

Earthrise

Earthrise

The Dawning of a New Civilization in the 21st Century

A Compilation of Articles by Leading Pioneer Organizations

Compiled by the Goi Peace Foundation

Edited by Patrick U. Petit



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Contents

Preface

By Patrick U. Petit 13

Introduction

The Dawning of a New Civilization

By Hiroo Saionji 17

Alliance for a New Humanity

Building an Ark of Hope

By Deepak Chopra 23

Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress

Working for More Just, Peaceful and Equitable Societies

By Luis Alberto Cordero 33

Bioneers

It's all alive – It's all connected –

It's all intelligent – It's all relatives

By Kenny Ausubel 43

Breuninger Foundation

Cooperative Behavior as a World Language

By Helga Breuninger and Eike Messow 59

Center for Ecoliteracy

Education for Sustainable Patterns of Living

By Michael K. Stone and Zenobia Barlow 79

Center for Visionary Leadership

Spiritual Politics –

Changing the World from the Inside Out and the Outside In

By Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson 95

CharityFocus

Voluntarism, World Service and a Prosperous Humanity:

The Tao of CharityFocus

By Nipun Mehta 109

Club of Budapest You Can Change the World By Ervin Laszlo	123
Club of Rome The World Problematique at the Beginning of the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities By Uwe Möller	133
Earth Charter Initiative Empowering People to Create Harmony with All Life on Earth By Mirian Vilela	141
Earth Policy Institute Planning for an Environmentally Sustainable World By Reah Janise Kauffman	153
Fetzer Institute Harnessing the Power of Love and Forgiveness to Heal the World By Amy Ferguson	169
Gaia Trust – Global Ecovillage Network The Ecovillage Strategy as Response to the Environmental Crisis By Ross Jackson	181
Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace New Institutions for a New Civilization: Establishing Ministries and Departments of Peace Worldwide By Dorothy J. Maver and Michael H. Abkin	199
Global Marshall Plan Initiative Creating a Global Eco-Social Market Economy By Franz J. Radermacher	215
Green Cross International Bridging Agendas of Peace and Sustainable Development By Alexander Likhotal	221

IDEM – Identity through Initiative A Global Youth Movement Creating a New Civilization By Valentin Vollmer	237
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy Enhancing Peaceful Societies Through Multi-Track Diplomacy By Kate Romanova	249
Institute for Planetary Synthesis The Path to Planetary Synthesis By Rudolf Schneider and Alice Boainain-Schneider	263
Institute of Noetic Sciences Exploring the Frontiers of Consciousness By James O’Dea	273
Kosmos Associates – Kosmos Journal Informing and Inspiring People to Become Co-Creators of a New Civilization By Nancy Roof	285
Pathways to Peace The Peace Wheel – An Innovative Concept for Sustainable Peacebuilding By Avon Mattison	303
Peres Center for Peace Building Tomorrow’s Peace in the Middle East By Ron Pundak	319
Schumacher College A Global Center of Transformative Learning for Sustainable Living By Brian Goodwin	337
Schweisfurth Foundation Towards Ecological and Social Transformation Through the Fulfillment of Basic Needs By Franz-Theo Gottwald	349

Social Venture Network Twenty Ideas That Changed the Way the World Does Business By Mal Warwick	363
World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality Global Wisdom and Spirituality for the 21st Century By Ashok K. Gangadean	381
World Future Council Securing the Sustainable Well-Being of Present and Future Generations By Herbert Girardet	393
World Parliament of Clowns The Gift of Joy and Laughter in Times of Crisis and Depression By Angelika Härle and Ekaterina Moshava »Antoschka«	411
World Wisdom Alliance Wisdom is Our Common Heritage – The Birth of the World Wisdom Alliance By David Woolfson	423
Annex	
Authors	433
Selected Bibliography	449
Declaration for All Life on Earth	467
Goi Peace Foundation Contact Information	471

Preface

By Patrick U. Petit

At the dawning of the new millennium, a growing number of people worldwide realizes that the future of humanity lies within the responsibility of each one of us. While the majority of us still believes that the world's problems are caused solely by governments, by people holding special authority, by representatives of the corporate world or other forces outside ourselves, awakened global citizens truly know that they must be the change they want to see in the world. They feel empowered from within to become change agents by establishing organizations and networks to serve humanity and the common good, and by fostering the creation of new, effective instruments of peaceful civic governance essential for our sustainable flourishing on Earth and with Earth.

The publication, *Earthrise: The Dawning of a New Civilization in the 21st Century*, is a compilation of articles by leading pioneer organizations dedicated to co-create a New Civilization based on reverence for all life on Earth. Their inspiring initiatives and creative activities ignite personal and collective empowerment and responsibility as a tidal wave of hitherto untapped human potential for co-creating a sustainable and peaceful world, and facilitate the transformation of our cultures.

There is some reason to believe that we are entering a pneumatocratic era – an era in which each individual is ready to accept responsibility, and to carry out his or her mission as a self-conscious member of the human race. It is an era, where we, – in the words of David Korten, author of *The Great Turning: From Empire To Earth Community* and Co-Founder of Positive Futures Network, »embrace the higher-order potential of our human nature, turn crisis into opportunities, and learn to live in creative partnership with one another and the Earth«.

Pneumatocracy is derived from the Greek *Pneuma*, meaning »spirit« or »soul«, and *Kratos*, meaning »the sovereign rule of« or »the power of«. Therefore, Pneumatocracy is »the sovereign rule of the spirit« and was first coined in 1973 by the dutch visionary leader and philosopher Johan Henri Quanjer. Pneumatocracy is a phenomenon which is flowering globally: many people are turning towards higher consciousness and inner wisdom as the solution to social and economical issues, beyond the traditional confines of current organized politics. This new form of »enlightened governance« emphasizes that some-

thing more evolved than democracy exists, something which recognizes that the expression of a greater spirit in humanity is needed, and is being progressively introduced and manifested, everywhere, for the greater good. Although Pneumatocracy is a development rooted in democracy, it goes beyond our conventional understanding of democracy. Pneumatocracy is founded on the collective awareness and individual self-actualization of each human being.

According to Masami Saionji, Chairperson of the Goi Peace Foundation, it is our consciousness that shapes our lives and the reality of the world around us. We can attain only what we firmly believe in. This is why it is essential that we uphold the highest vision. As more and more people share this vision, its manifestation will be facilitated. Therefore, it is imperative to inspire individuals to awaken to their inherent potential, and empower each of them to become agents of change.

It is the objective of this publication to inspire and to call on awakened citizens to join this global movement of mapmakers for our common future. They carry the pin-code for the paradigm shift that humanity is destined to undergo. They represent – according to Oran Cohen, Founder and Director of Living Peace Foundation –, »the new order of freedom that is emerging. This »movement« has no borders, no criteria, no categories and no dogmas. It is about the freedom to love and the love of freedom. It is about awakening to our highest truth, whatever it may be, and uniting as humanity to fundamentally transform our world and ourselves. It is about living our highest collective values of love, truth, unity, and peace«.

The Goi Peace Foundation would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to the distinguished authors and organizations which have contributed to this book. Their innovative initiatives and creative activities are an invaluable source of inspiration and motivation for humanity as it seeks to achieve a sustainable, harmonious and peaceful world.

My sincere appreciation also goes to the newly established Earthrise Foundation for its gracious support.

I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Ramona Rosenstern – a gifted life coach, holistic healer and Founder of RaStoa Academy – for her generous grant provided to make this publication possible.

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history. A time when humanity must

choose its future. We all have the power of choice. Our individual destiny and collective future lie within our own hands. »Our world is in grave danger«, said Roger Walsh, one of the pioneers of transpersonal psychology, »but it is in good hands, because it is in your hands«.

May Peace Prevail on Earth.

Thanksgiving Season 2007

Introduction

The Dawning of a New Civilization

By Hiroo Saionji

The Need of a Global Holistic Consciousness

Our global civilization stands at a crossroads. We have arrived at a critical bifurcation point in the history of humanity. With the spread of environmental destruction, cultural clashes, terrorism, overpopulation, wealth disparity, resource depletion, mass starvation, epidemic diseases, climate changes and a host of other complex issues, the world we live in today is economically, socially and ecologically no longer sustainable.

These global crises threatening our very survival are all interconnected and are the cumulative effect of human activities and lifestyles. They are at their core a crisis in human consciousness – a crisis in human thinking, human values, human priorities and human responsibility. It is therefore a choice we must make collectively either to continue on the present path toward destruction, or choose the way leading to a sustainable future. It is not enough simply to patch up the existing civilization founded on its old paradigms. In order to reverse current trends and constructively shape our global future, we must develop a new dimension of consciousness and create a New Civilization.

A New Civilization we envision is a world in which our human sociocultural systems, including our economic and political systems, are transformed to operate in accordance with the harmonious and cooperative principles of nature and ecosystems. It is a world where humanity reaches a higher and more holistic consciousness to embrace and revere all life on Earth, appreciating its beauty and diversity. It is a world in which all individuals can fully express their potential to carry out their unique role in creating true peace and harmony on this planet.

A New Civilization Is Taking Shape

As serious as it is, the critical situation we face today is also an unprecedented opportunity for a major leap in human evolution. Underneath the surface of the still dominant materialistic, consumerist culture, a major shift is occurring

among the global citizenry. We see ever-increasing number of people adapting new responsible ways of thinking and acting, forming a new culture that ensures greater socio-economic and ecological sustainability. These awakened citizens are now emerging around the globe to bring about positive changes in all areas of society, including politics, economics, business and education.

Pioneer organizations and institutions in various fields and regions are at the forefront of this cultural paradigm shift. With innovative concepts and creative initiatives, they are putting visions into action bringing inspiration to the world.

This publication entitled *Earthrise: The Dawning of a New Civilization in the 21st Century*, highlights some of the leading edge civil society organizations and networks internationally active in fields such as politics and diplomacy, ecology and education, economics and business, sciences and media, as well as youth and spirituality. The articles contributed by these organizations describe their respective visions, activities, best practices and their specific contribution toward the creation of a new civilization.

For example, Gaia Trust – Global Ecovillage Network demonstrates a new sustainable lifestyle through its ecovillage models, while the Schumacher College and the Center for Ecoliteracy offer education that nurtures a holistic worldview. The Global Marshall Plan Initiative proposes an innovative concept of a global eco-social market economy, and the Social Venture Network presents pioneering ideas that changed business models. The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy and Pathways to Peace promote their respective holistic approach to peacebuilding in the 21st Century, and the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace campaigns to establish departments of peace within governments. Green Cross International and the Schweisfurth Foundation focus on current issues such as sustainable water source management and healthy food security, while the Institute for Noetic Sciences explores the frontiers of consciousness to serve individual and collective transformation.

Together, all the pioneer organizations in this publication paint a compelling picture of a New Civilization, offering concrete first steps to get there. The concepts, models and structures they present may still be seeds of change, but they are undeniable signs of an emerging harmonious and values-based civilization, which will eventually replace the old collapsing materialistic civilization.

Although we are aware that many other organizations could be and should be

added to this publication, we are very confident that these exemplary institutions, working at the forefront of a New Civilization in the making, represent millions of awakened people and thousands of leading organizations around the world, who are contributing day by day to this evolutionary global transformation, with a strong sense of mission and compassion for all life.

Creating a New Civilization Initiative

This publication is a part of the Initiative for Creating a New Civilization, which was launched by the Goi Peace Foundation and thirteen additional like-minded organizations at a major international forum organized in Tokyo in November 2005. Among these organizations were the Club of Budapest, the Club of Rome, the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Kosmos Journal, Pathways to Peace, and the World Commission on Spirituality and Global Consciousness, whose articles are also included in this book.

The Initiative has since brought together many more organizations and individuals under a common vision of a sustainable and harmonious planetary civilization. In 2006, motivated young people from all parts of the world also joined the Initiative, launching a global youth movement for creating a new civilization.

Now more than ever, each of us is called upon to become a proactive agent for positive change. We are reaching out to all people who see this need, to build the critical mass for a paradigm shift. Working in collaboration transcending generations, cultures, and disciplines, we can reverse the current trends toward breakdown and co-create a New Civilization – a sustainable and harmonious civilization based on spiritual values, respect for our diversity, timeless wisdom and reverence for all life on Earth.

We hope that this book will offer you a glimpse of such exciting and enlightening future that is possible. May it inspire you to find your unique role in changing the world at this unprecedented moment in human history. Let us together create a New Civilization.

May Peace Prevail on Earth.

Tokyo, October 2007

Alliance for a New Humanity

Building an Ark of Hope

By Deepak Chopra

What happens when we are delving deep into the nature of our consciousness, while our collective subconscious erupts with rage and violence in the Middle East?

I felt myself asking, »Is it realistic to hope for a new humanity?« As I look at the faces of people yearning for true peace (not just the absence of war) and feel their presence, any sense of helplessness diminishes, because I am looking at the seeds of the new humanity.

These are caring, compassionate, loving, people engaged in personal transformation. There are many all over the world. If only they could be connected. If only we could reach critical mass as soon as humanly possible.

But the immediate question for everyone of us is »What can I do now?«

I would like to share my reflections with all of you in this time of war. These are not original insights. They have been part of wisdom traditions for a long, long time. I deeply honor the sentiments of those of you who favor social activism, but that approach has been tried over and over again without great success. I believe at the core of my being that only a consciousness-based approach will work.

Societies get into the grip of their own self-created story.

It's helpful to realize that we can choose not to participate in that story. Realize that national and tribal stories are limited, self-serving, based on the past, reinforced by orthodoxy, and therefore opposed to real change. Stories are incredibly persuasive. Wars are fueled by victimization that runs deep, for example. So let us not try to change anyone's story. Let us only notice and observe ourselves when we buy into it and then let us back away from participating in it.

Let us not demand of ourselves that we alone must be the agent of change. In a fire brigade everyone passes along a bucket, but only the last person puts out

the fire. None of us know where we stand in line. We may be here simply to pass a bucket; we may be called on to play a major role. In either case, all we can do is think, act, and say. Let us direct our thoughts, words, and actions to peace. That is all we can do. Let the results be what they will be.

Let us realize that engagement and detachment aren't opposite – the more engaged we become, the more detached we will have to be. Otherwise, we will lose ourselves in conflict, obsessiveness, anxiety over the future, and feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Keep in mind that we are pioneers into the unknown, and uncertainty is our ally. When our minds want closure, certainty, and finality, let us remind ourselves that these are fictions. Our joyous moments will come from riding the wave, not asking to get off at the next station.

Most misery is born of failed expectations so let us learn to minimize expectations so that we will feel far less guilt and disappointment. We aren't here to be good or perfect. We are here as the antennas for signals from the future. We are here to be midwives to something that wants to be born. Good people have preceded us. They solved some problems and created others. As one wise teacher said, »You aren't here to be as good as possible. You are here to be as real as possible«.

I know this sounds difficult, but let us try to be tolerant of intolerance. This is a hard one at times, but if you try the opposite – showing a hard heart against those with hard hearts of their own – all we've done is expand the problem. It's helpful (but often difficult) to remember that everyone is doing the best they can from their own level of consciousness. Trying to talk a terrorist out of his beliefs is like trying to persuade a lion to be a vegetarian. All we can realistically do is seek openings for higher awareness.

These include us versus them, civilized versus barbarians, good versus evil. The good, civilized people of Europe managed to kill millions of themselves, along with millions of »them«. In reality we are all in the same boat of human conflict and confusion. Sometimes it helps to admit that the doctor is not far from being a patient.

Let's create an atmosphere of peace around ourselves. Imagine that we are like a mother whose children come home crying about fights at school. Would it be her job to soothe their wounds or to arm them for fighting back tomorrow? Simplistic as it may sound, the male principle of aggression can only be healed by the feminine principle of nurturing and love.

Mahatma Gandhi spoke the truth when he said »You must be the change you want to see in the world«. We are units of consciousness, and the world is our projection. If there are enough units of peace consciousness and they are connected with each other to reach critical mass, we could heal the world by healing ourselves.

A conscious change of heart is one of the most concrete things the world can ever see. A change of heart can change the world, whereas dutiful combative stances can only increase our agonies. While caught up in a conflictive situation, keep out there in the midst of it all doing what you do best. Do not be discouraged, but know that there are people all over the world who support you. One day there will be so many that everyone will see peace.

Love is the only point of departure for intelligent action.

Reactionary activism based on blame and self-righteousness leads us to perpetual strife, as we accumulate vengeful and judgmental postures. There is war and suffering in life. It has always been there. Now in the present news from the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Guatemala, Congo, Somalia, etc. But it is really everywhere, as we have forgotten who we really are, and have failed to exercise the charity of forgiveness of ourselves and others.

How can we overcome this strife? – By overcoming hatred. How can we overcome hatred? – By releasing love. How can we release love? – By growing in consciousness, which means consideration, forgiveness, understanding, – an awareness of our common being. And this applies to collective, social, family, and individual conflicts.

Let us not become impatient for concrete solutions alone.

As we engage in dialogue among ourselves to find the solutions to our immediate problems, some of us with warplanes and missiles flying overhead, become truly desperate for concrete strategies, and concrete results.

But let us ask ourselves: did millions marching for peace across America and Europe before the Iraq war prevent it? Did the peace treaties negotiated by President Clinton between the Palestinians and Israelis achieve anything? Has all the negotiation and conflict resolution by responsible, intelligent, sincere diplomats affected the estimated 35 wars that are now going on simultane-

ously in the world? Has all the moral outrage prevented the ethnic cleansing and genocide in Sudan, Ethiopia, or Gujarat? Have the hundreds of billions of dollars of aid to developing nations overcome poverty?

We cannot simply pursue without reflection the same thing that didn't work. Maybe personal transformation (including the longing for personal transformation) can contribute towards a lasting and radical solution. Why don't we give peace a chance by engaging in something seemingly not so »concrete« like participating in the creation of peace consciousness?

We can and must do whatever is in our reach to put out the fires. Yes, let us bring the buckets of water and dig the trenches to contain the forest fires we have started, but if we do not stop smoking, we would not have addressed the root cause that gives continuous rise to the fire. So, although we must raise our voices and coordinate our actions as our hearts demand to counteract conflagrations like the one in the Middle East and Iraq and put pressure on our leaders to act fast to bring peace, we must not diminish our first order of sustained priority, that of addressing the root cause of all our social and individual hassle and pain – our ignorance and the healing of our own selfishness.

And this quest applies to all, the so called spiritual leaders, the seekers, the social workers activists and everyone. For all, no matter what role we play, we all are longing for love and peace, for greater understanding.

Peace can only be created by those who are peaceful.

I cannot honestly claim that I have achieved peace of mind, but because I am at least trying to go beyond my personal melodrama, it is my hope that I may be capable of seeing things in perspective. I think longing for peace may itself be the beginning to bring about a new birth of awareness.

To be part of the gestation process is just as necessary as any other stage. As Rumi said in one of his poems, »Our longing and our helplessness are the way«. Let's meet as people who have nothing in common except our helplessness and our own peace of mind. It's worth celebrating that we are not emotionally drawn into the concept of war as a »solution« when the rest of the world is. Maybe it is worthwhile to invite the world into a new era showing humanity the face of peace. I have no doubt that millions will watch us and say, »That's me, too«. I do not want to convey a sense of pacifism. Consciousness isn't passive. In itself it's always moving, changing, creating and affecting

change. Activism that works for change on the surface often winds up being just a counterforce – it's the opposite side of a tug of war.

The situation in the Middle East right now, for example is rife with action. It's rife with opposition. Is there a choice that didn't involve increasing tension? Of course, we all support humanitarian relief, peace negotiations, etc. This world has always been full of good, well-intentioned people who devote themselves to social change. And for many, this work is their personal path of evolution.

Yet the world remains a sinkhole of poverty, famine, war, crime, and despair. Goodness hasn't changed the situation; activism has ameliorated it, at best. When doing more of the same thing doesn't work, I think it's time to consider the deeper wound, which is at the level of consciousness.

[An Alliance for a New Humanity](#)

There is nothing more important today than to connect people to the accumulated wisdom of humankind that lives in our stories, so as to engender understanding and respect for others. The search for a new narrative that unites us and takes us to the dawn of a new civilization is a fundamental driving force at these crossroads of humanity.

At this moment we must work to link all those who believe that we must set forth a new narrative and create a new world where hope, social justice, peace, and a sense of the sacredness of life prevail. To form a critical mass of humanity that influences the change at a global scale. Bringing together the inner streams of sensitive human beings will work towards that goal.

The driving force for this Alliance is an upwelling from the heart that is rising from within many, unbeknown to all. I am simply amazed at the way this is all happening and feel totally overwhelmed at the heart energies being generated. I can see the yearning in me and in many for a renewal of the spirit, for another envelope to surround our daily lives, with kinder more compassionate and joyful undertones. The mechanistic assumptions, the hyper-media and its torrent of noise, fear instigation, violent icon projection and consumerism frenzy stimulation, have left us all with an empty heart.

These are our own inventions; we have tolerated them, played with them and accepted them. As we get fed up with our childish games of self-identification

and petite power, we hunger for serenity, understanding, and peace. We intuitively feel the oneness of all, and yearn to project out into the open this silent beauty that counteracts our darker sides.

We need to give space to the voice latent in the heart of many, and let it flow, and let it manifest and become part of the message context so that it is not just about war, terrorism fear and making money. That we can proclaim at the same level of volume the narrative of compassion, of love of understanding, of selflessness, and underscore that the greatest heroes do not look like Rambo, that being cool is not being competitive and aggressive, that true heroes are humble like Jesus, like Gandhi, like St. Francis.

Reconfirm that the great things in life; the tenderness, the smiles, the love of a mother for a child, the joy of a couple in love, the reflection in the eyes of the elderly, the beauty of a serene moment, are expressions of the purest aspects of our spirit, reflections of the Oneness that we are. This what the Alliance is seeking, a going back to being truly human, a pause, a call to this sense in most of all, to counterbalance the present hype of the media, the present prevailing thrust of a culture of »each man for himself«, that is generating this desperate hunger in the hearts of so many, and that has given way to an aggressive organized few to lead us into a seemingly hopeless divided violent world, where everything is solved by might and fight rather than by conciliation and compassion.

The Alliance is an open forum of humanity to facilitate an exchange amongst those who care about their fellow beings and understand that there is only one human family. It is a network of love in action, a collective statement of the best of our human nature, meant to influence social consciousness so we can move to a society of peace and serenity.

When Noah set out to build the Ark, it is said that few wanted to invest their time or resources in such a venture. But it did rain a lot, and those who built the lifeboat sailed, and generated a new hope, a new seed for the Universe to continue looking at itself. So goes the myth of Noah.

Today we are again swamped with our forgetfulness of Being, numbed by our proliferating toys, ignorant of life's continuum, indifferent to the sacred miracle of everyday, that manifests in the exquisite beauty and elegance of the texture of the universe, and in our consciousness dancing within it. We are again callous to each others pain as we indulge in our separateness. We must call again, for those whose hearts are listening, and beginning to suspect, that there

can be more joy and serenity in our collective tapestry. Call upon ourselves to help us build this Ark of hope, this Human-Forum. Make the change happen.

Many have asked me what to do to participate more actively in bringing forth this critical mass of consciousness which is already manifesting in building up a better world through social and personal transformation.

During the last three years, we have been forging at a global scale the Alliance for a New Humanity as a catalyst of this critical mass of emergent new consciousness. And what would a new humanity be like? Imagine a world in peace, compassionate, where each is cared for, everyone appreciated, our mother Earth nurtured. This is our alliance to which all belongs to when we share and connect around this vision. We are committed to continue this conversation of humanity, working to establish a platform for a global dialog.

Let us keep together inspired in this guiding principle that we are all part of the same humanity, and Earth is our only home. This shared vision is the basis to meet the great challenges that loom over us and our children, facilitate an exchange amongst those who care about their fellow beings, and who understand that there is only one human family. It is a network of love in action, a collective statement of the best of our human nature, meant to influence social consciousness so we can move to a society of peace and serenity. Let us, as Mahatma Gandhi said »be the change that we want to see in the world«.

Contact Information

Alliance for a New Humanity
PMB 233
701-1 Ponce de Leon Avenue
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00907
USA

www.anhglobal.org

Center for Visionary Leadership

Spiritual Politics

– Changing the World from the Inside Out and the Outside In

By Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson

The Center for Visionary Leadership was founded by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson in 1996 as a non-denominational educational center to help people develop the inner, spiritual resources to be effective leaders and respond creatively to change. Our purpose is to develop and support values-based visionary leadership in all fields of human endeavor, especially business and politics. We help people develop the inner resources to become effective leaders.

Our approach is based on the Ageless Wisdom, the golden thread that connects the deeper, inner teachings of the world's spiritual traditions. Based in the Washington D.C. and San Francisco areas, we offer an environment of heartfelt dialogue with an intellectually stimulating community of professionals. We offer seminars for the general public, and also provide customized trainings, consulting and coaching to a wide variety of business, government and non-profit organizations.

We are non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization and offer public trainings on spiritual development and social change, as well as a free monthly electronic newsletter with articles, spiritual practices, and featured visionary leaders. One of our main contributions to the development of a new civilization is our work in promoting a new spiritually based politics that transcends old categories of left and right and creates a new, practical synthesis. We also are very active in promoting socially responsible businesses and helping business leaders bring their spiritual values into the workplace. We help provide a platform for social innovators around the world, and support values-based visionary leadership in all fields of human endeavor. We research best practices and whole systems solutions to social problems like poverty, violence, and environmental pollution.

As it's said, »without vision, the people perish«, and for the past 11 years, The Center for Visionary Leadership has promoted a clear vision for a positive future based on universal, spiritual truths. We've always been on the leading edge, identifying, training and supporting visionary leaders in all fields, and providing insightful commentary on current events.

We were one of the pioneers in promoting spirituality in politics among those on the Left as well as the Right. We began writing about this in our regular newsletters over a decade ago and in 2000 hosted a popular national conference in Washington D.C. on Values and Spirituality in Governance, featuring presidential candidates, congressmen, leaders from several government agencies and political activists. Today this theme is front-page news, and there are now many inspirational books on this theme. We also were early promoters of the spirituality in business movement, and organized a very successful national conference on Spirituality at Work in 1998 with business leaders from both major corporations and local businesses.

Today we are supporting the seeds of a new world growing everywhere, right in the midst of the decay of the old. This gives us great hope for our future as humanity, living together on one planet. Our newsletter and website continue to offer many specific, exciting examples of the new world emerging in every field, along with spiritual practices and effective techniques for helping each one of us play our part.

Philosophy of the Center

1. Developing Leadership that Unites – Rather than Divides

The world today cries out for a unifying leadership that serves the good of all. The Center offers training and consulting for leaders in government, business and the non-profit sector to develop the inner resources to deal creatively with social and economic change. It helps leaders envision and build a positive future while encouraging a renaissance of community spirit. It assists leaders in developing the skills to draw forth the best in people, while providing a clear sense of direction and purpose. The Center also empowers future leaders and helps them connect with the leader within themselves.

2. Promoting a New, Visionary Political Process that Goes Beyond Left and Right

Recognizing there is some truth on both sides of most polarized issues in our society today, the Center promotes non-adversarial, win/win approaches to problem solving for mutual benefit. It offers training in conflict resolution and consensus building, specializing in whole-systems approaches, where the

interconnectedness of issues can be seen and lasting solutions formulated. Rather than over-dependence on government or alienation from it, the Center fosters partnerships between ourselves as citizens and our institutions, and features citizen dialogues on how we can contribute to the future direction of our nation.

3. Working to Change the World from the Inside Out – As Well As the Outside In

A changed person can be a more effective change agent. The Center offers courses for individuals and organizations that build an ethical and spiritual foundation as the basis for true visionary leadership. The Center is non-denominational, emphasizing the common moral and ethical values found in all spiritual traditions. Courses are offered to help individuals develop a deeper contact with their essence or soul, and apply their core values in their professional lives. Programs illustrate the connection between our collective psychological state and what we see mirrored in our world, and provide tools for transforming both personal and social problems. Conferences and seminars are offered on applying our spiritual values at work – in business and politics.

4. Providing a Platform for Social Innovators from Around the World

Visionary leaders with proven, successful programs for solving pressing social problems have been regularly featured at the Center's weekly »salons«. These informal and open dialogues explore the deeper roots of issues that face us as a society, highlighting solutions based on holistic ways of seeing problems. The Center has researched and published information on these cutting edge social innovations in its newsletter and in a guidebook on best practices produced for the government.

5. Promoting Sustainable Development and Healthy Communities

As we use resources to meet present needs, we must ensure that adequate resources are available for future generations to meet theirs. Lectures and seminars are featured at the Center, with nationally respected policy experts as well as hands-on practitioners who address the whole fabric of our lives and

help citizens build communities that are environmentally sound, economically prosperous and socially just.

Activities and Programs

Soul Light E-Newsletter

Our free electronic newsletter features business articles with cutting edge ideas, such as Conscious Capitalism, Sustainable Business, Social Investment; political articles, such as Political Karma, A Spiritual Voter's Guide, America's Mission Statement, Synthesizing Democracy and Hierarchy, The Soul of Nations; best practices such as Community Supported Agriculture, Victim-Offender Reconciliation; spiritual practices such as Transforming Fear, Invoking the Soul, Developing the Spiritual Will, The Healing Power of Nature; and visionary leaders such as The Dalai Lama, Hazel Henderson, Ray Anderson, Paul Ray, Jeremy Rifkin, Patricia Aburdene, etc. Our passion is to support people's spiritual growth with our trainings, counseling, articles and meditations. We've sent out many meditations and prayers over the years through our emails and e-newsletter. It is our greatest joy to bring through innovative ideas and solutions to personal and collective problems and share them with our readers and supporters.

Seminars and Professional Trainings

We offer public trainings and inspirational seminars on themes such as Visionary Leadership, Living as a Soul in Today's World, Spirit in the Workplace, Money as a Spiritual Asset, Spiritual Techniques for Mastering Time, Conflict Transformation, Creating the New World, etc.

International Meditation Conclaves

We organize yearly invitational gatherings in cities all over the world, such as London, Geneva, Tokyo, Darjeeling, New York, Los Angeles and Brasilia, with leaders from 60 meditation groups in over 20 countries. Our focus is on group meditation to build an inner energy field and help create a better world.

Spiritual Consulting and Mentoring

We provide spiritual consulting and coaching to many people around the world on a one to one basis, as well as mentoring young leaders. We also provide pro-bono consulting to many organizations in the U.S. and Europe, helping with visioning, leadership development and spiritual issues.

Spiritual Politics: An Innovative Approach

The Center has been pioneering a spiritual approach to politics in its public programs, articles and website. Most people would say you can be either a spiritual seeker – or a political activist – but never both because it creates fanatics who impose their beliefs on others. For those caught in dualistic, »either/or« thinking, politics and spirituality seem worlds apart – two different arenas that should never be mixed or they produce deadly results, such as we see today when some conservatives try to impose their religious beliefs on other people through public policies. As Jim Wallis writes in *God's Politics*, we shouldn't ask if God or Spirit is on our side, but rather ask, are we on God's side? Are we embodying our spiritual values and promoting compassion, justice, and peace?

In actual practice, true spirituality can ennoble politics and politics can ground spirituality. Spirituality can help people leave ego and power trips at the door and truly serve the good of others. Politics can provide a practical arena for applying spiritual principles such as compassion, as instant feedback is given if someone doesn't »walk the talk« – if their words are more pious than their deeds. Bringing spiritual values such as altruism and courage into politics could offset the immense power of moneyed interests to influence policy, and offset the cynicism and apathy of much of the public.

Gandhi had no trouble bringing his spirituality and politics together. He said, »I could not lead a religious life unless I identified with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics«.

But what about separation of church and state in this country? As Congressman Dennis Kucinich says, »Our Founders never meant to imply that we should separate the actions of government from spiritual principles«. Nor did they intend that we should avoid discussing spiritual ideas in the public arena. They only intended that the State not impose religious beliefs on citizens or interfere in the practice of religion.

»Religion« refers to an organized institution and community of believers, with specific dogmas and practices. But spirituality relates to one's inner, moral-centered life in relation to the Transcendent. It is concerned with qualities of the human spirit such as love and courage. Religion can help a person be spiritual, but spirituality isn't dependent upon religion.

People today are yearning for a spiritually based politics guided by moral values – a politics that doesn't appeal only to self-interest and pit one group against another. They seek a type of political discourse that speaks to their deepest values as human beings, that provides a greater sense of community and a transcendent purpose as a nation, that offers us a higher vision of public life and service to the common good – rather than appealing only to greed and lust for power.

A recent poll found that 84 % of Americans agree that »our government would be better if policies were more directed by moral values«. Another poll in *The Washington Post* found that the issue of greatest concern to voters wasn't healthcare or education, but rather moral values.

If citizens make it safe to discuss spiritual values in public life, then they can hold politicians accountable for the spiritual values they espouse. The public has made it very clear they don't want negative campaigning, and candidates today often try to convince voters that their campaign is the most positive. A refreshing call to honesty, service and sacrifice from a candidate often draws people to vote for the first time in many years.

How can we recognize a spiritually based politics?

Here are some key qualities:

- Courage in standing up to special interests
- Honesty and integrity – »walking the talk«
- Lack of ego-inflation and manipulation of others
- Fairness and justice
- Non-violence
- Compassion for the disadvantaged
- Serving the good of the whole
- Respect and civility for opponents
- Collaboration and partnership

Gaia Trust – Global Ecovillage Network

The Ecovillage Strategy as Response to the Environmental Crisis

By Ross Jackson

Introduction

During the past year, a very significant shift in consciousness occurred across the globe. For the first time ever, the environmental crisis has risen to the top of the global political agenda. The undeniable reality of global warming has forced political leaders across the world to acknowledge the truth in what environmental activists and concerned scientists have been saying for a long time, namely that environmental degradation is a major threat to our very survival and demands radical political action. An important aspect of this political shift is that it forces us to realize that all world citizens are in the same, very fragile boat. Only solutions that work for everyone will be acceptable to everyone. The debate on what kind of global civilization the majority of citizens wants in future can now begin in earnest. Without a common vision, it will be very difficult to develop a strategy that both the »overdeveloped« and »developing« countries can accept.

A major concern of mine at this time, based on the tentative reactions to the awakening taking place around the issue of global warming, is that our political leadership has not yet realized that global warming is but one aspect of a broader environmental crisis. Most proposals for a strategic response to global warming are some variation of technological innovation that will permit us to continue our consumer society with only minor changes. In my opinion, this is wishful thinking.

While global warming may be the greatest potential threat to our survival as a species, and will require a determined coordinated effort by the international community to resolve, it is probably the easiest threat to deal with. This is because the problem is, in principle, subject to technological solutions. We can reduce CO₂ emissions drastically by a combination of technological innovation and tax incentives, by conversion to renewable energy, by carbon sequestration, by developing more efficient combustion engines, and by building and retrofitting more energy-efficient houses and office buildings. But that is not enough. I claim that even if we could magically and immediately prevent any

rise in CO₂ emissions above current levels that we would be facing two far more difficult challenges that are beyond technological fixes. Tackling these problems will require a change in lifestyle, which will be extremely difficult in practice.

The first of these is over-consumption. The concept of ecological footprint is now well established in various studies. It measures the number of hectares of land required in order to provide the renewable resources consumed and the ecological sinks to absorb waste products in any region. The globally available productive space was about 1.8 hectares per person in 2003 and is dropping as population and urbanization increase. The most recent figures from 2003 showed that, at that time, the world average ecological footprint was 2.2 hectares per person, roughly a 20 % overshoot. By region, North America was the highest at 9.6 hectares per person. The overshoot today is certainly higher.¹

This means that, globally, we are eroding the carrying capacity of the ecosystem – »cutting off the branch we are sitting on«, so to speak. A continuation of current consumption trends will inevitably lead to the decimation of our species, no matter what we do about global warming. And the early consequences may well hit us before a 2 % rise in average global temperature manifests. No one knows just how much overshoot the ecosystem can tolerate before it collapses. If the entire planet were to have the same footprint as North America, and population growth were to stabilize at current levels, the overshoot would be more than 400 %, corresponding to the need for four extra planets! Yet the political goal of almost every country, including the already over-consuming nations, is to increase their consumption even more by promoting economic growth. The only exception I know of is Bhutan, whose stated goal is to maximize »gross national happiness«. To some extent, the problem of over-consumption can be handled by more efficient production technologies that reduce the so-called MIPS factor (Material Input Per unit of Service) , but there is no doubt that a change in life-style with lower material consumption will also be necessary if we are to have any chance of creating a sustainable future.²

As if reducing consumption was not challenge enough, the second issue is going to make it even more difficult to achieve a »soft landing«, namely the phenomenon of »peak oil«. The term »peak oil« refers to the point in time when

1 »Living Planet Report 2006«, World Wildlife Fund, (See www.panda.org)

2 Friedrich Schmidt-Bleek, »The Factor10/MIPS-Concept: Bridging Ecological, Economic, and Social Dimensions with Sustainability Indicators«, Factor-10 Institute (See www.factor10-institute.org/).

global oil production hits its maximum and goes into permanent decline. The time is very near, the consensus guess being roughly 2011. The key economic variable driving events will likely be the exploding price of oil as demand exceeds supply for the first time ever. It is important to realize that prediction of a peak in oil production is quite certain and is based on a broad consensus of oil geologists. The only uncertainty is the timing, plus or minus a few years. Our whole industrial society has been build up around the concept of a limitless supply of oil, but there is no comparable substitute. It is not, as some economists and politicians think, simply a question of investing more money in oil exploration. Geologists have a quite firm grasp on how much oil is likely to be found in the future, and it is not very much compared to the past. And what is available, for example in Canadian tar sands, is not only very expensive, but very energy-intensive and environmentally damaging. The mathematics of oil discovery and production is well known by oil geologists. Their forecasts of production levels and new discoveries have been quite accurate for over thirty years.³

The Ecovillage Movement

The ecovillage movement is an initiative that is attempting to tackle all the above environmental problems head on by showing how we can reduce both our consumption and our dependence on fossil fuels by a change in lifestyle. Recent ecological footprint studies at three leading Ecovillages, Findhorn Ecovillage in Scotland, BedZed Ecovillage in downtown London and Ecovillage at Ithaca in upper New York State show that their lifestyles result in ecological footprints of 50 %, 42 % and 40 % respectively below national averages.⁴ These examples show that it is possible to make significant improvements in practice without sacrificing quality of life. But it is still a long way to the 70–80 % reduction required to bring the worst over-consuming regions down to the sustainable global average ecological footprint.

3 Colin J Campbell, *The Coming Oil Crisis*, (Petroconsultants, in association with Multi-Science Publishing Co. Ltd, 1997).

4 Tinsley, S. and George, H. »Ecological Footprint of the Findhorn Foundation and Community«. Moray. Sustainable Development Research Centre, (UHI Millennium Institute, 2006).

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_footprint

Liz Walker, *Ecovillage at Ithaca; Pioneering a Sustainable Culture*, (Gabriola Island, B. C., Canada, New Society Publishers, 2005), p.174, Available from the GEN Asia/Oceania office at genoa.ecovillage.org. See www.livingroutes.org

Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson, editors, *Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People*, (Barcelona: Green Books, UK, 2002).

Exploding oil prices are going to force major changes in the way we produce food and the way we travel. Oil-based industrial agriculture will simply become too expensive relative to producing food organically and locally by traditional methods. Transportation by automobile and airplane will be a luxury for the few. Our lives in future will be anchored in our local communities. Place, social networks and the natural environment will become far more important. The quality of life in industrial societies will improve though consumption will decline. What we are likely to experience in this century, either by choice or necessity, is a process of »localization«. This means essentially a shifting of economic activity into the hands of small and medium sized local businesses instead of concentration in fewer and fewer mega international corporations. The shift will entail a revival of true local democracy and the nation state, both of which have been under pressure in recent decades due to the increasing influence of transnational corporations.

In the coming society, it will be far more economical to produce energy using local solar, wind, hydro and biomass sources than to continue with a centralized energy production system based on fossil fuels. We will see a move away from centralization towards decentralization, away from centralized control and towards empowerment of local communities to solve their own problems. Many people will move out of the cities into the countryside, looking for a place to survive in self-reliant communities with a lower ecological footprint as consumption will shift from »wants« to needs. Others will stay in the cities but take up food production and form urban ecovillages and new social networks. Governments will find it economically advantageous, if not downright necessary, to support this shift in lifestyle in various ways. The global network of ecovillages, embryonic as it is today, will provide beacons of light to attract the second wave of pioneers to build more robust local communities on the existing foundation.

A Sustainable Lifestyle

The ecovillage movement is a global phenomenon responding to global problems. It is best understood as a part of the anti-globalisation movement (i.e. anti-neo-liberalism). But while the more visible parts of the anti-globalisation movement protest the corporate-dominated global economic model through demonstrations in the streets and consumer boycotts and through single issue movements, ecovillagers have a different approach. They are quietly building small, sustainable communities with their limited resources, with personal

commitment – walking their talk in a classical bottom-up strategy. They see ecovillages as models of how we must all live eventually if the threat to our environment and social structures is to be taken seriously. Their solidarity is with all cultures and all races in both the North and South as they lay the foundations for the first truly global civilization with a common set of values that work for everyone.

Politicians and others, who have observed the phenomenon superficially, tend to classify ecovillagers as »idealists«, as if to dismiss them as irrelevant. But this reaction is flippant and misleading. The reality is that ecovillagers are the true »realists« of our time, who take the threats to our way of life seriously, and are taking personal action to deal with the problem. It is our traditional politicians who are unwilling or unable to deal with the issues. They are in denial and living in a fantasy world that cannot continue for long. Their almost religious belief in unending economic growth as a solution to our problems is untenable and is simply delaying the time when serious action will have to be taken. Politicians are taking the easy way out, while ecovillagers are confronting the problem directly, doing the hard but necessary work with little or no support from their governments.

Ecovillagers are neither neo-Luddites nor nostalgic sentimentalists who want to turn back the clock. On the contrary, they are the true pioneers of our time, forward-looking and in resonance with a new, emergent holistic paradigm, whose metaphor is the living being rather than the billiard balls of the crumbling mechanical worldview. The significance of this movement is the personal commitment to make changes in one's own life. All of the good intentions and sophisticated analyses of global problems and solutions by academics, politicians, think tanks and concerned ordinary people mean nothing until and unless individual citizens take personal action to change their lifestyles. This is the essence of the bottom-up ecovillage strategy. The greater society will eventually embrace ecovillage principles, partly through necessity, but also because ecovillage living simply offers far more satisfying life conditions than the dominant Western model, as a closer examination would demonstrate to anyone who makes the effort to investigate.

What is an Ecovillage?

An ecovillage is, ideally speaking, a microcosm of the macrocosm, as it represents in a very small area – typically with 50–400 people – all the elements and

Institute for Planetary Synthesis

The Path to Planetary Synthesis

By Rudolf Schneider and Alice Boainain-Schneider

The Institute for Planetary Synthesis was founded in 1981 to promote the idea of planetary synthesis, and to help manifest it in the human family.

What is synthesis? In modern language, »synthetic« is mostly used to designate something artificially contrived, man-made, produced by putting together what is not found in the desired combination in nature. We at the Institute for Planetary Synthesis use the term to indicate the already existing sum of all interactions within the planetary life, which forms a »synthetic« whole. We postulate the existence of a synthetic planetary life, formed by the sum of all natural kingdoms and their interactions, in the same way as the human body is a synthetic whole of organs and functions that interact to maintain the life of the total organism and fulfil the purpose of its existence. This synthesis already exists in nature. Our purpose is to aid in its realisation by the human family, so that humanity may consciously integrate in the planetary life.

We think that there is no doubt that the present chaotic world conditions are due to the lack of integration of the human family in the natural circle of the planetary life. This lack of integration has several causes, in particular humanity's belief that it is not part of nature, that it is above nature. This is a foundational belief that determines the way our civilisation has developed, and colours all our personal and collective decisions. We have taken the helm of the ship, emboldened by the scientific discoveries of the past few hundred years, guided by the belief in our intellectual, spiritual superiority over the other members of the planetary community: our brothers and sisters the plants, animals, minerals, our own body, the sun and the wind, water and fire, birth and death, as this is so beautifully expressed in the song of St. Francis. This sense of separation from the planetary life has perhaps been necessary, even inevitable in the course of humanity's evolution, but it has created many perversions and deviations that need to be corrected: an insensitivity to the suffering we cause through our actions, through our misguided attempts to control what we do not yet fully understand, a disregard for the consequences and results our actions may have on ourselves and others, sooner or later. The present climatic disturbances are just an example. Another example is genetic manipulation.

Luckily, modern science has finally progressed sufficiently in the last century to recognise the synthesis of all interactions within nature, the existing balance and cooperation among all living organisms and natural forces on the planet. There remains the task of finding our own place within this existing body of manifestation of the planetary life.

Speculation on humanity's purpose has traditionally been the domain of religion and philosophy. Where do we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? These questions usually concerned only the religiously or philosophically minded. Humanity is now at a point in its evolution where we can begin to seek for scientific answers to these questions.

The first reaction of science was to state that there is no purpose, that life is the result of chance, or if there is a purpose, it is not possible to identify it in the natural world by scientific methods. Many scientists in the last century, however, from Teilhard de Chardin to Vernardsky, from Einstein to Rupert Sheldrake, have started to postulate the hypothesis that the planetary life, like the human being, evolves for a purpose. This necessitates our conscious cooperation with the natural processes at work within the planet. It necessitates a recognition of our responsibility for all consequences of our actions, and the determination to act fairly in all circumstances, to keep the balance of nature. We reap what we sow, there is no way to escape this natural law. It is up to us to start sowing in full awareness of the fruit we will reap.

The work of the Institute is inspired by the teaching given in the books written by Alice A. Bailey in the beginning of last century. These teachings constitute an attempt to convey, in a language more appropriate to the modern mind educated in the Western civilisation, some of the eternal truths that have been known to the most advanced representatives of the human race throughout the millennia, such as the founders of the great world religions: Krishna, Lao-Tzu, Confucius, the Buddha, the Christ, Mohammed, and to many others who, to a greater or lesser extent, have influenced the development of the human race.

These teachings deal with many subjects, but the part that has motivated the creation of the Institute is the teaching concerning the so-called Seed-Groups. In 1981, year of the foundation of the Institute, there existed many groups, organisations and movements throughout the world, but they lacked coordination. Networking was still at its beginnings. The seed-groups constitute a structure that could be of use to help bring together and organise the many

positive initiatives being undertaken everywhere to establish a human culture and civilisation based on right human relations.

In a world where unity is essential for survival, we aim at a global education with values shared by all humanity and accepted by all the different educational systems, religions and ideologies.

We outline below five basic values as a starting point for a co-operative, international education towards planetary synthesis. With these qualities, cultivated and practised daily, it should become possible to build up the new systems and structures so urgently needed today, thus helping to create a new civilisation and a new culture, in a spirit of unity in diversity among people and nations. The most important factor is the voluntary education of ourselves, as individuals, along the following guidelines:

- Love of Truth
as the only sure standard for a just and inclusive far-sighted society.
- Sense of Justice
that embraces love and compassion, broadmindedness, understanding and readiness towards self-forgetfulness.
- Sense of Personal Responsibility
towards group concerns, the community and the nation as well as a sense of self-control in personal matters.
- Co-operative Thinking
that rests on active good will and the principle of right human relationships.
- Serving the Common Good
through active personal effort and the readiness to share with others. Only that which serves the whole is also of value to the individual, in the sense of »one for all and all for one«. (Leaflet »Values to Live By«, from Lucis Trust Association)

Guided by these basic values, it is possible to develop an all-pervading, ten-fold group structure that gives new life to all existing groups, governments and organisations, including the United Nations.

The groups will consist of men and women whom we may call »experts«, because they are not only highly competent specialists in one particular sphere of work but will also be able to offer solutions to recognised problems based on their many-faceted experience in their daily endeavours and above all in their

spiritual life. These experts will find a point of convergence in the plan of a global group structure. They will not appear as organisations but rather as a living organism imbuing all existing, far-sighted groups with new life, although the first three groups will be working on a more spiritual level.

The specific tasks of every seed group are shortly presented below. The 8th and 10th seed groups form an exception that has been described as follows:

The nature of the anima mundi, the fact of the subjective consciousness found in all forms without exception, and the existence of an interplay between these forms, through the medium of the soul, will be the major theme (of the 8th group). Soul sensitivity and reaction to the energy in any form will be the training objective of the group members. Owing to the difficulty of this task, the members of this 8th group will be chosen from the personnel of the other groups, for they have had a fair measure of training in their preliminary work. Two groups will then be interlocking groups – that which is formed of the key people in all the groups (the 10th group of creative workers) and this one. (»The Externalisation of the Hierarchy«, page 59, by Alice A. Bailey)

The Tasks of the Ten Seed Groups

- Telepathic Communicators:
telepathic communication from soul to soul through alignment; from mind to mind through integration; between humanity and the inner government of the planet through the science of impression.
- Trained Observers:
dissipation of world glamour, illusion and maya through illumination.
- Magnetic Healers:
through »magnetic living«; through laws of life, laws of health and right human relationships; through continuity of consciousness.
- Educators in the New Age:
education through inflow of the light of knowledge into »instinctual man«; through inflow of the light of wisdom into »intelligent man«; through applied knowledge, expressed wisdom and occult understanding in »spiritual man«.
- Political Organisers:
international understanding through communication of the divine (political) Will into races and nations, linking the department of the Manu (the ruler of the human race) with men.

- Workers in the field of Religion:
through transcendental mysticism; through transcendental occultism;
through transcendental religion.
- Scientific Servers:
through development of new hypotheses to substantiate the next step forward; through sensitive reaction to spiritual energies and forces; through release of energy to relate spirit and matter and precipitate the divine Plan.
- Psychologists:
through relationship of the human kingdom to the sub-human and the super-human kingdom; through a study of the divine Plan for the five kingdoms in nature.

Co-workers of the IPS in the United States have developed a striking description of the essential tasks of these groups, which they called »The Code of Humanity«:

- I Choose to Communicate Truth.
- I Choose the Reality of Life.
- I Choose to Heal Not Hurt.
- I Choose Education Over Ignorance.
- I Choose the Power of Peace.
- I Choose to Love God (or Good) and See God (or Good) in All Humanity.
- I Choose to Seek the Soul in All Things.
- I Choose to Link to the World of Inspiration.
- I Choose the Principle of Sharing.
- I Choose to Become a Co-Creator in Life and Live it More Abundantly.

The Institute's main mission consists in networking the loose members and groups of the New Group of World Servers and to create with them a strong and effective platform and global energy structure which will bring forth planetary awareness and synthesis. The Institute for Planetary Synthesis participates actively in ECOSOC and UN conferences, and intervenes in the discussions whenever meaningful. Statements aimed at elevating the discussions onto a planetary synthesis level evoke a reaction from some of the participants. Thanks to the universal law of affinity and synchronicity, the members of the New Group of World Servers are thus discovered and relationships are established.

Thus, the IPS' work at the United Nations is to establish right human rela-

tionships by means of integration, constructive co-operation, an expansion of consciousness that leads to the awareness of the ecology of life and to the establishment of world peace. The Institute therefore supports the main aim of the UN Charter (Art.1.1), » ... to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace ...«. Only the means differ. The Institute has a more holistic nature, as it seeks to strengthen world peace by promoting inner peace, the peace of the mind and feelings, with the ultimate aim of experiencing cosmic consciousness, i. e. unity with the source of all life.

It works for reawakening an awareness of spiritual values in daily life, for promoting planetary awareness, which leads to planetary citizenship. This includes an awareness of the underlying energy structure of our society, the kingdoms of nature, the planet and the solar system. It also seeks to analyse and help solve world problems on the basis of spiritual values and planetary awareness, thus meeting true present needs. For that purpose, it publishes studies on papers on world problems, which are distributed with its newsletters or at relevant meetings and UN conferences. The challenge is always to present the eternal truths in a way that can be received and understood, whatever the religious or ideological framework in which people operate, and help them move forward into greater usefulness for the common good.

Another task is to observe what steps are being taken today within humanity in the various fields of activity, to establish the new world culture and civilization based on right human relations and sharing. From what we have observed at the many meetings and conferences in which we participated, we can be confident that many people of goodwill are active today in the world, struggling to solve humanity's problems. We seek to do our part by bringing these people together, helping them to learn about each other's efforts, so that their overall effectiveness may be increased. From time to time, we have also the joy and possibility to help people discover new dimensions of thinking within themselves, leading to life more abundant and a greater contribution to the common good. Selfless giving is the key to happiness.

For example, we have published in 2005 a paper entitled »The Seven Tasks«, which discusses seven tasks which are exemplary of the work that needs to be done today to establish right human relations within our human family. These tasks are:

Schweisfurth Foundation

Towards Ecological and Social Transformation Through the Fulfillment of Basic Needs

By Franz-Theo Gottwald

Diagnosis: Basic Needs must be Fulfilled in a Civilized Manner

In 1985 Karl Ludwig Schweisfurth, a manufacturer from the food sector, established the Schweisfurth Foundation. He had played an essential part in industrializing and globalizing the meat product sector. For decades he was instrumental in turning the fulfillment of basic consumer needs into a way of maximizing profits through automation, specialization and concentration. Beginning in the 1980s, he became ever more aware of the fact that although these industrial solutions of meeting food requirements – like those that meet other basic needs like clothing, secure housing or a promising future for generations to come – function on a high technological level, but in a rather uncivilized fashion. Two observations in particular strengthened his notion that the conventional, industrial manufacturing processes for goods and commodities meant to satisfy basic needs, had reached their apex worldwide. On the one hand, it appeared that in his field of work, technical and economic frameworks for animal husbandry had been optimized in such a way that no additional cost reduction was possible. Examination and analysis of industrial food production proved that depleted soils, polluted rivers and streams, and insufficient feed supplies for animals went hand in hand with immeasurable pain inflicted on the animals during transport and slaughter. On the other side, it had become obvious as early as the middle of the 1980s that working conditions in all branches of conventional industry had become ever more devoid of meaning, which led to feelings of alienation, and increased sick days by workers.

Karl Ludwig Schweisfurth had also been introduced to the activities of the Club of Rome. He was convinced that economic growth potential was limited. His intensively maintained relationships with artists and scientists strengthened his assumption that a new era had dawned, challenging him to find and establish new ways of meeting basic needs, which would hold up to the ecological and social scrutiny of future generations.

Thus, in his autobiography he summarizes his thoughts:

»As I have said earlier, conceptual formulation in my giant company had become difficult. Growth had begun to slow, and I felt that a definite shift in the relationship between producer and consumer was under way. Entrepreneurs were slowly losing control over corporate policy, as customer wishes became the determining factors. I realized that a maelstrom was dragging me down and I was no longer master of my decisions. Added to this was an economic breeze blowing ever colder which increasingly forced me into the role of an auxiliary to the retail trade. If I did not conform, I would lose my competitive edge and be forced to the sidelines.

I did not like the idea that this had caused a chasm that I was unable to bridge. On the outside, I was still the entrepreneur, but inside I had to yield to pressure that was brought to bear upon me. I also did not like the fact that I was no longer able to live in harmony with my basic tenets concerning the responsibility I felt towards my workers and my company and that my ideas concerning quality and the social system I had established, which vastly transcended any state ordered requirements, seemed in danger, just as my ideas of a humane work place and – most importantly – of a beautiful work place, would neither bear up to competition nor the ever intensifying business rivalry.« (Schweisfurth, 1999, pg. 213–214).

Therefore, in 1984 he sold his company and started building a New Culture of Agriculture with a small group of people who believed in sustainable development.

In those days I joined the group as a young corporate consultant, with a background in consciousness studies, systems theory and ecology as well as evaluation of holistic management. All of us were convinced that »more of the same simply would not do!« We pledged to work towards creating a new civilization that would meet basic needs according to new criteria and yardsticks, such as eco-efficiency, eco-consistency and eco-sufficiency. We strove to find new ways of avoiding externalizing costs at the expense of natural and social capital while building up locally and regionally focused production and consumption systems, which would be economically, ecologically and socially viable, and moreover, would inspire and invite our fellow citizens to consider a new way of life.

We expressed our diagnosis with the phrase: The system's too many victories

have proven fatal! Our hopes for change were based on the fact that as early as the 1980s, a number of civil society activists and networks had gotten together or were in the process of forming, whose global consciousness was directed towards actively transforming perceived grievances.

We were greatly influenced by the Lindisfarne Fellows, the scientists and educational experts and visionaries active at Schumacher College, such as Arne Naess, Ervin Laszlo, Frederick Vester, Hazel Henderson und James Lovelock.

In order to effectively build upon these principles, the Schweisfurth Foundation was legally established on 12 November 1985.

Inspiration: Consciousness Development is our Common Basis

Karl Ludwig Schweisfurth, the founder, and those of us who attended to day-to-day business, were guided in our work by Einstein's statement that the problems facing mankind are of such a fundamental and global nature, that they cannot be solved by the same mindset that created them.

Our work then and now has always been inspired by certain ideas that never lose their validity. For instance, we believe that a change for a more sustainable lifestyle must be based upon a culture of consciousness convinced that an individual as well as a collective consciousness can develop. Most people on earth harbor an inexhaustible potential, which is expressed directly through care, insight and empathy. We are strongly convinced that egocentrism and consumerism may be transcended through states of consciousness that fulfill human yearnings for happiness, love and freedom more so than any craving for more of the worldwide pie of goods and services.

We also believe that organizations and institutions (and naturally our foundation) – and not only single persons or groups – in keeping with a collective development of consciousness can lead the way to a new zeitgeist of sharing and conviviality, thus growing themselves with the intensity and the extent of realizing this zeitgeist. The more an organization's vocation is felt and implemented, the easier it is. It is our vocation to contribute to measures in science, research and education as well as counseling public policy agencies, making ecologically and socially sustainable proposals for transformation, especially with regard to the basic human right to food.

In the pursuit of this vocation, we are guided by our internal vision. As worked out in one of our earlier projects, internal vision for us means being continually in touch with the »Spirit of Holistic Change«. We systematically use this inner dialogue as well as joint discussions with the Schweisfurth Foundation board, coworkers and project partners to check if our actions are in total harmony with our vocation. And thanks to Martin Buber and David Bohm we are able to use dialogical methods, thus trying to become a living fractal of a new civilization for whose creation we have been animated with the living spirit.

We also like to measure our efforts by Albert Schweitzer's ethos of biophilia, by checking if our projects, measures and programs are designed to preserve and develop life. We make sure our institutional activities never hinder or destroy any form of life.

Motivation: Living Well Forever

Today, mastering a sustainable lifestyle, leading a sustainably conscionable personal or family existence, is more topical than ever. If we believe climate researchers of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) mankind has around 15 years left to turn things around.

Technical solutions exist in every area of need: organically produced foodstuffs, ecologically produced textiles, efficient low energy homes, new solutions in mobility like car sharing and the three-liter-engine, ecologically friendly tourism – to name just a few that are easy on the climate, but help fulfill human primary needs.

To quote the philosopher Schmid, living well and being easy on the climate means »to lead a *life of circumspection* and to find ecologically correct measures in dealing with resources and technologies as well as limiting intrusions to a conscionable extent, while avoiding any kind of permanent damage«. (Schmid, 2006, p. 123).

An Indian Yoga instructor who conducted an advanced training course at the Schweisfurth Foundation introduced the principle of a circumspect lifestyle to us. He informed us that the aim of all physical and spiritual exercises is »achieving more by doing less«.

»Do less and achieve more« was and is a challenge. It turns a basic assumption

of our contemporary achievement-oriented society upside down, which posits that higher value can only be attained through higher achievement, application or an ever better and more intensive performance as well as increased productivity (more results in a shorter time span).

Constant practice of this principle – in contrast to conventional (erroneous) beliefs – gave us deep insights. We are solely responsible for the creation of our inner selves, and our lifestyle with its impact upon nature and the environment. This means that we as an institution have to ask ourselves before each act of consumption, each purchase, if and how amassing fewer goods might actually lead to more satisfaction.

Leading a sustainable and good life has been the leitmotif guiding our decisions and actions ever since. Scrutinizing one's own habits is the best starting point for the creation of sustainable ways of life. We, like Schmid, are convinced that a daily examination of one's modes of consumption and conduct are a central factor in living with a clear conscience – also towards future generations.

»Often heedless choices and habitual use and consumption of materials and objects are ecologically relevant. Traditional individual and societal habits are even more at odds with ecologically sound ways of life than some anonymous power. Simply knowing about the necessity for change in order to create an ecological lifestyle is not enough, what is required is a regular and sustainable practice of changed habits and modes of behavior, which eventually must become »second nature to the self.« (Schmid, 2006, p. 124).

If a foundation engages permanently in a good life, doing good, it must be in the context of developments impacting all of society. The idea has been rife lately that economic growth can be the solution to environmental problems and social troubles like the new forms of poverty and pauperization, which have been particularly endemic among the young worldwide. A contradiction seems to exist between the personal guiding principles that less sometimes is more, and the familiar industrial growth model. A contradiction with its concomitant conflicts and psychological problems, for those persons who would like to remain within society and its prevailing cultural mores rather than lead an insular life or a life on the sidelines, constantly imperiled.

In order to solve this motivational and argumentative conundrum, we resort to the »Factor-4-Philosophy« promising doubled prosperity while using half of the resources. The past two decades of technological development have

World Wisdom Alliance

Wisdom is Our Common Heritage – The Birth of the World Wisdom Alliance

By David Woolfson

Everything that is created in the world begins in the first instance with an idea. Almost all ideas, however, are built upon the work of the many who have previously set the foundations. Accordingly, most »new« ideas can be more accurately viewed as creative innovations of existing concepts presented in a new way or with new elements. They are often a synergistic extension of one or many ideas that have come before.

That is certainly the case with the concept for a »World Wisdom Alliance«. The core idea was first conceived in an email dialogue that I had in the year 2005 with Dr. Ervin Laszlo, Founder of The Club of Budapest International, and world artist Peter Gabriel in relation to the World Wisdom Council.

My relationship with Ervin Laszlo and The Club of Budapest began in 2000 when I undertook the production of a worldwide event marking the first spring/autumn day of the new Millennium as the first »World Day of Planetary Consciousness«. We called the event »Planetary Vision Festival 2001« and sunrise ceremonies were held in 28 cities around the globe from New Zealand to Samoa on March 20, 2001.

A documentary program was subsequently made from the world event which also featured numerous Honorary Members of the Club of Budapest including Peter Gabriel and music from his Millennium show »Ovo«. At the taping in Toronto, Peter remarked that Native American tribes made decisions through an Elder's Council which considered the future impact of their collective decisions to the Seventh Generation of their descendants.

We talked briefly after the taping and Peter mentioned that he had been contemplating the creation of such an Elder's Council on a global level. At the time I had also been thinking of a comparable concept – a think-tank of leaders with both a futures and a global perspective. I replied that I would present an idea for such a council to Dr. Laszlo for the Club of Budapest, which I did in 2003 along with colleague Gregorio Rivera.

The Club of Budapest International endorsed the concept and in the year 2004, in association with the World Commission of Global Consciousness & Spirituality, convened the World Wisdom Council as a global »think/action tank« dedicated to the advancement and application of wisdom in the world.

When Peter Gabriel and I were next in touch in the spring of 2005, he advised that he was developing a distinct Global Elders initiative with various partners. It is often the case that people who share a similar broad goal or mission differ when it comes to the specific concepts or initiatives. That is a major reason why there are hundreds of thousands of groups in the world addressing issues of environment, peace, poverty, etc. instead of a few very large ones!

This realization led to the consideration of further questions; »How can the many diverse but like-minded »better world« initiatives be linked?« and »How can we connect, share information and collaborate to a greater voice and impact in the world at this critical evolutionary moment in human history?«

The answer seemed clear – a mega-network with the primary vehicle to connect being the Internet. Thus the concept of the World Wisdom Alliance was conceived as a network of like-minded groups and individuals and as an »on-line community«.

A major step in the development of the Alliance concept took place in conjunction with the Goi Peace Foundation's Forum 2005 »Creating a New Civilization« in November 2005 in Tokyo. The Forum featured the participation of 14 like-minded organizations including The Club of Budapest, Club of Rome, Institute of Noetic Sciences, Pathways to Peace and the World Wisdom Council, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration. Featured speakers included The Hon. Mikhail Gorbachev, Dr. Kazuo Murakami, Dr. Ervin Laszlo and members of the World Wisdom Council.

Foundation President Hiroo Saionji closed the Forum saying: »If we hold a global consciousness then we will achieve a global civilization....We can work together to expand the network«.

I attended the Forum and the related World Wisdom Council meeting in my capacity as Co-Coordinator of the Council. That historic gathering inspired me to consider in a very real way what concrete steps I and my colleagues could take to assist in the great and urgent task of creating a new civilization as a new

»world community«. The concept of a »mega-network« remained foremost in my mind in that regard.

The World Wisdom Council met next in Arosa, Switzerland in January 2006 in conjunction with the World Spirit Forum. The consensus of the Council, the World Spirit Forum participants and the speakers in Arosa was that humanity has, at best, a 10 year »window of opportunity« for a massive evolutionary shift in human consciousness and behaviour. Without such sweeping change in thought and action we can anticipate widespread societal collapse and face the potential end of humanity as a viable species on our planet.

It was accordingly clear that humanity as a whole faces both enormous challenges and tremendous opportunities today on a global scale. Our growing environmental and societal challenges are unprecedented as both our civilization and survival are in serious jeopardy. Opportunities for large-scale transformation are also unprecedented being driven by on-going revolutions in new scientific knowledge, innovative technologies and global communications.

The challenges before us are both man-made and products of the modern age. The long list includes; nuclear war, terrorism, climate change, ozone depletion, eco-system destruction, resource depletion, disease, pandemics and toxic pollution of our air, water and land. Increasing ecological degradation and resource exploitation go hand in hand with mounting insecurity and militarization, rising criminality and corruption, growing economic and social polarization and escalating religious and cultural conflict.

At the same time the promise of this 21st Century includes new understandings of the natural world and ourselves together with incredible new tools: alternative energies, sustainable technologies, world communications, global information exchange, space exploration, biotechnology, nanotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence and many others yet to be discovered.

Yet, humanity remains in the midst of a growing global crisis as the large-scale negative trends interact with and reinforce each other. Many of the world's leading scientists have been warning us to address our growing global challenges for over 40 years now. Regrettably the majority of citizens in our respective nations are neither aware of the true nature of this crisis nor of the major societal shifts necessary to address it. Especially in the shrinking time-frame that many of these scientists are now telling us remains to do so which may now be less than 10 years.

However in this crisis, as in all crises, there of course exists a corresponding opportunity – an opportunity to adapt to the rapidly changing circumstances by changing ourselves. It is apparent then that today’s growing global crisis has a »flip side« which provides us with a corresponding opportunity. It is the opportunity to trigger an evolutionary transformation of humanity and our values, systems and structures to the »Global« level based upon our new understandings and tools.

Accordingly, the major question of our time has now become: »Will we be overwhelmed by the growing global challenges confronting us or will we overcome them through wise leadership and collective action to enter a new »global era« of peaceful and sustainable human development?«

This bottom-line »breakdown or breakthrough« scenario reinforced my personal commitment to take appropriate action. In that regard, I and colleagues Gregorio Rivera and Lynn Holden presented the concept of the »World Wisdom Alliance« to the World Wisdom Council members meeting in Arosa. The Council enthusiastically endorsed the Alliance as a key »wisdom-in-action« initiative fully aligned with the shared mission. The announced plan was to launch the Alliance in Toronto, Canada in July 2006, as time was surely of the essence!

After many months of planning and hard work by our local organizing team, the World Wisdom Alliance was officially launched in Toronto, Canada on July 26th–28th, 2006.

Nearly 200 people from many parts of the world came together to participate in the launch as the WWA’s founding members and partners. The launch gathering was hosted by The Club of Budapest Canada, a Canadian non-profit organization formally chartered in April, 2006 which is the entity initiating and developing the Alliance.

Participants and supporters included members of the World Wisdom Council and Kosmos Journal. WWC members participating were Ervin Laszlo, Ashok Gangadean, Elisabet Sahtouris, Audrey Kitigawa, Lybert »Uncle« Angaangaq, Michael Laitman, Jonathan Granoff together with Ambassadors Hiroo Saionji and Nancy Roof.

Many other participants were associated with like-minded groups such as the Goi Peace Foundation, Campaign for Departments of Peace, Global Marshall

Plan USA, InterSpiritual Dialogue Network, Children of the Earth, Kosmos Magazine, World Spirit Forum and Ecologos Institute.

The Alliance is intended as a »mega-network« of like-minded organizations, groups, businesses and individuals actively addressing our shared societal and environmental challenges and opportunities – both globally and locally. It will bring together all sectors of society and cultures as well as ecological groups, peace groups, development groups, poverty groups, etc. working for a better world, through a multi-faceted Web community.

Once created, our »on-line community« will empower Alliance members to have a »global voice« for a better world and positive future and enable them to more effectively address our shared challenges and opportunities. It is both a »grassroots« initiative and one that can harness the power of our numbers worldwide.

WWA core concepts include: »Consciousness, Connection, Communication and Collaboration toward World Community«. Core principles include: inclusivity, mutual member support and active engagement within the community.

The following »Working Framework« for the World Wisdom Alliance was presented to the founding gathering in Toronto:

World Wisdom Alliance – Working Framework

Mission

To effectively address our growing, global/local societal and environmental challenges and opportunities with new thinking and actions in sufficient time to adapt to rapidly changing world circumstances.

Medium

A »world community« aimed at actively addressing our shared challenges and opportunities by linking and connecting like-minded groups and individuals worldwide through effective communication, dialogue and collaborative action.

Method

The core of the WWA communication network will be a web portal which creates a Member »on-line« community

The main Communication Centre will be established in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Member Benefits

- Connect, communicate and collaborate with like-minded organizations and individuals worldwide.
- List Member events, activities and share other key information in the WWA »on-line« community.
- Access new members, supporters, partners and resources.
- Distribute content and information on-line to WWA members and the public.
- Develop new relationships including joint projects, collaborations and campaigns.
- The WWA may coordinate joint projects, events and campaigns for Member and public participation.

Member Responsibilities

- Endorse the WWA »Vision and Values Statement«.
- Provide mutual web-links with the WWA web portal.
- Share information and communicate Member's mission, projects, events, research, etc. with all other WWA Members via the on-line community.
- Contribute content, as applicable, on an on-going basis to the community.
- Appoint an individual from each organizational Member as a communication liaison for the WWA.
- Make the applicable Membership contribution annually.

Member Categories

- Community Groups & Communities of Interest
- Corporations & Companies
- Individuals
- Local/Regional Governments & Agencies

- Non-Profit Organizations
- Religious and Service Organizations
- Schools and Educational Institutions

The founding group in Toronto provided substantial input and further ideas at the working session. For example, the session on the »Alliance Framework« suggested the following Mission Statement: »To facilitate the joining together of the hearts and minds of the citizens of the planet in an alliance which draws on and embodies deep wisdom to ignite a critical mass of people into co-creating a world in which we are one human family, flourishing together with all living things on sacred Earth«. The creation process has continued on-line pending the WWA framework being finalized.

At the same time, the World Wisdom Alliance »on-line community« website is now being designed in association with The Peoples World initiative based in the United Kingdom. The site will be a community platform and meeting point of infinite diversity to catalyze global change.

The first phase will be an extension of The Club of Budapest Canada site where Alliance members and participants can define how they can best contribute and interface, from the perspective of their community of interest, with the many other communities of interest within the broad shared mission and vision. It will also be a dynamic platform enhancing the effectiveness of the important work of our members.

In addition to a multitude of state-of-the art web communication and networking tools, our Alliance community will feature both a Public and a Member section:

- The Public section will contain content in categories such as global issues, solution pathways, alternative futures, editorials and guest editorials, blogs, database of world reports, world publications, world links, and other content.
- The Member section will contain specific content and services of particular value to organizational members and activists including: World Calendar of Member events; Database of Members; Database of Member Projects tailored to finding sponsors, donors, partners; Member communications including Web Conferences, Discussion Forums, Symposia; Access to all Members for communication and collaboration, and other content and services as they evolve.

At this time the World Wisdom Alliance is still in the process of co-creation – a potential butterfly that has just begun to emerge from its formative cocoon. The process is on-going but we can envision what it can ultimately become – the creative space for the creation of a new civilization as a world community of global citizens who can together shift the future from our present path of breakdown to one of breakthrough.

Ultimately, thousands of organizations and hundreds of thousands or millions of individuals can connect, communicate and collaborate in shared vision and action in our new world community toward a sustainable and peaceful planet and future for humanity.

What is needed above all right now to make the WWA a reality in the near future is the active participation and support of numerous like-minded groups and individuals. The creation of this mega-network requires the involvement and skills of many people and significant resources as well.

The World Wisdom Alliance can be our collective vehicle to envision and build the new global civilization – first on-line and then in the real world! This is what »wisdom« must come to mean for all of us at this point in humanity's evolutionary development. The alternative is too grim to contemplate.

We welcome your input, participation, partnership, resource support and sponsorship in the development of the World Wisdom Alliance. Please join us in this process of co-creation and development as our initial partners and members!

Contact Information

World Wisdom Alliance
1101 Bay Street
Suite 2606
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2W8
Canada

www.clubofbudapest.ca

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About the Declaration for All Life on Earth

The Declaration for All Life on Earth, launched by the Goi Peace Foundation, promotes a shared vision of a truly peaceful and harmonious world for all life in the 21st century. It sets forth guiding principles to realize this vision and encourages all people to apply them in their individual lives and in their specialized fields of activities. Our collective wisdom and joint efforts are vital to ensure a bright and sustainable future. The Declaration for All Life on Earth is intended to serve as an instrument in bringing together individuals and organizations committed to this common aim.

Declaration for All Life on Earth

Preamble

The earth is an evolving living entity. Every form of life on earth is an important part of this living entity. Accordingly, we, as individual human beings, must cultivate the awareness that we are all members of a global community of life and that we share a common mission and responsibility for the future of our planet.

Every one of us has a role to play in the evolution of our planet, and to achieve world peace each of us must live up to our responsibilities and obligations. Up to the present time, few people on earth have been fully satisfied with life. We have faced conflicts all over the world in competition for limited resources and land. This has had a devastating effect on the global environment.

As we enter the new millennium, more than anything else, the realization of world peace depends on an awakening of consciousness on the part of each individual member of the human race. Today, it is imperative that every human being bears the responsibility of building peace and harmony in his or her heart. We all have this common mission that we must fulfill. World peace will be achieved when every member of humanity becomes aware of this common mission – when we all join together for our common purpose.

Until now, in terms of power, wealth, fame, knowledge, technology and education, humanity has been divided between individuals, nations and organizations that have possession and those that do not. There have also been distinctions between the givers and the receivers, the helpers and the helped.

We hereby declare our commitment to transcend all these dualities and distinctions with a totally new concept, which will serve as our foundation as we set out to build a peaceful world.

General Principles

In the new era, humanity shall advance toward a world of harmony, that is, a world in which every individual and every nation can freely express their individual qualities, while living in harmony with one another and with all life on earth. To realize this vision, we set forth the following guiding principles:

1. Reverence for life

We shall create a world based on love and harmony in which all forms of life are respected.

2. Respect for all differences

We shall create a world in which all different races, ethnic groups, religions, cultures, traditions and customs are respected. The world must be a place free from discrimination or confrontation, socially, physically and spiritually – a place where diversity is appreciated and enjoyed.

3. Gratitude for and coexistence with all of nature

We shall create a world in which each person is aware that we are enabled to live through the blessings of nature, and lives in harmony with nature, showing gratitude for all animal, plant and other forms of life.

4. Harmony between the spiritual and material

We shall create a world based on the harmonious balance of material and spiritual civilization. We must break away from our overemphasis on the material to allow a healthy spirituality to blossom among humanity. We must build a world where not only material abundance but also spiritual riches are valued.

Practice

We shall put these principles into practice guided by the following:

As individuals:

We must move beyond an era in which authority and responsibility rest in nation states, ethnic groups and religions to one in which the individual is paramount. We envision an »Age of the Individual« – not in the sense of egoism,

but an age in which every individual is ready to accept responsibility and to carry out his or her mission as an independent member of the human race.

Each of us shall carry out our greatest mission to bring love, harmony and gratitude into our own heart, and in so doing, bring harmony to the world at large.

In our specialized fields:

We shall build a system of cooperation in which wisdom is gathered together to derive the most from technical knowledge, skills and ability in various fields, such as education, science, culture and the arts, as well as religion, philosophy, politics and economics.

As the young generation:

In the 20th century, parents, teachers and society were the educators of children, and the children were always in the position of being taught. In the 21st century, adults shall learn from the wonderful qualities of children, such as their purity, innocence, radiance, wisdom and intuition, to inspire and uplift one another. The young generation shall play a leading role in the creation of peace for a bright future.

[May Peace Prevail on Earth](#)

Goi Peace Foundation Contact Information

The Goi Peace Foundation
Headquarters
Heiwa Daiichi Building
1-4-5 Hirakawacho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093
Japan

Tel: + 81 3 3265 2071
Fax: + 81 3 3239 0919
E-mail: info@goipeace.or.jp

Internet: www.goipeace.or.jp

For comments and recommendations, please kindly contact:
E-mail: info@goipeace.or.jp and goipeace@web.de