

the Friends Quarterly 2009 Prize Essay Competition

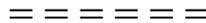
ENTRY



" The future of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain "



" Hello , Copenhagen --- Farewell , Earth ? "



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Hello , Copenhagen --- Farewell , Earth ?**(0) Leading : RE - SOLUTION**

" Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth. "

(*The Holy Bible, New Testament, The gospel according to St. Matthew, ch. 5 : v.5*)

This has to be our aim, and resolve, in order to achieve the pleasanter, less frenetic, albeit "lower" lifestyle for many of us, to the benefit of everyone, *and* the planet, clearly, if we are to survive at all. It *is the solution* -- impossibly and unbelievably simple, or simplistic, as it may appear to be -- yet this text will try to show how it can be so, and thence how it *must* become our resolution forthwith in order to secure the necessary global (and personal!) unity and consensus for our joint survival, easiest, quickest, and *only*, way !

(1) A Quaker future ?

There will not *be* one, not for Friends, nor for anyone else, on Earth, if we continue as we are doing, with no clear aim, and no overall strategy to achieve it, together with an unknown but diminishing time-scale left for any *real* action. Gloomy as that may sound, there is just one hope, as the following proposes.

The whole Quaker philosophy, and those parts in common with other faiths too, can indeed come to fruition by a world-changing catalyst -- firstly, our humble acceptance that we have failed, and that we must stop deluding ourselves otherwise in so many ways ! For this, and to "get focus", imagine we have so polluted the Earth that the *one* priority for each and all of us is simply to *breathe*. Then, with a completely open mind, and all our personal worries, jobs, family, and notions dispelled, for the moment, truthfully *see* how we (all and each of us) have failed so badly that we are on the very brink of our extinction. Without Earth, no one of us can sensibly prioritise ourselves, let alone our beloved family members ! But of course, to consider Earth first and foremost *is* nonetheless intrinsically protective towards self, family, and unborn generations, so there is no logical reason to put oneself and family first, is there ?

(2) " Earth Company Limited "

In AD : 1967, Fraser Darling provided that year's Reith Lecture : "*A Runaway World*", and it was broadcast on BBC's Home Service, or possibly the new Radio 4. Either way, it is a so much worse world now, by many parameters, than he spoke of then. Around the same time, AD : 1968, came the landmark publication "*The Limits to Growth*" from the Council of Rome, Europe. It took approximately 20 more years before Quaker concerns were aroused, earlier than most, and more than 10 more years before there was much mainstream concern for the state of the Earth, and how we were despoiling it in ever-increasing ways. Incredibly, even now, following the recent financial shenanigans, talk is of recovery in "the economy", recovery and "sustainable" growth. (By and large, in such context, be aware that the phrase "sustained" growth is often actually meant -- which, frankly, is *not necessarily* "sustainable", and so may be a deliberate attempt to mislead others into thinking it's environmentally acceptable in a given instance; patently it isn't !)

More recently still, Al Gore's undeniable opus of truth about our state of planetary degradation and dwindling resources was met with both acclaim and criticism, and there's been widespread concern over renewable energies, and climate change, as you all know. The unclear and hotch-potch result is that, were we setting out a Prospectus for a new company, "Earth Company Limited", say, for the issue of shares, on the basis of how we are to run our world from its present dire condition, and how we are intending to correct such condition as far as is possible, piecemeal, with no objectives set, then the Company would be in receivership and liquidation even before the share-issue : it's a failure before it starts ! There's no overall control, management, objectives, consistency or monitoring, and too many causes of our failures are not addressed at all So, extinction beckons us ... ???

(3) A golden opportunity ?

The recent so-called "credit crunch" has not produced any real change, effectively, as we now seem to be embarked upon a course of largely 'business as usual'. Saving the world from complete financial collapse is justifiable only as a temporary measure, to enable us to abolish money altogether, as soon as is feasible, in a controlled manner, and without undue injustices being thereby perpetrated -- a real job, for once, for all those knowing "experts". Crazy idea ? Well, let's consider it a little longer.

Unfortunately, our world has been increasingly led by bullies, their tactics, systems, tools and devices, and practically all of us support, acquiesce to, or condone by default, this *status quo* régime governmental or otherwise, armies, global corporations, and -- our prime human insanity -- **money!** Another *tour de force* of ours, the 'World Wide Web' / 'Internet', unbounded, binds us, and is just as bound to let us down, becoming, perhaps shortly, our great "Tower of Babel, Mark 2". Thus, together with money, these 'twin towers' may collapse yet again. Bullies : oh, *yes* : security, passports, ID cards, secure personal and other data -- almost a laugh a minute, well weekly, if it all weren't so serious for us ? The scandal, over making low-energy, fluorescent light bulbs **compulsory**, illuminates the massive deception of the public to achieve that end. Land ownership, excessive population and demands upon Earth, the worsening rural/urban imbalance, and many other excesses have added to our woes, and we now belatedly realise that we're facing extinction. Seeking alternative, renewable, forms of energy is necessary in our plight, but don't confuse the two issues : the state of the planet is paramount and its health is obviously pre-requisite for our continued existence upon it, our only home !

We have tried, for far, far too long, these aggressive, 'bully-boy' ways of living together, more often than not in disharmony, and in ways which yield inequalities, injustice, subjugation, persecution, greed, criminality, violence, deprivation, starvation, genocide, torture, terrorism, and incessant wars. On top of all of that we plunder, despoil, destroy and pollute our planet and overpopulate it too. How *could* we ? To survive, maybe, once or thrice upon a time. But, mainly, now, it's "the economy" (**what a misnomer that is!**) or, more simply -- **Money ! Abolish it !**

Instead, with fair distribution of goods and services globally, but localised as far as possible, and with reduced world trade, no pay for employments, all arbitrary monetary-based inequalities would disappear, there'd be absolutely zero "pensions" problems, funding for essential services (as health, education, policing, etc.) a thing of the past. Huge manpower pool released from the shackles of money at last, even allowing for redeployment, for some, in fair distribution logistics, would enable the world to try desperately to save itself, as the current complacency and helplessness (and much of that due to money) is replaced by a thrilling spiritual renaissance and will to live, the resulting beneficial and psychosomatic effects would relieve health services everywhere, as people "come alive" after centuries of blind addiction and adherence to the evil tool that money has been, and an increasingly constraining and quite unreal master it has so tellingly become, under whose rule we have made ourselves subservient slaves and even our governments impotent : "we can't dispense with the banks, can we ?" ... **Abolish them, too ?!**

The days of bullies **must** be ended, everyone valued, in full Quaker manner, as *themselves*, not by arbitrary wages, money abolished, everyone treated to a basic standard of living (eventually), *nem con*, because we have tried the other way, and it has both clearly and dismally failed us, and will continue to do so, unless we come to our collective senses '*p.d.q.*' The credit crunch was hardly a *surprise*, except, of course, to the oh-so-clever "experts", and "rocket-scientists", from whom we're, incredibly, still asking for their advice ! The slight fallacy of the "chaos theoreticians" is only that they seem to have limited, to finance matters, their well-considered research and explanations -- but it is eminently and correctly applicable to the whole, flawed, human system, as we are inexorably and determinedly making matters worse and worse -- and more complex -- with every piecemeal solution we undertake -- rarely any, if any at all, are remotely holistic solutions !

(onwards ... "and upwards" ...)

(... ever downwards ??! ...)

[3]

(3), *continued* ...

This universal awakening to our true plight -- **WE** are "the enemy", not, say, the Taliban. How can this be ? We don't condone their actions, but neither should we our own. However, with the prospect of a first-time-ever *united* world working towards the new one, wars, Taliban, Al Qaeda, terrorists, and many other evils will just dwindle away as it is seen to be good -- and *working* ! -- slowly at first then accelerating. Each and every one of us has been "conditioned", to varying degrees, by being brought up in a "wrong" and ever wrong-going world -- so that we each have a different mix of blindnesses, misconceptions, received "wisdom" that isn't, different emphases, values, priorities, and, worst of all, views or opinions on *facts*. "Worst of all" because such views and opinions are often indicative of incomplete knowledge, rather than purely of our value judgments, and the BBC's need to be impartial, for example, reinforces people's expectations for disagreement rather than for consensus.

In the "right", or more accurately "right-going", world we must now aim for, solutions brook no argument, as will shortly be shown, and there will be no need for opinions, as everyone will be "at one", as never before ! Indeed, as older generations pass, and the young are taught for the new world, problems will reduce ever more rapidly, as human, self-inflicted, complexity is reduced. Not simplistic, by any measure, but infinitely easier than our current, blind, and panic-driven pursuit of various attempts to "fix" our demonstrably-failed world without any reference to other factors and problems which militate against those selfsame "piecemeal" attempts. Mostly, these fixes produce more and more problems anyway, so cannot be considered a success.

Utopias have been classed as unworkable -- based on a wrong-going, hence biased, world view of the "nature of Man" -- which *may not be so*, in a right-going situation, but nonetheless such widespread unscientific conclusion is just one example of how misinformation can have prevented people from finding the way out of our failings with the Earth, by unthinkingly closing people's minds to the possibilities of a reversal given a quite different potential "nature" applied to Man. In short, minds permanently closed to the one thing that *could* yet "save the world" ! People being able to be truly themselves, and valued as themselves, in a right world, not we "distorted" beings, adapted to, and damaged by, the wrong world we've always had ! ... For "... a stranger's just a friend we do not know ...", or haven't met, after all ?

On Remembrance Day, just passed, well, and sincerely, may we recall the dead, but *honour* them we do not if we continually persist in warfare -- it's a twisted and hypocritical (if "popular") logic that says the loss of ever more lovely peoples, on both "sides", in Afghanistan, for instance, won't have been in vain, as we continue the war in their "honour", to try to win : *no-one "wins" -- ever !* ... Stop wars; stop. Then we can say that we have well and truly **honoured** all of the dead, everywhere, everywhen -- and, at very long last, none, then, have died "in vain", surely ? ... But we excuse each successive war, waste resources, cause massive destruction, waste more resources rebuilding (often to destroy again -- Gaza ?). Enemy ? We are, and insane, certainly.

Arms manufacturers ? ... Money ? ... Jobs ? -- There are jobs *galore*, to be done, instead of arms and armies : making renewable energy devices, for example, bi-directional, dual frequency marine power units, to tap simultaneously wave and tidal energies; helping disaster areas and victims; stopping illegal wildlife poaching and drugs crops growing; care for the elderly, the sick, and the disabled; providing wardens dispensed with in elderly care homes; myriad tasks ...!

Let us be, then, determined to convert the credit crunch to our advantage, by rethinking our whole ethos, thereby arriving at a new and complete clarity of thought, and not let this golden opportunity to do so pass us by ?!

(4) Copenhagen

However "right" proposed targets, any agreements and decisions are, after the conference, is not the issue. These will be panic measures taken without seeing how the same results could be ensured, and easily bettered, by a completely different approach : a comprehensive, holistic one. It has been suggested, in some panic, that Copenhagen is some sort of "last chance saloon", and its success is essential ... No; quite to the contrary : if it "succeeds", then we are indeed doomed to go extinct, as it will be felt that we're doing something positive, to avert climate change disaster, yet in fact we don't know which threshold will be reached, or when, given natural excursions of global temperatures, varying insolation totals, the companion El Niño/La Niña effect, and the Earth's changing albedo values. But those uncertainties apart, there are other factors we could correct more reliably, more easily, more ... "cheaply" ? Abolish wars : immediately, and worldwide ; phase-out money ; rid ourselves of all the wasteful, parasitic, industries, and of those similar aspects of our systems, of which there are many, revealed once each of us has attained the new perspective, and see what's really important to maintain, and what's not.

So, if, or rather as, the conference fails, "Don't cry for it, i.e.Copenhagen." -- there's a better way yet !

(5) Present analysis : piecemeal ; failure !

In H.R.H. Prince Charles's *Dimbleby Lecture, 2009*, televised -- and which should be compulsory viewing -- Charles gave an exceedingly comprehensive review of our Earth and Human condition, and pleaded that Mankind should **do something**, and quickly. But there was a tangible feeling of his despair, even helplessness, as he stated that we keep solving problems, yet more problems arise. That is precisely our problem -- we can't see where we are going wrong, and persist, with some pride, with our erroneous process, of compartmentalised thinking and problem solving, modified by, or usually been laden with, varying views and opinions, which are seen to be needed.

We haven't given the Earth centrality -- it has to vie with other "compartments", and with (separately in the UK) Environment, or Energy, along with Health, Industry, Education, Transport, ... and so on. Then, whilst our solutions take effect, all those other factors we haven't taken into account play havoc, resulting in yet more problems. So much for "joined-up thinking" ! To see how wrong we are, think of a Rubik Cube, and how its proper, shortest, and easiest solution, from a complete 'muddle', is simply to reverse the series of twists imparted to it from "solved" (all faces just one colour), which series one may not know. But "our World Cube" is so much more complex, more muddled, yet we should know the reverse series -- *we* "twisted" it ! The intentions, for Copenhagen, were merely to do some "tricks", hopefully to solve our Cube, but of course, in the meantime, the other, ignored, factors, add their twists, so how *could* the tricks succeed, always assuming that *every country* were to fulfil their promises, and targets ? Ignored factors ? Countries' economies; wars, continuing; parasitic industries, continuing, a prime parasitic being, obviously, world stock markets and high finance -- money can't be breathed, remember ! Etc. etc. ...

Were we to untwist our Cube, the proof of its validity would be indicated by an improving world, albeit with lower lifestyle expectations for us all. How could this be so ? Well, with increasing altruism, compassion, integrity, tolerance, generosity, justice, honesty, unity, consensus, joy -- and real happiness - - away from the oppressive world we've always known, been adapted to, and been dulled by, into the conditioned state that is so far preventing us seeing how we might extricate ourselves from the threat of imminent disaster. Forget the imagined losses, appreciate the gains, and, at last, the promise of a peaceful and harmonious world we've not had for a long time, if ever !

Still you are doubtful ? Let's next look at the analysis from this new, hopeful, perspective, and summarise how we should proceed to an overall, holistic, strategy, with a plan for the transitional world, and the final objective sought ...

(6) "Pearl" analysis : Man's actions , prescribed

Two basic assumptions :

(A) : Most of Mankind's problems are *self-inflicted* ones ;

(B) : The sheer number of problems, ever-increasing, results from too many imposed solutions being concerned with treating a narrower field than is warranted, almost invariably disregarding the Earth's needs, especially in the past.

A "pearl of wisdom" :

any
the

yields
!)

Before trying to solve a problem, as a stand-alone one, consider whether it should be on a wider basis. Nearly always it should be. Where the problem involves the Earth, however slightly, then include other factors involved, include more problems, and **keep on** adding related problems, until all are included. This is counter-intuitive, but does in fact simplify choice of solution rather than the opposite. In confronting the world's problem, no-one, it seems, has continued adding problems to solve this particular one, yet it demands nothing less than adding all of our problems, and beyond, to see how wrong we are -- and this the clear answer. Not only that, what we then have to do is prescribed (actually *proscribed* and we merely have to decide to do it, for if what we are willing to do is any less then we face extinction. So no experts are needed to decide, but people with knowledge could help with any transitional arrangements.

(7) Holistic : Man's only chance

Having humbly and open-mindedly accepted Man's failures, seen how many things we've made wrong, and realised one's own blindnesses, priorities, wrong emphases, failings, and degrees of conditioning since birth, one can then accept, gratefully, a new, holistic understanding. One has *included* all the problems and seen how and why and where we strayed from the path. We shall each individually realise our own distortions and learn how we've been deceived, or have deceived ourselves, in so many formerly "accepted" ways that simply do not have validity. In our wrong world, we are bombarded with views on the human condition, or, even more mind-numbing, on our flawed, innate human nature -- yes, a nature adapted only ever to a twisted world : we never had a chance, nor gave ourselves one. Now, holistically, we can truly be *ourselves*, in an increasingly improving world, and '*fly*' ! With money eventually gone, how very much more time we'd all have available to help do those vital jobs needed to save our planet, surely ?

(8) "Uniquity" : Mankind United ?!

Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an interview with Roy Jenkins, on BBC's Radio Wales programme, *All Things Considered*, recently, gave a superb, *holistic*, summary of Man's condition, in a faith, or lack of such, sense, ending, at Roy's query, with Rowan suggesting the key to it all was overcoming our *pride*. Sadly, his holistic summary didn't continue to include the secular, economic, and other mundane problems, for, as is so often the case, we stop short of adding yet more problems, when we should really continue, because we feel that we can't cope with "even more complexity" if we did. But, paradoxically, *the opposite is true* !!!

By *including* the secular, *renaming*, or, rather, *replacing* the terms God, Allah, etc., with a suggested word, "**Uniquity**" can do much to heal the wounds of that schism 'twixt God and Mammon. It seems ideal, for implicit in it is a sense of eternity, infinity, and unity, together with the uniqueness (yet, should be, unity) of each of us, unity with Uniquity, and with each other -- the preciousness of it **all**, and of **all of us** ?

"It" even includes *I.T.*, and all that *that* entails ?!

(9) Trailing

Humbly accept that we -- **and you** -- have " failed " .

See just how you personally have been 'blind', from whatever cause.

Consider how very much you have had to adapt to the twisted and failing world.

Review the many ways we have gone wrong, for centuries, even.

Collate your own list of things Man has to put right.

Ignore those, like climate change, we can do little about directly in the time we have.

Select those which are susceptible to Man's (and your self 's !) changing, quickly.

Imagine everyone else doing this exercise, and their selecting identical lists.

Consensus, **not** "opinions" ; *unity*, **not** conflict ; *will*, to try to save ourselves, **not** despair.

The World, now with a clear objective, draw up a plan, showing the stages for actions.

"*Uniquity*", can help draw those of faiths and those of non-faiths together.

The Quakers' future, now assured, if this all happens in time ... **and why shouldn't it ?**

And, *yes* , for the first -- and only -- time the word appears in this script ...

... "**I** " *have been led : affirmation -- it's the Truth ! ... So, how can anyone doubt ?*

" *Hello, Copenhagen --- Farewell, Earth ?* "

[SOLUTION]

[This script was prepared as an entry to *the Friends Quarterly* 2009 Prize Essay Competition.]

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