the famous Time Lord from the prolific UK Sci-Fi series.

Here is what he wrote:

“I’ve spent the last three years being part of a television programme called Doctor Who. I play a character called The Doctor who travels through time and space in a battered old wooden box. He’s 903 years old and he comes from a planet called Gallifrey in the constellation of Kasterborous, but although he couldn’t be less human I suspect he’s got a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights pinned up in his bedroom in the Tardis. Wherever he goes in the universe, he spends his time rooting out injustice and wrongdoing. He believes that everyone everywhere has the right to be happy and free – just as Amnesty International believes.

When I first heard about Amnesty International I was a teenager, just beginning to take an interest in what was going on in the world and continually shocked at how cruel and selfish human beings could be with each other. Amnesty International represented such a simple idea: that everyone everywhere deserved to be treated fairly.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is clear and uncomplicated. It reads like a list of common sense – maybe everyone should have a copy printed in their bedroom.

None of us are going to make it to 903 years old, so don’t we all deserve to make the most of the time we got? There are so many of us humans squeezing on this wee planet and there’s no Tardis coming to spirit us away. We need to look after each other.

In this beautiful book you’ll find thirty rules for the world to live by.

We’re all in it together.”¹¹

A species who could dream of such a wondrous document to live their lives by and look out for the lives of their fellow creatures can’t be all that bad.

To believe in this possibility while staring at nothing but a blank page takes imagination and artistry.

The power of art in our lives is all around us. Whether we are the audience, performer or creator of that art it touches and inspires us.

The Science Fiction genre gives artists a vast canvass to explore the BIG QUESTIONS about human nature. Who are we? Why are we here? What do we want? Can we be more than we are? What will we discover when we travel to the stars? How will our future be shaped by our past?

As much as humanity destroys and murders we also create and sometimes we create things of beauty that live forever.

It’s no accident that Battlestar Galactica inspired a roundtable discussion at the United Nations hosted by none other than Whoppi Goldberg with speakers ranging from the creative team of the show to United Nations staff on March 17th of this year.

Edward James Olmos who played Admiral William Adama on Battlestar Galactica passionately stated that, “The most important thing I have done with the artform is this program.”¹²

Mary McDonnell who played President Laura Roslin on Battlestar Galactica shared her observations on what the show ultimately had to say. “What you are finally left with are two things. One is, the idea of patience. Being the essential element to evolution. And two, the idea

of forgiveness being the necessary action needed in order to end the cycle of violence and begin to create dialogue. We feel honoured to have participated in such profound simplicity towards disciplines, which are really difficult to practice. Thanks to the United Nations for this extraordinary opportunity for artists to connect with the world. It's ultimately what we want to do. It's what drives our passion." ¹³.

Battlestar Galactica writer David Weddle sums up what the show ultimately wanted to explore. "We wanted to take the time to examine what happens to people when their dreams are shattered, when everything they held as true turns out to be an illusion. After a blow like that, how do you pick yourself up from the floor and go on? Are you able to pick yourself up at all? This is perhaps the most universal theme you can explore. For the people of the ragtag fleet, the dream was Earth. For those of us here on Earth, the dream could be many other things. It may be the house you saved all your life for but now can no longer afford to make payments on. The career you fantasized about since high school, went to college to prepare for, finally landed and loved, then lost when your company downsized. The woman or man you met who seemed to be everything you ever wanted to find in a lover, who betrayed your trust or left you or died. The flood waters that swept your entire neighborhood away. The war in a far away land that took your son or daughter or husband or wife. The spot on an X-ray that now wants to eat you alive." ¹⁴.

These are the tests of life every human must learn to conquer and overcome. For it is in these moments that we truly prove that we are worthy.

So say we all!

1. Battlestar Galactica – Miniseries (2003) screenplay by Ronald D. Moore. Distributed by Universal Television.
2. Munich (2005) screenplay by Tony Kushner and Eric Roth. Based on the book "Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team" by George Jonas. Distributed by Dreamworks SKG.
3. Ibid.,
4. D. Ellis, Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak. (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004) pp. 9-10
5. Ibid., p. 40
6. Ibid., p. 85
7. Ibid., p. 97
8. http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2002/09/12/pm_reax020912.html & <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2002/09/11/chretienjumbo020911.html>
9. Sunday In The Park With George. Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and Book by James Lapine. 1990.
10. Ibid.
11. We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures. (London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2008)
12. <http://www.un.org/webcast/SE2009.html>
13. Ibid.
14. http://www.tvfodder.com/battlestar/archives/2009/01/battlestar_galactica_key_point_6.shtml

17. HYMN #116 – I'm On My Way (Traditional African American Folk Song. Arranged by Mary Ellen Walden.)

VAL: Please stand if you are able and let us join together in worship by singing hymn number #116 from your gray hymnal entitled "I'm On My Way". We will only sing the first and last verse of this hymn.

ALL: *I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
To the freedom land (to the freedom land)
I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
To the freedom land (to the freedom land)
I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
To the freedom land (to the freedom land)
I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
Great God, I'm on my way (I'm on my way)*

*I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
And I won't turn back (And I won't turn back)
I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
And I won't turn back (And I won't turn back)
I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
And I won't turn back (And I won't turn back)
I'm on my way (I'm on my way)
Great God, I'm on my way (I'm on my way)*

18. CHALICE EXTINGUISHED/CLOSING WORDS

**From the Battlestar Galactica episode "Daybreak – Part 2" by Ronald D. Moore
[Reader: Mel Rutherford]**

VAL: Please be seated. I would like to ask Lyla to extinguish our chalice as Mel Rutherford shares with us our closing words. These words are spoken by Gaius Baltar in the series finale of Battlestar Galactica.

Baltar: *God is not on any one's side. God is a force of nature. Beyond good and evil. Good and evil, we created those. Want to break the cycle? Break the cycle of birth, death, re-birth, destruction, escape, death. That's in our hands. In our hands only. It requires a leap of faith. It requires that we live in hope, not fear.*

19. POSTLUDE

Take Me Home by Phil Collins

Lyla Miklos (Vocals), Anne Marie Pavlov (Vocals and Guitar), Pamela Marques (Vocals and Piano), Nathalie Pasche (Vocals), Matthew Badal-Badalian (Percussion) and Alexa Badal-Badalian (Percussion)

VAL: I invite you to please remain seated as we enjoy our Postlude.

LYLA: *Take that look of worry
I'm an ordinary man
They don't tell me nothing
So I find out what I can
There's a fire that's been burning
Right outside my door*

*I can't see but I feel it
And it helps to keep me warm
So I, I don't mind
No I, I don't mind*

*Seems so long I've been waiting
Still don't know what for
There's no point escaping
I don't worry anymore
I can't come out to find you
I don't like to go outside
They can't turn off my feelings
Like they're turning off a light
But I, I don't mind
No I, I don't mind
Oh I, I don't mind
No I, I don't mind*

*So take, take me home
Cos I don't remember
Take, take me home
Cos I don't remember
Take, take me home
Cos I don't remember
Take, take me home, oh lord
Cos I've been a prisoner all my life
And I can say to you*

*Take that look of worry, mine's an ordinary life
Working when it's daylight
And sleeping when it's night
I've got no far horizons
I don't wish upon a star
They don't think that I listen
Oh but I know who they are
And I, I don't mind
No I, I don't mind
Oh I, I don't mind
No I, I don't mind*

*So take, take me home
Cos I don't remember
Take, take me home
Cos I don't remember
Take, take me home
Cos I don't remember
Take, take me home, oh lord
Well I've been a prisoner all my life
And I can say to you*

*But I don't remember
Take, take me home..*

20. LEAVING MUSIC

[The sound crew will play orchestral score selections from the Battlestar Galactica soundtrack once the service ends.]

21. FELLOWSHIP HOUR