

Revision D

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The Buddhist

Do not put faith in traditions even though they have been accepted for long generations and in many countries. Do not believe a thing because many repeat it. Do not accept a thing on the authority of one or another of the Sages of old, nor on the grounds that a statement is found in the books. Never believe anything you yourselves have imagined, thinking that a God has inspired it. Believe nothing merely on the authority of your teachers or the priests. After examination, believe that which you have tested for yourselves and have found reasonable, which is in conformity with your well-being and that of others.

A few decades ago I found, *The Buddhist*, but do not recall where. The sage advice is as important now as whenever it was written, by whomever. Actually, it is even more important now because there is strong evidence that the inherited pathways that our country blindly follow, indeed, that all civilizations living on our common planet follows, are leading us into grave danger. It is time to question the beliefs and common customs that we have grown up to think of as “normal”, beliefs that create the framework of our society’s current paradigm.

Comment on certainty:

Throughout this draft I may make statements about this or that as though they were fact. This means that they are currently fact for me as I understand it from my personal journey. Nevertheless, like all “facts” they are subjective and others may disagree or see the matter differently. And since knowledge is never cast in stone, facts are always subject to change if enough evidence indicates they are not correct. Many accepted facts of the scientific world today are quite different from facts 50 or 100 or 1000 years ago. But throughout all ages people have needed a comfort zone of basic beliefs about who we are and why they are the way they appear to be. Before science solved some of the riddles of life and nature, various religions gave stabilizing answers and behavioural guidelines. In some cases, long held beliefs take precedence over conflicts with science even when scientific conclusions can be demonstrated consistently. Such is the nature of deeply held beliefs whether pertaining to religion, evolution or economics.

Parts of my personal road

It seems that I have been a sceptic from a very young age. I never really believed in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny or the Catholic teachings in my childhood – although I pretended I did for a long time. I went to college, married, had 3 children and worked with a variety of companies. These included ground geophysical surveys, air crew in aerial photographic survey in the Canadian arctic and South America, and for a few years I headed maintenance of a data center at RCAF station Cold Lake Alberta. While associated with the RCAF I did

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some special projects for them involving system analysis. For about 20 years I owned/operated an aircraft electronics sales and service organization at Dorval International Airport in Montreal: during that time I became president of the Canadian section of the, *Aircraft Electronics Association*, for two years. I also held personal maintenance contracts for products emerging on the leading edge of the digital age - of the '70s era. I sold the Montreal company and moved back to Ontario, returning to a company I'd worked for much earlier. Here I was involved with design/development of, and marketing of, automatic test equipment for navigation and communications systems for airline transport aircraft – many of these still in use today (We called the product line *Iris*, Greek goddess of communications). That company product line was sold to a US company. I declined an offer to work in US and experienced the uncertainty of unemployment for the first time. Not long after that I accepted an offer with Transport Canada as an Airworthiness Inspector where I remained until retirement in 2001.

My adulthood was during the euphoric era of rapid exponential growth and opportunity. I was a believer in free enterprise, capitalism – even the Reagan/Thatcher deregulationism did not faze me – Why not let corporations just run free!

Along the way I experienced close and personal encounters with alcohol addiction on a couple of occasions. This was my introduction to the study of human nature, and the strange behavioural anomalies within individuals and groups.

It was not until my late 50's that I began to question our government's foundational quest of everlasting economic growth. My first inkling that not all was well in our marvellous expanding world, was the result of "tuning-in" one day, to the recurring debate of, "where can the city of Toronto find landfill sites to take their ever increasing garbage?" *Infinite growth in volume of garbage, VS diminishing areas suitable or willing to take it.* Soon after that pensive moment it became clear that this fundamental conflict of "*infinite growth VS diminishing resources*" applied on many fronts.

So I began to read about energy, demographics, ecology and related areas. When I first read Lovelock's description of the systems of Gaia it was very meaningful to me as it cleared the fog on many areas of interactive systems that make up the world we live in. Whether or not Lovelock's description is scientifically accurate, like other "facts", it seemed reasonable and insightful to me: perhaps because of my background working in various aspects of integrated dynamic systems.

When I began to see how vast and threatening the human predicament actually had become, my interest in psychology was renewed in an effort to try to understand: Why would "homo sapiens", the smart animal, be driving *ourselves* toward our own extinction? (The *human predicament* is a term coined by the Club Of Rome)

After a couple of years communicating with a few professors and authors in psychology, religion and ecological issues I began to study economics and monetary systems. It seems

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this subject is one of the primary drivers of our common problem. It appeared that the global system of human civilization had serious faults, so I decided to make a personal project of troubleshooting the human/Gaia relationship.

In 199 I completed a manuscript titled, *A 21st Century Steward's Handbook*. The final effort coached by professor Richard Slaughter (in Australia) past president of the *World Future Society*. After selling about 500 locally made copies it was accepted for publishing by a publisher in UK, but the company closed for reasons unknown. The chapters are now on web in pdf, on my home page.

While waiting for the book to emerge (but never did), I had a summary article published in the Journal, *Futures*, distributed by Elsevier (See Notes).

Abstract of, *A Troubleshooter's Analysis of the Human Predicament*:

Contemporary media bring us news of wars, political scandal, ecological disasters, space explorations, religious edicts, economic good or bad news and major league sports scores. These appear to be humanity's most pressing issues. But beneath these issues lies a pervasive matter, an issue close to, but inhibited from, the conscious mind and the feeling heart of most humans—the spectre of possible human extinction. It has been pointed out time and again by individuals and scientific groups that exponential population and industrial growth leads directly to the end of planet Earth's ability to sustain human life. It seems that we do not know how to stop this growth, so we do not talk about it. A troubleshooter concludes that we could learn to talk about it, and we could stop this insidious growth.

This abstract remains generally suitable for *Paradigm Junction*, except we now propose a potential solution.

In order to encourage conversations about our future, during gestation of the first manuscript I started an organization called the *Gaia Preservation Coalition* [link below]. For a few years we had bi-monthly meetings in Toronto. Now, two decades later this organization communicates via a Yahoo email listserver and we have a web page. We have had no significant initiatives to date. The directors, from various countries, and many others discuss global issues on an email list server.

GPC CORE PURPOSE

To be a gathering place for people who
Consciously acknowledge the human
Predicament and who seek with others its
Resolution through the creation and
Exploration of ideas and actions that move
Humanity toward a more harmonious
Relationship within Gaia.

In the past dozen years I continued reading and discussing our issues, and have had articles published in various journals. These are listed in my personal web home page, noted below, Slowly over the past few years I mentally arrived at conclusions about how current

