

If you wanted to save the
world, ...

... where would you start?

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If you have any questions please contact me.

Curt Gibby <gcgconsult@n-star.com>

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Our world and some observations

The World That Should Be?

Good Intentions and Unintended Consequences

Do No Harm

From the Noise find the Vision

Building to a Commitment and Action

To save the world is the simplest thing in the world. All one has to do is think.-- *Leonard Peikoff*

A Caution

Don't start vast enterprises
with half vast ideas



The World

Starry Night



Starry Night

Oil on canvas
73.0 x 92.0 cm.
Saint-Rémy: June, 1889
F 612, JH 1731

New York: The Museum of Modern Art

http://www.vangoghgallery.com/painting/P_0612



This image released by NASA, captured by the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope, bears remarkable similarities to the Vincent van Gogh work, "Starry Night" complete with never-before-seen spirals of dust swirling across trillions of kilometres of interstellar space. This image, obtained with the Advanced Camera for Surveys is Hubble's latest view of an expanding halo of light around a distant star, named V838 Monocerotis (V838 Mon). V838 Mon is located about 20,000 light-years away from Earth in the direction of the constellation Monoceros, placing the star at the outer edge of our Milky Way galaxy. (AFP PHOTO/ NASA/HHT/(AURA/STScI) and ESA) March 9, 2004
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Image taken by the Hubble space craft, of the near by dwarf galaxy NGC 1569 which is a hotbed of vigorous star birth activity.
(PHOTO COURTESY
[HTTP://IMGSRC.HUBBLESITE.C](http://imgsrc.hubblesite.org)



10. NGC 1569 ▼

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Newsday .com

Astronomers at the Space Telescope Science Institute unveiled the deepest portrait of the visible universe ever achieved in this image released Tuesday 09 March 2004 taken by Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys (ACS) and the Near Infrared Camera and Multi-object Spectrometer (NICMOS). The image reveals the first galaxies to emerge from the so-called 'dark ages,' the time shortly after the big bang.

(EPA/NASA)

March 9, 2004

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Photographs from the Hubble Telescope

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Deepest Look

Mars



Earth at Night



Theory

There is a theory which states that if ever anyone discovers exactly what the universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable.

There is another which states that this has already happened.

Adams, Douglas, The Restaurant at the end of the Universe, Pocket books, Gulf & Western Corp, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, 1980, front flyleaf.

Before proceeding perhaps we should ask:

Does the world need to be saved?

From What? Earthquake, pestilence and fire?

Does the world want to be saved?

Do you really, really want to save the world?

Why?

Do we want a perfect world? That is, is a saved world synonymous with perfect world?

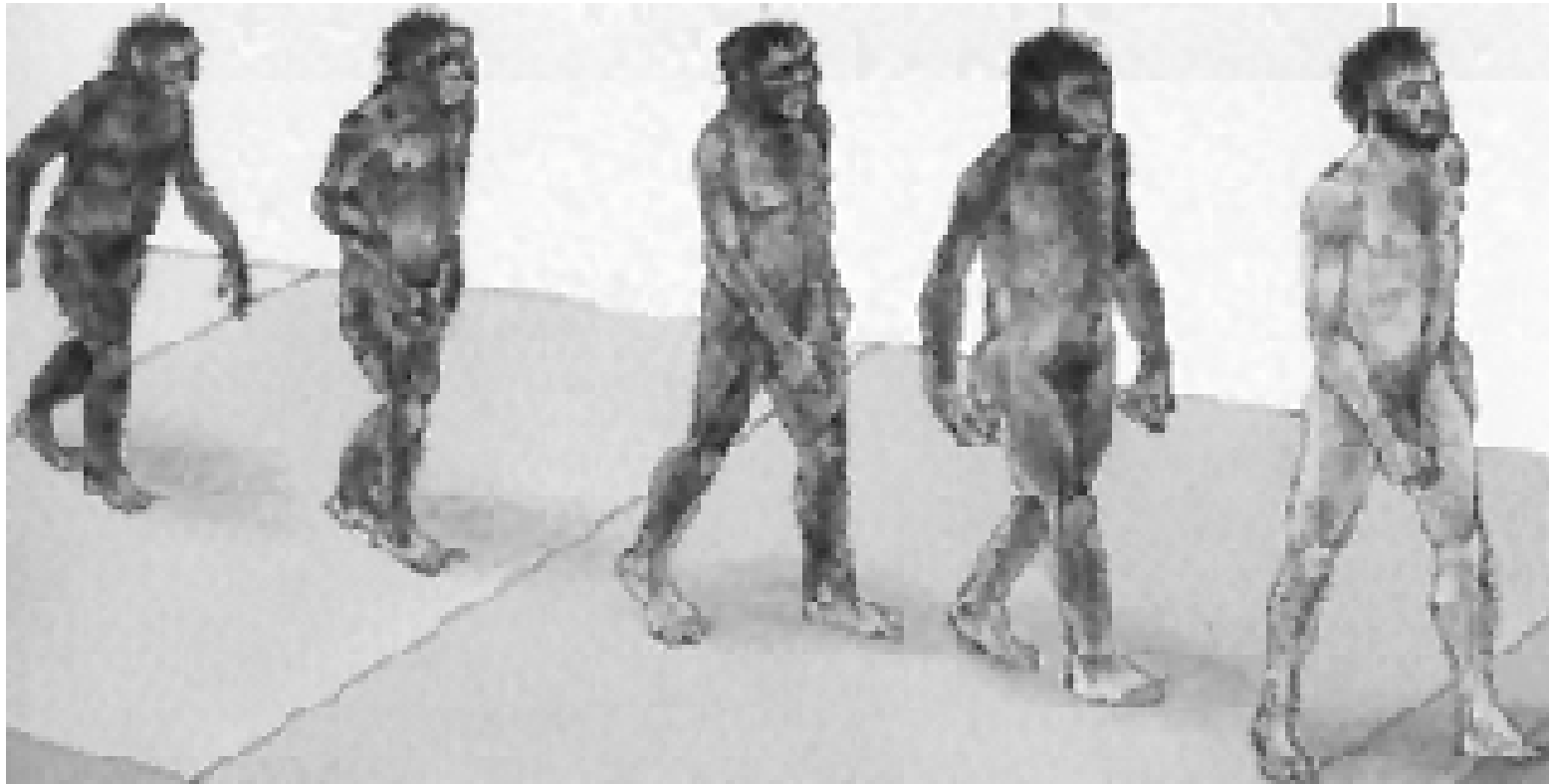
Do we mean save humanity? What about the other species?

The five mass extinction episodes occurred because of major changes in the prevailing ecological conditions brought about by climate change, cataclysmic volcanic eruptions, or collisions with giant meteors. The sixth mass extinction appears to be in progress now, and the main cause is environmental change brought about by human activities.

Millions of Years Ago	Name of Extinction Episode	Percent of Families That Died Out	Note
440	Late Ordovician	20 - 50 %	Tropical areas are hit hardest. No terrestrial vertebrates have evolved yet.
360	Late Devonian	20 - 30 %	Many fish and marine invertebrates die out.
250	End of Permian	50%	Greatest mass extinction ever.
213	Late Triassic	20 - 35 %	Dinosaurs and mammals had just recently evolved; both live through this extinction.
66	Late Cretaceous	15%	Dinosaurs become extinct, possibly caused by a meteorite colliding with the Earth. Mammals and fishes begin to proliferate. 65 million of years after this mass extinction, early humans evolve.
NOW	Holocene	?	Anthropogenic causes

Anthropogenic - Caused or influenced by human impact on natural systems.

The Evolution of Man



The Human Lineage:

Homo habilis Homo Erectus Homo Sapiens Neanderthals Cro-Magnons

<http://hannover.park.org/Canada/Museum/man/evnman.html>

The worst weather

From the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a rundown of the century's worst weather:

International:

Drought and famine in China in **1907**, toll estimated at **24 million**. **Millions dead** in other drought-related famines in **1928-30, 1936 and 1941-42**.

Drought in the Ukraine and Volga region of the Soviet Union in **1921-22**, **deaths estimated at 250,000 to 5 million**.

Indian drought of **1965-67**, estimates of dead at **1.5 million**. In **1900**, drought in India blamed for **250,000 to 3 million deaths**.

Yangtze River flood, China, **1931**, **3.7 million** killed due to flooding and subsequent disease and starvation.

Sahel drought in Africa in **1972-75**, with estimates of dead at **600,000**; more than that were died in 1984-85.

Bangladesh cyclone in **1970**, with **300,000 to 500,000** dead in wind and storm surge.

United States:

Galveston Hurricane, **1900**, a 20-foot storm surge swept over Galveston Island and killed an estimated **8,000 people**, the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history.

Dust Bowl of the 1930s, when drought swept the Great Plains and plunged thousands into poverty as farmers abandoned their land to seek better lives elsewhere.

Tornado outbreak in **1974**, when 148 tornadoes swept through the country from the Great Lakes to Alabama and Mississippi and killed **315 people**.

Hurricane Camille in 1969 claimed 256 lives.

Great Midwest Flood of 1993, the costliest flood in U.S. history, claimed 48 lives and caused \$18 billion in damage.

El Nino episodes of 1982-83 and 1997-98 caused storms that battered the West Coast and set rainfall records in the Southeast.

Hurricane Andrew in **1992**, which caused **23 deaths** and \$25 billion in damage in Florida and Louisiana.

New England hurricane in 1938, with 600 fatalities and millions in damage from New York to Boston.

Winter superstorm of 1993, which battered the eastern seaboard and claimed 79 lives.

Tri-state tornado of 1925, which killed 695 in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana.

Oklahoma-Kansas tornado outbreak in 1999, with more than 44 dead.

Great Okeechobee flood and hurricane in **1928**, which killed **1,836**.

Storm of the Century, **1950**, brought snow and hurricane-force winds to 22 states and claimed **383 lives**.

Florida Keys Hurricane, also known as the Labor Day Hurricane, killed more than **400** in **1935**.

New England blizzard of 1978 paralyzed New England for a week.

A LIST OF ATROCITIES 1450 CE TO WORLD WAR II

Time	Location	Perpetrators	Victims	Number of victims
1450 to 1792	Europe, New England, S. America	Christians	" <i>Satan worshipers</i> " & other heretics	Perhaps 50,000 to 100,000
1492 to now	Western Hemisphere	European Christians	Aboriginals	Millions or tens of millions
1770 to now	Australia	British invaders	Aboriginal people	720 thousand
1915 to 1916	Turkey	Muslim government	Armenian Christians	1.5 million
1917 to 1987	USSR	Communist government	Public	About 41 million
1937	Nanking, China	Japanese army	Chinese public	320 thousand
1940 to 1945	Poland, mainly	German army volunteers	Jews, Roma, etc.	11 million
1941 to 1945	Croatia	Ustaša (Roman-Catholic/Fascist regime)	Jews, Roma, Serbian Orthodox Christians, anti-fascist Croats.	Unknown; estimates range up to one million

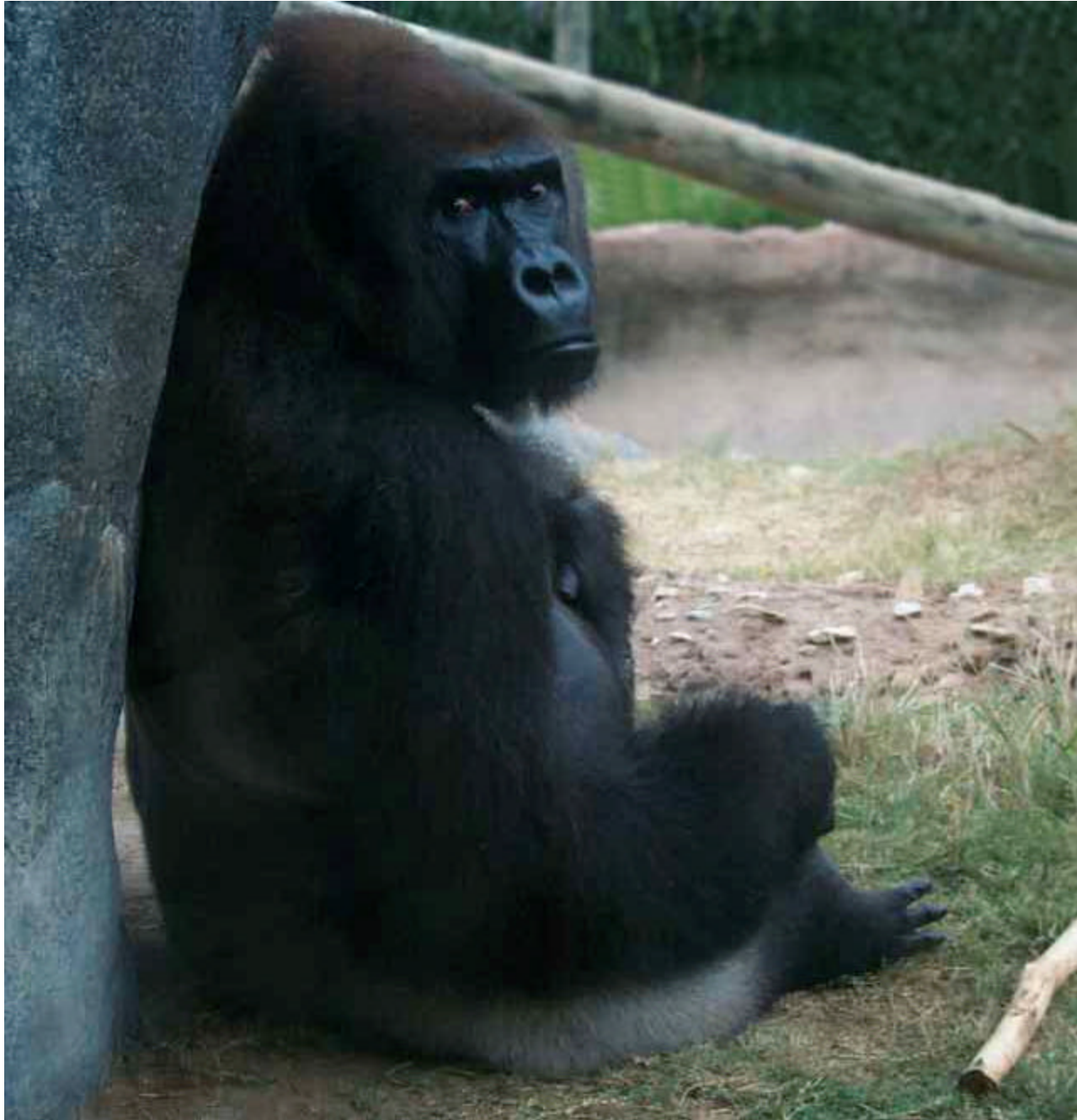


Houston Chronicle, Outlook, 14 March 2004

TEACHER SEEKS PUPIL

Must have an earnest desire to save
the world. Apply in person

from Ishmael by Daniel Quinn



http://www.thebigzoo.com/Animals/Western_Lowland_Gorilla.asp

WITH MAN
GONE WILL
THERE BE HOPE
FOR GORILLA?

WAS MAN MADE FOR THE WORLD

OR

WAS THE WORLD MADE FOR MAN?

Definitions (Ishmael's)

Story - A scenario relating man, the world, and the gods

To enact - To live so as to make a story a reality.

Culture - A people enacting a story.

Leavers and Takers

Adam and Eve leave the garden as they morph from Hunter-Gatherers to Agriculturalists.

Take what you need leave the rest - Take everything and leave your competitor nothing

Cain became a wanderer when he killed his brother Abel the shepherd.

Ishmael the first son of Abraham became patriarch of the nomadic Arabs.

Issac became the father of Esau and Jacob.

Isaac had two sons. Esau, a coarse rustic was tricked out of his birthright by his younger twin brother Jacob. Jacob became patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Much of the bible is about the tension between the nomadic hunter-gatherers (Take what you need and leave the rest) and their agriculturalist cousins (who in the process of domesticating and cultivating are displacing other peoples and other species.)

Ishmael's Program

"But I do have another question," I added. "Proceed."

"Your ad said, 'Must earnestly desire to save the world.'

"Yes?"

"What do I do if I earnestly desire to save the world?"

Ishmael frowned at me through the bars for a long moment. "You want a program?"

"Of course I want a program."

"Then here is a program: The story of Genesis must be reversed. First, Cain must stop murdering Abel. This is essential if you're to survive. The Leavers are the endangered species most critical to the world-not because they're humans but because they alone can show the destroyers of the world that there is no *one right way* to live. And then, of course, you must spit out the fruit of that forbidden tree. You must absolutely and forever relinquish the idea that you know who should live and who should die on this planet."

"Yes, I see all that, but that's a program for *mankind*, that's not a program for *me*. What do I do?"

"What you do is to teach a hundred what I've taught you, and inspire each of them to teach a hundred. That's how it's always done."

"Yes, but . . . is it *enough*?"

Ishmael frowned. "Of course it's not enough. But if you begin anywhere else there's no hope at all."

Ishmael's Clarification

"One thing I know people will say to me is 'Are you suggesting we go back to being hunter-gatherers?'"

"That of course is an inane idea," Ishmael said. "The Leaver life-style isn't about hunting and gathering, it's about letting the rest of the community live-and agriculturalists can do that as well as hunter-gatherers." He paused and shook his head. "What I've been at pains to give you is a new paradigm of human history. The Leaver life is not an antiquated thing that is 'back there' somewhere. Your task is not to reach back but to reach forward."

"But to what? We can't just walk away from our civilization the way the Hohokam did."

"That's certainly true. The Hohokam had another way of life waiting for them, but you must be inventive-if it's worthwhile to you. If you care to survive." He gave me a dull stare. "You're an inventive people, aren't you? You pride yourselves on that, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Then invent."

The Importance of Myth

Rollo May (1909-1994), one of the most prominent existential psychologists of the last century, argued that many of the problems of our present society - such as substance abuse and the alarming increase of depression and suicides - are caused by the absence of myths that could give shape and meaning to our contemporary world. He believed that myths are the narrative patterns that give significance to our existence. He saw a positive, life-affirming mythical element as essential for psychological health and observed that the Western world's denial of myth was a result of the over-emphasis on the value of left-brain activities.

Distorted Myth

The myths of contemporary western society, argued May, are either non-existent or based on distorted value systems, responsible for creating anxiety and meaninglessness. Examples of such distortions might be the myth of the self-made man, promoting ruthless individualism, the mythic lives and ascent to stardom of empty celebrities or the pursuit of surface fame. The myth of personal success in the material world through driven individualism has probably been the most influential theme of 20th-century America, a myth that generally leads to placing excessive value on work at the expense of the more inner and personal spheres of life. It is a myth that creates competition, tension, fear of failure and a predisposition to narcissistic disorders, stress, disease and depression. The heroes of our society are often singers, actors, starlets and football players, people that succeed in making it to the top, but not necessarily the people that are truly contributing to the psychological and spiritual growth of our world. There is a need for heroes that can act as role models of true human values and inner growth, replacing the celebration of the rich and famous just by virtue of the status of having "made it" financially or of being "well known."

New Myths for Our Times

May suggested that it was time to create new myths that could be helpful for our present condition. He suggested, for example, the value of an equality myth between men and women, to help women see the meaning of their existence independent of their relationship to men. He also believed that it was necessary to shape myths that contained within them the notion of having to overcome or go through some sort of trial. He believed that only when we have been through hell (a personal hell like confronting painful truths, or the overcoming of blockages) can we love and live life as a community.

Myths ... According to Joseph Cambell (1904-1987)

All journeys would start with what he described as **"The Call to Adventure."** The hero is unsuspectingly drawn away from his ordinary life and beckoned into the unknown, summoned, often by supernatural means, into **accomplishing a superhuman feat**. He is drawn into alluring, magical or dangerous worlds, from the ordinary to the extra-ordinary; pulled into a **transformational journey**. Soon the hero enters the **"Crossing of the Threshold,"** a phase where it becomes clear that there will be no return, no option of turning back. The adventure, great or terrible, has truly begun. A series of **initiations, trials and tribulations, of death and rebirth experiences will test the hero**, helped along at times by the appearance of the **'Supernatural Aid.'** This is a magical form of intervention: apparitions of magicians, spirits and fairies, **mysterious signposts** that encourage and guide the hero along during the most hopeless moments of the quest. Eventually the **hero's journey reaches a peak**, often a battle between opposing forces, a confrontation between light and dark, human and monster, conscious and unconscious. Symbolically, from a psychological prospective, all such journeys are, of course, ***processes of transformation and integration of the darker aspects of one's being. Journeys to wholeness are a process through which parts of the self are redeemed,*** archetypes are confronted and inner strengths are built through a final fight with the Shadow. **The journey usually ends with the hero returning, enriched and triumphant, carrying proof of his feat to the natural and normal world.**

Two words for our times

ol-i-gar·chy (1/4“1-gär”k¶, 1/2“1-) *n.*, *pl.* **ol-i-gar·chies**.

1.a. Government by a few, especially by a small faction of persons or families. **b.** Those making up such a government. **2.** A state governed by a few persons. -- **ol”i-gar”chic** or **ol”i-gar”chi-cal** *adj.*

he-gem·o·ny (h¹-jµm“...-n¶, hµj“...-m^{1/2}n¶) *n.*, *pl.*

he-gem·o·nies. The predominant influence of one state over others. [Greek *h¶gemonia*, from *h¶gem^{1/n}*, leader, from *h¶geisthai*, to lead. See **s³g-** below.] --

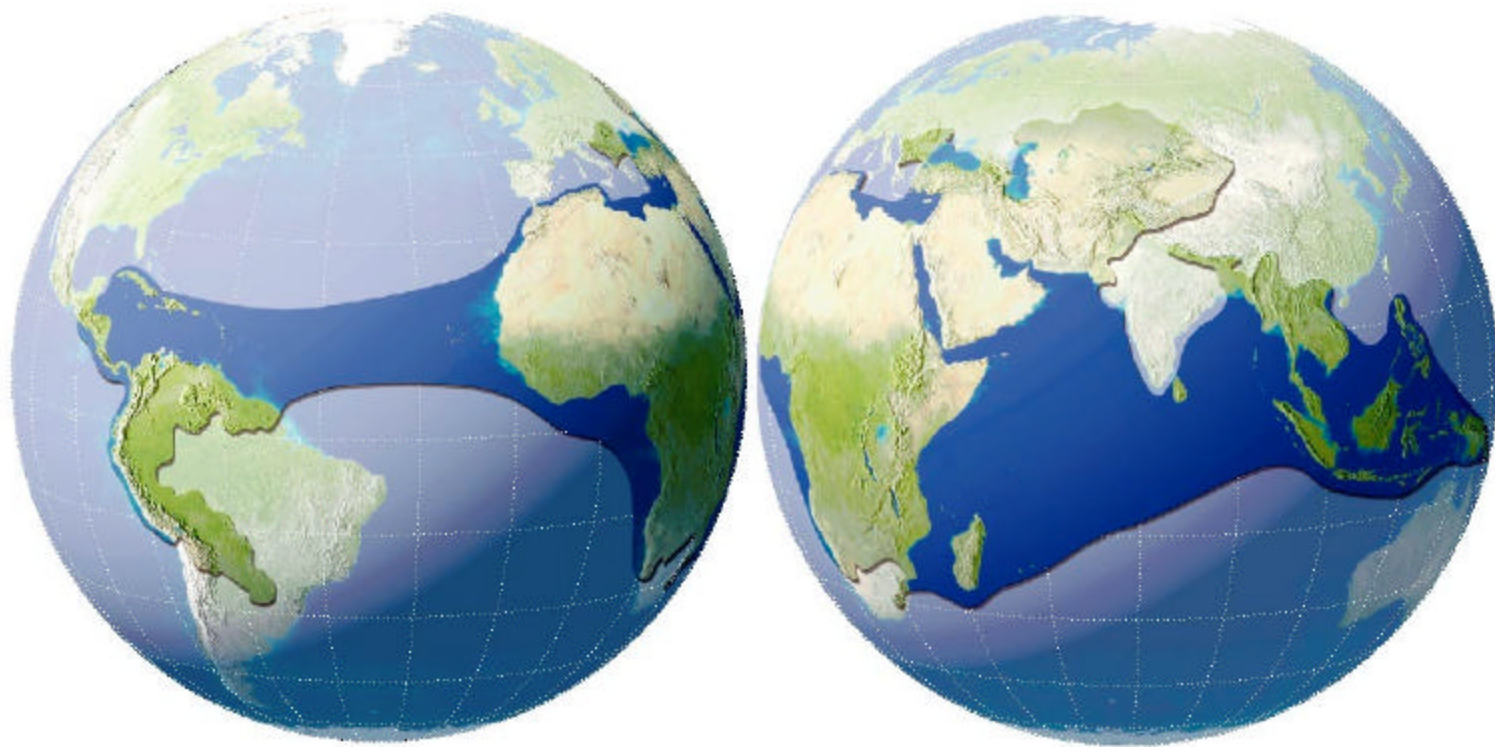
heg”e·mon”ic (hµj”...-m^{1/n}“1k) *adj.* --**he-gem”o·nism** *n.* -
-he-gem”o·nist *adj.* & *n.*

The Pentagon's new Map

Show me where globalization is thick with network connectivity, financial transactions, liberal media flows, and collective security, and I will show you regions featuring stable governments, rising standards of living, and more deaths by suicide than murder. These parts of the world I call the Functioning Core, or Core. But show me where globalization is thinning or just plain absent, and I will show you regions plagued by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder, and—most important—the chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of global terrorists. These parts of the world I call the Non-Integrating Gap, or Gap.

THE PENTAGON'S NEW MAP, IT EXPLAINS WHY WE'RE GOING TO WAR, AND WHY WE'LL KEEP GOING TO WAR. BY THOMAS P.M. BARNETT, U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

<http://www.nwc.navy.mil/newrulesets/ThePentagonsNewMap.htm>



DISCONNECTEDNESS DEFINES DANGER Problem areas requiring American attention (outlined) are, in the author's analysis, called the Gap. Shrinking the Gap is possible only by stopping the ability of terrorist networks to access the Core via the "seam states" that lie along the Gap's bloody boundaries. In this war on terrorism, the U.S. will place a special emphasis on cooperation with these states. What are the classic seam states? Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Phillipines, Indonesia.

THE PENTAGON'S NEW MAP, IT EXPLAINS WHY WE'RE GOING TO WAR, AND WHY WE'LL KEEP GOING TO WAR. BY THOMAS P.M. BARNETT, U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

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Soros' Insight From Hegel

In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel discerned a disturbing historical pattern -- **the crack and fall of civilizations owing to a morbid intensification of their own first principles.**

Although I have made a fortune in the financial markets, I now fear that the untrammelled intensification of laissez-faire capitalism and the spread of market values into all areas of life is endangering our open and democratic society.

The main enemy of the open society, I believe, is no longer the communist but the capitalist threat.

<http://www.helsinki.fi/~mqsal/hegel.htm>

George Soros

George Soros's opening words to "The Capitalist Threat, Atlantic Monthly, Feb 97

Simple, brutal solutions are often ... brutal ... and backfire ...

Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada was pressured to resign the Presidency of Bolivia in October of 2003. (Remember, He advocated “Shock Treatment” in *Commanding Heights*.) Shock Treatment refers to the government not spending money unless the current rate of taxation will support it.

...

The fight against the gas deal has awakened mass resentment against the deepening poverty and social polarization produced by two decades of International Monetary Fund-dictated “free market reforms.” Large sections of the Bolivian working class, including tin miners and public sector workers, have seen their jobs wiped out by the wave of privatizations and budget-cutting that has swept the country. At least 60 percent of the population subsists on \$2 a day or less.

...

Morales, the deputy of the MAS, has indicated he is willing to accept Sanchez de Lozada’s replacement by Carlos Mesa, insisting this would be a “constitutional” solution. There is no reason to believe, however, that such a replacement of one representative of the ruling oligarchy by another will do anything to satisfy the pent-up social demands of the country’s workers, peasants and the majority indigenous population that have erupted in Bolivia’s so-called “gas war.”

...

Bush administration backs massacres in Bolivia By Bill Vann, 17 October 2003

http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/oct2003/boli-o17_prn.shtml

World Socialist Web Site www.wsws.org

Making Capitalism Work for the Poor

INTERVIEWER: Do you think capitalism is in trouble, then?

HERNANDO DE SOTO: Well, capitalism is certainly in trouble if it doesn't adapt. Capitalism is essentially the economic system of poor people. That's what allowed the people that came from humble origins of the world to have economic rights the way only nobility and the high bourgeoisie had it before. So capitalism is essentially a tool for poor people to prosper.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/shared/miniextlo/int_hernandodesoto.html#12

A civilization involves fixed rules, discipline, a passing from the instinctive to the rational state, forethought for the future, an elevated degree of culture--all of them conditions that crowds, left to themselves, have invariably shown themselves incapable of realizing. In consequence of the purely destructive nature of their power crowds act like those microbes which hasten the dissolution of enfeebled or dead bodies. When the structure of a civilization is rotten, it is always the masses that bring about its downfall. It is at such a juncture that their chief mission is plainly visible, and that for a while the philosophy of number seems the only philosophy of history.

Gustave LeBon, *The Crowd, A study of the popular Mind*, 1896

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake

Matthew 5th Chapter

This under the oppressive government of Herod the Great, the vassal King of Judea and the under the cruel administration of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

Up to now these thoroughgoing destructions of a worn-out civilization have constituted the most obvious task of the masses. It is not indeed today merely that this can be traced. History tells us, that from the moment when the moral forces on which a civilization rested have lost their strength, its final dissolution is brought about by those unconscious and brutal crowds known, justifiably enough, as barbarians. Civilizations as yet have only been created and directed by a small intellectual aristocracy, never by crowds. Crowds are only powerful for destruction. Their rule is always tantamount to a barbarian phase.

Gustave LeBon, *The Crowd, A study of the popular Mind*, 1896

The Forces of Evil ...

What is evil?

--e·vil *n.*

1. The quality of being morally bad or wrong; wickedness. **2.** That which causes harm, misfortune, or destruction: *a leader's power to do both good and evil.* **3.** An evil force, power, or personification. **4.** Something that is a cause or source of suffering, injury, or destruction: *the social evils of poverty and injustice.*

Axis of evil, Personification of evil, Evil intent, Evil empire

Sin

In Greek, it is the word hamartia, that is translated as sin, which is commonly understood to mean “missing the mark.” Aristotle’s use of the word sin in his writings, Poetics, translates as “error, frailty or tragic flaw.” Identifying sin in these terms, sin becomes an essential part of our humanness, our errors, our flaws. It allows us to confront our fate, the results which may lead to the gaining of wisdom. In this way, sin, according to the Greek definition, is not concerned with an act of separation, rather sin is that which gains us knowledge, insight and eventual wisdom.

The Hebrew word translated as sin is chet, which also means to miss the mark. The metaphor comes from archery. However, in further examination of rabbinic studies, it states sin must be translated as “to aim and miss the mark” As one rabbi stated, “it is better to aim and miss than not to aim at all.”

Reverend Bill Clark <http://www.tuuc.org/sin.html>

Some Things to Consider

- Are we as a civilization on a path to become Super Nova?
- Will the Smarter, faster, stronger always dominate.
- Will world civilization be dominated by those with the greatest industrial and military strength and the motivation to use it?
- Will the US always have buy or beat other countries to be our friends?
- What if the present third world countries and primitive society reached the same level of consumerism?
- It appears that all things that we recognize as having “life” (process) are made from the same “building” blocks.
- Are humans part of one or more interrelated “food Chains”.
- All living things have DNA, genes, chromosomes.
- Human beings evolved, appeared, were created, from the same nursery as all other living things, making them more or less our cousins. We are both predators and prey. Some animals seem primarily engaged in converting vegetable matter into protein for predator consumption. The world recycles everything. If we are part of a chain what happens to us when members of that chain are exterminated?

A few of the things that don't really make sense (to me.)

- That you rely on your employer to provide your health care insurance. Why is it his business?
- Why should your employer be the custodian of your retirement/investment program

Victims and Safety Nets

A safety net is a wonderful thing, but American politicians have gone beyond that to build a welfare state that rewards victims. When you reward something, you get more of it. Almost all of us some- times have a childish wish to feel sorry for ourselves, to be a *victim*. By catering to that, the government exacerbates our illnesses.

"Seeing ourselves as victims," says Roger Conner, "is a disease that's weakening America's moral fiber. *Living* consists of encountering the weaknesses, the failings that we all have as individual human beings, and the problems that inevitably enter our lives. Dealing with those, that's the stuff of life."

Give Me a Break by John Stossel

Conceit of the Anointed

Author Thomas Sowell calls it the "Conceit of the Anointed." *You* are not to be trusted. *We* know better. There are now 150 government agencies with more than 5 million employees who spend most of every day searching for ways to protect us, make something more "fair" or just help their friends. Every year they churn out thousands of pages of new rules. But again and again, the experts' schemes go awry. They don't see the unintended consequences. The Conceit of the Anointed is so powerful that they insist on maintaining control even when they fail, and fail again.

Give Me a Break by John Stossel

Police have no interest in preventing crime. Their job is to clean up the mess . If there were no criminals, they wouldn't have a job.

This also applies to illegal drugs. It is a source of growth and considerable off-budget financing for law enforcement. For the drug dealers that is a low cost for doing business considering the profits to be made.

Since Ashcroft, and with the connivance of do-gooders in Congress we are criminalizing a large number of personal activities.

8.1 Substance Dependence and Abuse

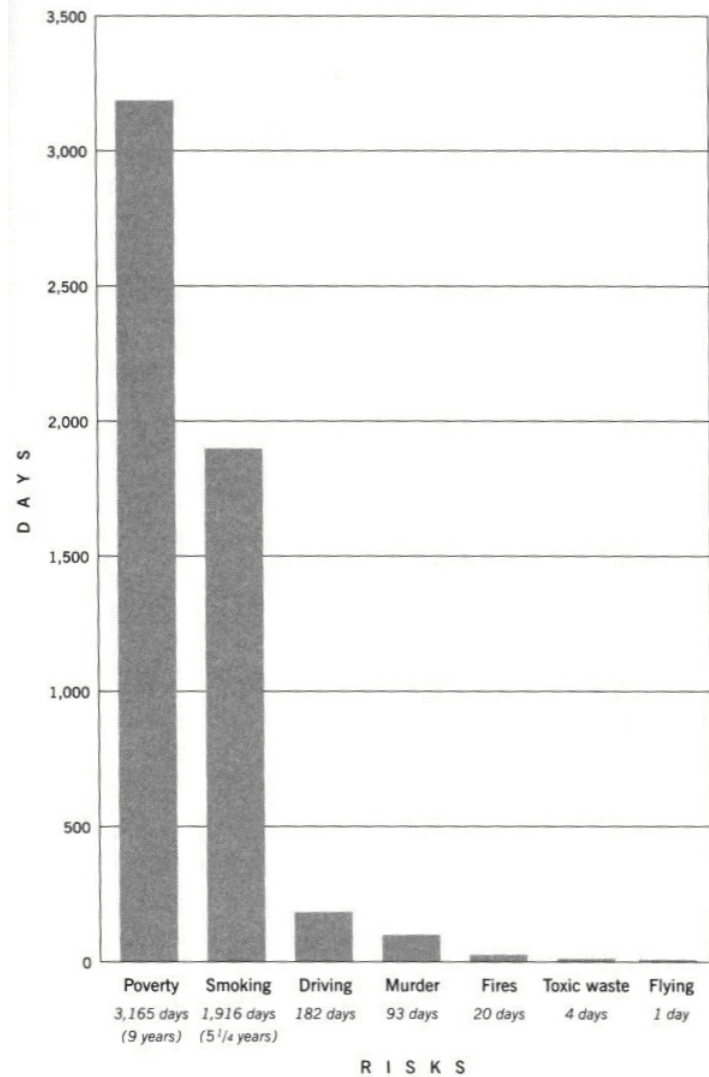
- **An estimated 22.0 million Americans aged 12 or older in 2002 were classified with substance dependence or abuse (9.4 percent of the total population).** Of these, 3.2 million were classified with dependence on or abuse of both alcohol and illicit drugs, 3.9 million were dependent on or abused illicit drugs but not alcohol, and 14.9 million were dependent on or abused alcohol but not illicit drugs (Figure 8.1).
- Of the 22.0 million persons with substance dependence or abuse in 2002, about half (11.5 million) were substance dependent. Of these, 1.3 million were classified with dependence on both alcohol and illicit drugs, 6.9 million were classified with dependence on alcohol but not illicit drugs, and 3.3 million were classified with dependence on illicit drugs but not alcohol.
- Of the 7.1 million Americans classified with dependence on or abuse of illicit drugs, 4.3 million were dependent on or abused marijuana. This represents 1.8 percent of the total population aged 12 or older and 60.3 percent of all those classified with illicit drug dependence or abuse.

Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings

<http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda/2k2nsduh/2k2SoFW.pdf>

Days off the life of the average person due to some well known causes common in our culture

CHART 4: DAYS OFF YOUR LIFE



John Stossel, *Give Me a Break*, p 95

Poverty is not a mortgage on the labor of others -
misfortune is not a mortgage on achievement - failure is
not a mortgage on success - suffering is not a claim
check, and its relief is not the goal of existence - man is
not a sacrificial animal on anyone\'s altar nor for
anyone\'s cause - life is not one huge hospital.-*Ayn Rand*

Nobody respects an altruist, neither in private life nor
in international affairs. An altruist is a person who
keeps sacrificing himself and his values, which
means: sacrificing his friends to his enemies, his
allies to his protagonists, his interests to any cry for
help, his strength to anyone's weakness, his
convictions to anyone's wishes, the truth to any lie,
the good to any evil.-*Ayn Rand*

On September 11, it was *government* that failed. Law enforcement agencies didn't detect the plot. The FBI had reports that said young men on the terrorist watch list were going from flight school to flight school, trying to find an instructor who would teach them how to fly a commercial jet. But the FBI never acted on it. The INS let the hijackers in. Three of them had expired visas. Months after the attack, the *government* issued visas to two dead hijackers.

The solution to such government incompetence is to give the government more power?

Give Me a Break by John Stossel

Acronyms for our Age

NIMBY

Not

In

My

Back

Yard

Build

Absolutely

Nothing

Anywhere

Near

Anybody

BANANA

Then where?

When considering action to create social justice - - Think

What is social justice? Will your law or regulation benefit all members of society the same way every time?

It is really a matter for legislative action or for you to extend a helping hand?

Are large corporations to be trusted (I don't think so.)

- During the industrialization of America, Immigrants were regularly victimized by the elite and their retainers (The Octopus, Grapes of Wrath)
- Corporations regularly lobby, give large contributions to, and even write draft legislation for the people who are Constitutionally obligated to represent us.
- The Capitalists and the Do-gooders have a better plan for your life and money than you do and their handmaidens your elected representatives are legislating you, the worker and consumer into a box where you get to do all the heavy lifting, they collect your money and they tell you what a good job they are doing and you believe them!

Slipping Slowly Down the Slope

Perhaps one of the more dangerous activities of today's America is that through campaign contributions and effective lobbying large special interests are shaping our government to provide what they see to be a stable environment conducive to the conduct and growth of their interests.

These same interests will cheerfully supply the legal talent to craft this legislation, to assist the busy legislator.

Of course this legislation will usually epitomize Hegel's **morbid intensification of their own first principles.**

The problem arises because this so selfishly biases against the consumer, diminishing his rights and perogatives, and his livelyhood that the consumer eventually will no longer provide the other side of the market equation.

However, it may take several generations, before the damage is apparent. (Remember the frog in the pot of cold water)

The Cure

The cure is simply for the entire population to become self-aware of what the special interests will naturally try to do and then exercise it's assertiveness at the ballot box to elect law makers who will provide balanced legislation that will serve the interests of all parties.

Special interests are not the enemy, nor are we the people always pure. This is why we have the system of government that we do. It needs to be exercised fully to keep it from atrophying.

Think about John Nash's (*Beautiful Mind*) idea that if a group decision is to get the best for everyone, the thinking has to go beyond what's best for just an individual player and include what's best for the group.

That's why we have elected representatives. But we and they need to make ourselves a lot wiser in the interim for it to work.

A quick self-test:

Truth, Myths, Wishful Thinking or Wrong?

- All people are equal.
- All people are entitled to
- Men and Women are the same.
- All primitives are noble savages.
- People are essentially lazy.
- All people are entitled to an equal share of the Earth's resources.
- All people are entitled to an oppulent life.

Where is humanity going?

- Will we progress in productivity and intellectual capacity?
- Will we continue on a path to become the vassals of the “rich and powerful” and their lackeys.
- What if technology takes over the heavy lifting of providing a high standard of food, shelter, comfort and security?
- What is left for the Human Race?

Priority

How much of the world's resources go to actually supplying and improving the quality of life of the people that produce those resources and how much goes to controlling those people and lining the pockets of those doing the controlling?

HOW MANY VOTED

Primary election turnout in
presidential years:

1988

Harris County: 29%

Texas: 36%

1992

Harris: 32%

Texas: 29%

1996

Harris: 17%

Texas: 20%

2000

Harris: 13%

Texas: 17%

2004

(projected based on early
vote)

Harris: 12%

Texas: 14%

Sources: Harris County
Clerk Beverly Kaufman
and Texas Secretary of
State Geoffrey Connor.

Countywide turnout for the general election in November likely will exceed 50 percent — a percentage that indicates that voters retain a healthy interest in having a say about the direction of national and local politics, Birnberg said.

TURNOUT MATH

In some cases, the drop in voter turnout figures is a mathematical effect rather than an actual decrease in voting.

Efforts to make voter registration easier have shrunk turnout percentages by adding people to registration rolls who aren't likely to vote. The result: The same number of voters represents a smaller percentage of the rolls.

Source: Houston Chronicle 10
& 11 March 04



Raising the Roof 2004 Presidential Race Fundraising as of October 15, 2003

Total funds raised by all presidential candidates

2000		\$528.9 MILLION
1996		\$425.7 MILLION
1992		\$331.1 MILLION
1988		\$324.4 MILLION
1984		\$202.0 MILLION
1980		\$161.9 MILLION
1976		\$171.0 MILLION

George Bush		\$84,596,875
Howard Dean		\$25,385,265
John Kerry		\$20,043,631
John Edwards		\$14,512,398
Dick Gephardt		\$13,666,915
Joe Lieberman		\$11,779,353
Lyndon H. Larouche, Jr.		\$5,652,783
Dennis Kucinich		\$3,399,709
Al Sharpton		\$283,714

Paying for the Party Largest contributors to parties -- Jan. 1978 through Sept 2003

Democratic Party 		Republican Party 	
AFSCME*	\$16,491,501	Philip Morris	\$10,339,620
Saban Entertainment Inc.	\$12,723,582	American Financial Group, Inc.	\$6,600,158
Service Employees International Union	\$12,549,102	Alticor Inc./Amway/DeVos Family Interests	\$6,069,797
Communications Workers of America	\$10,009,140	Pfizer Inc.	\$5,601,933
Fred Eychaner/Newsweb Corp.	\$9,032,500	AT&T Corp.	\$5,538,126
Carpenters Union	\$7,775,704	Freddie Mac	\$4,605,106
American Federation of Teachers	\$7,438,000	Verizon Communications Corp.	\$4,593,402
Shangri-La Entertainment	\$7,438,000	Microsoft Corp.	\$4,193,866
United Food & Commercial Workers Union	\$6,293,492	BP (BP Amoco)	\$4,136,810
Loral Space & Communications Ltd.	\$5,314,100	R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Holdings, Inc.	\$3,800,315

<http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/election.html>



Italy.....	92.5
Uzbekistan.....	86.2
Australia.....	84.4
Germany.....	80.6
Spain.....	77
United Kingdom.....	74.9
Turkey.....	73.5

[see more countries](#)

Venezuela.....	72.2
India.....	60.7
Syria.....	58
Russia.....	55
United States.....	48.3
Thailand.....	47.4
Zambia.....	40.5

[view historical US voting trends](#)

[back](#)

US Presidential Elections

2000.....	54
1996.....	54.2
1992.....	57.4
1988.....	59.2
1984.....	59.3
1980.....	59.9
1976.....	61.3
1972.....	63
1968.....	67.8
1964.....	69.3

Mid-Term Elections

1998.....	36.4
1994.....	44.7
1990.....	45
1986.....	45
1982.....	45.9
1978.....	46
1974.....	48.5
1970.....	54.6
1966.....	55.4

Get The Mythical and the Real into Balance

Threats (these have both mythical and real dimensions.)

Nature - Earthquake, lightning, fire, disease

The Universe - Rocks from space

Man Made - Nuclear, Chemical, Biological

Inhumanities -Injustice, criminality, greed, suppression of the rights of others, etc.

Speculative Reasoning and Legislation

Macaulay, teaches us in a passage that the politicians of all Latin countries ought to learn by heart. After having shown all the good that can be accomplished by laws which appear from the point of view of pure reason a chaos of absurdities and contradictions, he compares the scores of constitutions that have been engulfed in the convulsions of the Latin peoples with that of England, and points out that the latter has only been very slowly changed part by part, under the influence of immediate necessities and never of speculative reasoning.

The Crowd, Gustave Le Bon

The Whole Answer?

Not one of us has the whole answer to anything.

But we each, all of us, have a part of it.

The only way to find the answer is for us all to cooperate.

We are each one, the teacher and the student.

And the answer is never complete until it is everyone's.

What Can I do to save the world?

First, check out yourself: Do you? Can You?

- Respect yourself, your experience and your knowledge
- Respect your instincts, evaluate what you see and hear.
- Acknowledge that your abilities, time and energy have limits, but that does not make you ignorant. Use what you have and add to it as you go.
- Choose your friends and associates carefully.
- Trust only those who are worthy. Don't be in a hurry.
- Choose your teachers and advisors wisely: social, educational, medical, financial, spiritual, etc.
- Be honest with and supportive of (love) yourself. When you make a mistake, try to figure out why. Learn from the experience. Make amends if possible and appropriate. Then, move on.

What Can I do to save the world (Continued)?

Next, choosing your mission:

- What concerns you?
- What are you passionate about?
- How much time, resources, energy do you have available?
- What other obligations do you have? Set realistic priorities.
- What are your natural and acquired abilities?
- How can they be applied to the need?
- Will your family, friends and groups that you are a member of support you to whatever level you might want from them.
- Decide how you will go about it. Make yourself a plan and a schedule. These can always be adjusted as time goes on, but if you have not identified goals and how and when you intend to achieve them it will be difficult to stay on track.
- Be realistic, kind and supportive to yourself and your friends as you work towards whatever goals or missions you have set for yourselves.

Feeling a little overwhelmed?

You'd like to save the world but don't know where to start?

Increasing the Signal to Noise ratio

or

Separating the wheat from the chaff

There is too much to absorb in the time you have.
What can you do about it?

You care about a subject but you don't feel that
you understand it well enough to have an opinion.

Testing the “Untestable”

When you hear, see or read something that for some reason you think is important ... Test it with a check list like this:

- Do I know this thing to be true from my own experience or observation?
- Do I know that the teller knows what he is talking about?
- Do I know where I can check it out, and
- How can I double check it.

Please note the use of the words “important” and “know” If it’s not important to you, you probably don’t want to waste the time and effort. The necessary degree of “knowing” is set by the importance you place on the issue.

Things about people that should set off your warning alarms

- Activists of any sort (Including me) (... activists have selfish agendas, too. They want to be famous or feel morally superior. And scaring people helps them raise money, John Stossel in *“Give Me a Break”*)
- Ideologues of any persuasion. These are the people whose labels end with “ist” or “ism”
- Those with authority suffixes or prefixes, “Dr.”, “Phd”, “Esq.”, “Professor”, “Coach”, “Bishop”, “Rev.”, those starting with “C” for Certified, “Officer”, “Agent” or “Special Agent”, Captain, General, Chief, etc., etc.

None of these are de facto proof that the person will try to mislead you. Most could pass lie detector tests. Most will try to do a good job. But just because they sincerely believe something doesn't necessarily mean their viewpoint is suitable for you or that what they believe is scientifically or factually accurate. Some will be able to provide what it is that you seek, but not not all.

You should determine your own perspectives and needs and knowing the biases of an information source helps you to classify and adapt the information to your own needs.

You have to do your own work;
Those who have reached the goal
Will only show the way.

Gotoma Siddartha the Buddha

The day is short, the work is great, the reward
is much.

The work is not ours to complete. But
neither are we free to take no part in it.

Rabbi Tarfon, "ethics of our fathers"

A Quick Summary

- Be your own messiah.
- Choose your teachers, your sources and your friends well.
- Have Faith.
- Consider courses of action.
- Know how to balance myth and reality.
- When history finds you, try to be ready.
- (If you miss an opportunity, Don't Panic. There will be another.)
- Live your life to the best of your ability.
- Know if it's time to let something go.

The destinies of peoples are determined by their character and not by their government.

Gustave LeBon, *The Crowd, A study of the popular Mind*, 1896

Learn to enjoy what we have and have faith that you will help make the future even better.

Going around being mad all the time wastes energy and makes you easy prey to your antagonists, and is a burden on your family and friends.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's
the only thing that ever has.

[Margaret Mead](#)

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/margaretme129902.html>

Footprints

If we are going to live on the planet we will change it.

It will change us.

Whenever we take a step, we leave a footprint.

When we eat something, something dies.

When we plant something, something grows, maybe.

Make it good.

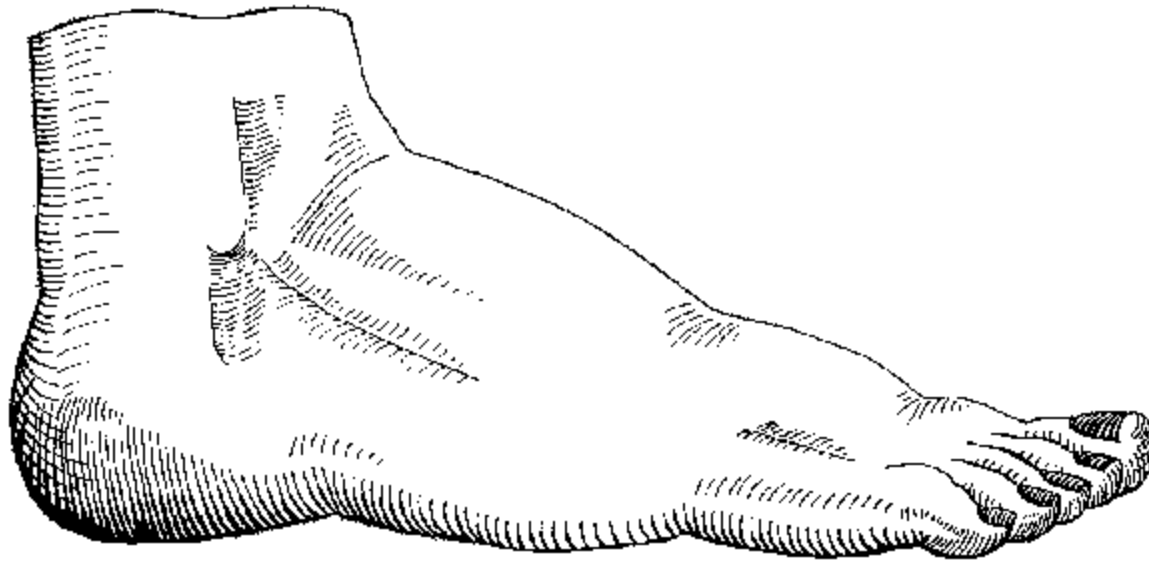
What is the future of man-kind?

Will we progress spiritually and materially to a higher plane?

What about all the other life in the the solar syatem?

Idiologies and isms are often philosphies and religions with the spiritual relationships, justice, mercy and compassion subverted to the exercise of power.

Deus ex machina



Remember the famous Monty Python foot

I'd love to change the world,
but I don't know what to do.
So I'll leave it up to you.

I'd Love To Change The World
Alvin Lee , 1971

Q. If you wanted to save the world,
Where would you start?

A. Here.

Resources

KPFT - Democracy Now - Flashpoints - Indymedia <http://www.kpft.org>

The Houston Chronicle <http://www.chron.com>

KUHF NPR <http://www.kuhf.org>

KUHT - PBS - Frontline, NOW, NewsHour

Search Engines - Google - Yahoo

Newspapers

Reason Foundation <http://www.reason.org>

American Civil Liberties Union <http://www.aclu.org>

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

United Nations

<http://www.Wikipedia.org>