

This letter from [Alexander King](#), co founder Club Of Rome, is a response to reading a manuscript, *A 21st Century Steward's Handbook*. This manuscript is available in pdf near the bottom of my home page, <http://members.kos.net/donchism/index.htm>.

January 10th 1993

THE CLUB OF ROME

Mr Don Chisholm,
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Dear Mr Chisholm,

I have read your manuscript with the greatest interest. It is a very brave book, in that you have ignored all the taboos. I think that its message is so important for humanity that it should be published and distributed as soon as possible.

As your list of references indicates, many other writers are concerned with the various individual problems and trends which you described, but your approach is significantly different and potentially more influential for a number of reasons which I shall list here.

Firstly, most books discussing contemporary world problems are concerned with single issues such as the failure of the economic system, problems of transition from communism in Eastern Europe, environmental threats or the population explosion. You have endeavoured to paint the "big picture" as you call it, indicating the interactions between these and other issues and presenting a cumulative menace which demands radical changes in policies and attitudes if it is to be mastered.

The style and structure of your approach is interesting in the way you personalize the arguments with indications of your own insights, doubts and inner conflict. This should help to make an impact on the reader and arouse his or her personal involvement in a way which more conventional or scientific accounts of the same problem analysis is less likely to achieve.

You indicate clearly how in the management of human affairs and in the taking of critical decisions, irrationality often dominates over the rational. This inevitably leads to the identification of taboos and the avoidance of discussion of fundamental issues. This is well illustrated by your mention that at the Earth Summit at Rio, the critical issues of population growth in the South and excessive consumerism

in the North, were tacitly avoided.

You clearly understand that the great problems that confront humankind are, in fact, caused by the behaviour of people both individually and collectively. "The common enemy of humanity is man". This means that in analysing the world problematique, it is necessary to include discussion of human nature, the place of religion and other matters not normally taken into consideration'

Your recognition of the inadequacy of both the economic and the political systems with their obsession with short term issues, to face up to the fundamental problems of our time makes it inevitable that you would propose in your rescue scenario, a solution which must appear revolutionary if not utopian. What you are really advocating is the exercise of "people's power" based on an awakened understanding of the chaos and disaster which acceptance of the status quo is preparing for us. This seems to me to be a sound approach and possibly the only one open to us.

The big question is whether the awakening can be achieved in time. I remember an occasion a decade ago, when the Club of Rome had persuaded a dozen prime ministers and presidents to discuss world problems with us. We were agreeably surprized by the extent of understanding of the longer term issues which these political leaders displayed. Why then did they not act? At the end of the meeting one of them summed up his position by saying that they all more or less accepted the Club of Rome's position, despite their ideological differences. However, were he to act on this substantially, he would be out of office, not at the next election, but in a few months. It would take his successor some years to understand the basic problems and if he reacted as he should, equally he would be eliminated politically. The only solution lies in an increase in depth and extent of public understanding of the dangers which confront us.

Understanding of the dangers has indeed increased considerably during the last two decades. but it is still too slow. Your book would be an important contribution towards the generation of widespread recognition of the precarious situation of humankind at the end of the twentieth century with the hope of positive action to follow. My deep hope is that it will appear rapidly.

yours sincerely,



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