

THE PLAN

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Herein: a plan to save the life of the earth and the human species.

In discussion one often hears the refrain, “Oh, we can’t kill the earth. The earth will survive us,” as if that dispels the massive destruction of the planet’s life. Well maybe the ants and cockroaches will survive but the morality of we humans destroying the life of the earth back to the cockroaches must be addressed. These types of comments are made by civilized people, members of industrial society who have little relationship to the life of the earth. Because of the life that we are forced to lead due to the structure of industrial society, we do not have familiarity with the larger life that supports us.

Money is our life support system which we use to purchase food and shelter. We are not like our successful forager/hunter ancestors who could identify several hundred plants and explain their uses for food, medicine or handcrafts. The life of the earth provided their life support systems.

Now, our industrial life support systems are threatened even if we have money. When topsoil, oil or potable water run out, they run out and there is no more. Many are becoming aware that our planet is headed toward a massive die-off of human and other species. Some near the first world shopping malls have not yet got a clue but many in third world countries are already seeing the beginnings of “the end of the world.”

No need to cite the numbers. We know they are huge. The machinery of industrial civilization is eating up the flesh of the earth. The ocean fish stocks are falling precipitously, deforestation is epidemic, add this to topsoil exhaustion, desertification, pollution of potable water, species extinction and many other indices, then add the newer effects of Global Warming and dwindling oil reserves and anybody should be able to get the picture. An exponentially

exploding human population, with increasing material consumption based on dwindling resources and a dying planet will not work!

When people first look at this situation they panic and try to think of ways to save everything. Save everything just as it is. People search for the magic bullet that will solve our problems so that we don't have to think or change lifestyles in any way. Many people believe that "technology will save us," not realizing that technology got us to where we are.

We in the industrial society inherit from Babylon, five thousand years ago. Babylon's energy base was the fertility of grasslands, forests and deep soils. In effect this Babylonian type of culture rewards humans for success in extorting fertility from the flesh of the earth. Today the energy base of industrial farming is the topsoil/fossil fuel trade-off—chemical fertilizer and pesticide applied to exhausted soils; and plants bred especially for this industrial application. Instead of the long term fertility of the soil community of millions of different lives, both macroscopic and microscopic, industry produces chemicals from fossil fuels. This has happened in just an eye-blink of humans' several million year history. Technology and fossil fuel have aided this type of culture in catching more fish, logging more acres, digging more mines, and generally turning anything that could be found into cash. No one asks about the morality of sucking the life out of the planet earth, the biological mother. Holographically, we are lives within lives. We live within the planetary organism and are eating up that which feeds us. We are at the point where the parasite sucks dry the host and the parasite dies.

We're talking about lifestyles that practice large scale agriculture which drains the fertility of the soil and over-grazes the landscape. The "bigger barns and broader acres" crowd stretches in a line back to Babylon whose ecology now is essentially gone. This is a culture that does not think deeply about the extinction of intact climax ecosystems. An overgrazed grassland becomes a semi-arid desert; the Cattle Baron's family retires with their loot to the capital city. This is the story of imperialism. We can trace the "surpluses" taken from the earth in the sordid ecological history of the empires since Ancient China, Indus Valley and Babylon.

Viewed as a whole this is a pre-adolescent human culture. The human species has produced many types of culture but the mining of the earth's fertility to swell the social body, to increase the power, production and profit of the elite who are gathered around the emperor—has been a disaster. This grasping after material objects and desperate need to exert power over other

humans is an immature response to life. The highest purpose of life in an industrial society is to produce industrial goods.

If We Were Mature Members of a Mature Species

In our maturity we would notice that it is the biological processes of life that provide our sustenance. The loss of only one coral reef and its incubation of numerous fish schools translates its effects to us. The loss of one forest means the deprivation of clean water for us. We cannot destroy that which feeds us. In our maturity we understand that rather than suck biological energy from the earth we must restore the ecologies of the earth to health and live from the increase. A healthy living earth would reflect in a healthy human species.

In our maturity, we would notice that the scramble for industrial products is hardly a sophisticated purpose for the life of the human species. A more mature focus would be to aid the life that we are a part of. If we were a mature species, would we not want a human culture that encouraged the fullest development of each member of society, from *en utero* to old age; the development of our full human potential? Rather than the “progress” of amassing money, the manifestation would be of more and more human creativity in refining culture and aiding the life process. The proposal is that the highly unusual abilities displayed by rare people are abilities that are latent in the species and that all people can fully develop all of these abilities—full blown—as human culture and creativity become more refined. Because we live in a machine society and our lives are shaped by the needs of the machine process, we fail to recognize that we can shape and create the way we biologically relate to each other and the earth. But, in order to shift from the industrial system we must have some other way to provide food, shelter and to raise children free from emotional damage.

The Biological Multiplier

The life of our earth is made up of biological communities within biological communities. The very important soil community is made up of a huge number of different species. The food of this community is organic debris that falls on it. This is an energy flow system, a food chain, wherein solar energy comes to the tree, dead leaves and other organic debris fall on the ground and are consumed by the soil community. The excrement of the soil

community rests in solution and is taken up by the roots of the tree. The tree stands above ground in its own guild of plant species, a forest or as a mainstay in a surrounding community of smaller plants. (Below ground, species of mushroom mycelium spread vast mats of fibers which connect with plant roots symbiotically). Everything is food and everything is excrement in the cyclic flow system. There is no waste. This is the process of creating soil that plants can live on. It requires three hundred to one thousand years to create each new inch of topsoil in optimum ecosystems.

If the biology is injured, say a fire, earthquake or storm, the health is restored in biological succession. First, tough plants (now usually called weeds) come in to cover the exposed and oxidizing soil. Then as those plants lay down their bodies more topsoil and altered soil chemistry prepares for the next succession of plants, which prepare for the next, ultimately reaching back to the original health of the climax ecosystem which might be an “old growth” forest or primary grasslands. As the succession proceeds, the diversity, the number of species, increases until climax which has the largest number of species and therefore the greatest photosynthetic income. The climax ecosystem is the normal state of health of the earth—all over and everywhere on the earth! Presently, as the earth’s vegetative cover is stripped the solar food of the living earth is choked off—with the obvious consequences.

The Human Possibility

Because humans have the mobility and intelligence, they can restore the ecosystems and increase the diversity of many areas over what would be climax. Humans can potentiate ecosystems and live in stability from the increase. Realizing that now, anything except existing wild lands would be scar tissue renewing the flesh of the earth. The preferred method of restoration would be the practice of Permaculture. This method of growing food and restoring ecosystems has spread world-wide among cognizant people .

The thrust of technology is to simplify living systems. One can average a stated number of pounds of red meat by cattle grazing a rangeland ecosystem. Cattle eat mainly grass but if one looks at the multiplicity of species that eat plants it is seen that far higher production of red meat could be gained per acre by harvesting the rabbits, pronghorns, deer, elk and other species because each species eats different plants such as grass, forbs, bushes and such, giving a

seamless and non-destructive cropping of the ecosystem. It is because of the manageability of the cow that the industrial system ignores and eliminates the other species that would actually be more productive. This is done for “efficiency” resulting in surpluses (profits). Industrial mass production monocropping has produced a simplified diet. In the supermarket we see a wide diversity of packaging but the basic food is wheat, corn, potato and rice. With Permaculture we greatly increase the diversity of our foods which will assist our health, our abundance and our community food security. In a decentralized system with local control, we can grow much more food for people than can the industrial system grow food for “surpluses.”

This is the watershed of the logic. For the humans and planet to endure, a completely new human culture must be created. This is not movies and books. This is the whole world view and all of the content by which we relate to each other and to the earth in belief, practice and ritual. This will be a most amazing adventure. If one has heart and courage and can move out of virtual reality onto the fact of the living planet, our future will provide one of the most exciting challenges we humans have faced, with the greatest benefits, if we are successful. Previously, culture proceeded by the conditioning of each new generation. Now we find that there is little human culture remaining aside from what we are required to do to keep the machine process moving. In history humans have not been in a situation where we artfully create our own culture. We must reverse the social values of “civilization.” Alienation, isolation and individualism become clan and tribe, focus turns to each individual rather than the idealizing of leaders and power, life and its celebration become primary rather than amassing material objects. When we become a mature, legitimate and potentiative part of the earth’s biology, then we have the base to explore and develop our human potential, rather than focusing our lives on the production and acquisition of material objects.

The great power of humans is not petroleum, it is creativity and adaptation. We can create the future world. Humans need food, shelter and love. With Permaculture we can restore ecosystems, build soil and produce more food per acre than the industrial system. These projects exist now. One can go look at them. Shelter exists. Examples of “alternative” houses can be viewed that heat and cool themselves without outside energy inputs. Intentional communities exist which focus on positive vibrations of cooperation, mutuality and love. How much more do we need to know?

We would not be trying to save the world as we know it, we would be looking at the future world and working toward it. There will be a massive apocalypse. “Civilization” has overshot its life support systems so far that it is irretrievable. Traditional agriculture drains the fertility of the soil unless large amounts of organic material are fed to the soil community to replace it. In our culture we have a tradition of “farmed out” lands. The industrial system has boosted food production by injecting artificial fertilizers into exhausted soils. Now, more than half the world’s population eats because of the added production caused by fossil fuel derived fertilizers. Now, we reach the peak of fossil fuel production while the population continues to explode. This is only one of the factors of the general overshoot phenomenon.

The Plan is to establish self-sufficient, population-stable, seed communities, wherever possible with the expectation that some or most of them would survive the apocalypse. These then become the seed of the future human species. Most species devote much energy to raise and prepare a future for their young. For our species to endure, we civilized humans must come up to that level of maturity.

Though our image is future oriented, the benefits of this kind of life can be enjoyed now. This is a grand project of a species attempting to change itself. We could not ask for more challenge to our creativity. We have resources. We now have planetary communication through various mediums. We have thousands of people in thousands of eco-villages around the planet. This disaster is waking people up. The world population is beginning to understand global warming and its origins; all over the world people are going green. The species is beginning to reorient itself. This is not the shopping mall. We are not going to be handed a simple solution off the shelf. But, we can point the direction toward aiding the living things. We can reject the death culture and create a culture of life.