Paying Forward.

“Do unto others before they get an opportunity to do it to you”; that seems to be the watch-phrase of nations, let alone certain sectors of society, these days.

There are a number of issues surrounding this type of attitude, not least of which that it can lead to ‘tit-for-tat’ behaviours that can be alarming - even dangerous! Even those who are not directly involved in the ‘politics’ get drawn into the situation, and escalation seems inevitable.

There are, of course, better ways, and obvious solutions, that get lost in the immense volume of information, deliberate disinformation, accidental mis-information, exaggeration and downright lies that abound in the communications media; ‘*everyone is entitled to MY opinion*’ seems to be the catchphrase of many ‘influencers’ - and this is often believed and acted upon before anyone gives any thought to what they read. And there’s a famous quote (wrongly attributed to Winston Churchill): ‘***A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on***’.

Sorry if I sound testy - but in an increasingly secular world, there doesn’t yet appear to be a voice of reason loud enough to bring some sense to it all. That said, I came across an interest way of looking at things that I wanted to share this time. **Paying Forward.** Basically, this means repaying an act of kindness by doing something kind for someone **other-than** the original ‘benefactor’.

- ‘A’ does ‘B’ a good turn (which may, or may not, be repaid at some stage).
- But ‘B’ then does a good turn (maybe the same one) for ‘C’ and or ‘D’.

Imagine a world where one good deed inspires other good deeds in this way, thereby creating a chain reaction of positive actions - rather than simply repaying or paying back.

It occurs to me that this sort of behaviour, once it starts, can become a practical example that can make a big difference: Why? Well, paying forward:

- Focuses on the future by making a positive influence rather than 'settling old debts'
- There's no expectation of pay-back or reward - the act being its own reward!
- This sort of kindness spreads exponentially - and very quickly - if each of us pays forwards - even if only twice:
  - One of us pays forward twice = 2 positive acts
  - Those two pay forward twice each = 4
  - Those four pay forward twice each = 8

The progression then rapidly becomes 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 2048, 4096, 8192, 16384, etc., initiating a ripple effect! In reality of course, we don't have to 'stop at 2' - so the growth can be much, much more.

Thoughts for the Day: Pie in the sky? Definitely, in truth - that is unless and until some**one**, some **community**, some **society** or some **nation** makes a start to pave the way.

We can't start yesterday, but we can 'do good for God' **in this context** here and now. The stakes are high (I've mentioned before Ralph Waldo Emerson's quote: "***Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.")***

Yet it occurs to me, too, that Jesus started such a process 2000 or so years ago - He didn't only submit himself for execution (and the consequences) <u>for them, then</u>. He died (and rose again) <u>for us, now</u>, and for all who are yet to be born.

Isn't that ***"paying forward"***?