

Saving the earth peacefully -- 12 imperatives

By Bo Filter

Earth day has once more come and gone quietly. Subduing the earth keeps on going at record pace, and now we have the Gulf of Mexico oil-gush disaster. Many don't want to put on the brakes. In laying blame, I'm frequently told to let God sort it out. So we see the avoidance of responsibility continuing on in human affairs. For a moment, however, let's put responsibility squarely on human shoulders.

Firstly, environmental destruction, pollution and razing of the planet are not the work of other species. About two species an hour go extinct, according to David Suzuki's research group. The Brundtland Commission, formally the World Commission on Environment and Development, known by the name of its Chair Gro Brundtland, was convened by the United Nations in 1983. It stated that the normal species extinction rate is only one per year. The extinction rate of two per hour may be even higher by now.

So we have to ask, what is behind our seeming race to exterminate life on earth? This question has been answered over and over again as a base element in the capitalist model of business—the unquenching thirst for profit at any cost. To achieve a steady stream of record profits, the peoples of the world are conscripted into all types of jobs that ravage the land. So the fundamental problem is the pressure capitalism puts on the land. To stop killing the planet, we have to take the pressure off the environment. Let it grow and recover, while we end our poisoning and polluting.

So how do we do this? What are the imperatives we need to save earth?

Imperative one: UNIVERSAL GREEN EMPLOYMENT

Give everyone in the world *green* jobs, work that is neutral to environmental damage if not restorative.

Imperative two: UNIVERSAL GUARANTEED MINIMAL ANNUAL INCOME

Give everyone in the world a guaranteed income. Many people express the desire to end their planet-destructive jobs. Easing the pressure on the planet by not having to do harmful work to survive, millions could turn to a life of contemplation, self-reflection, volunteerism, etc. Tremendous self-healing and advancement for community, nation, and beyond can be obtained.¹

Several ways of doing this have been proffered. Several mechanisms already exist to curb the vast accumulating money supply. What we fail to realize is that a mushrooming money supply already exists but curbing mechanisms are not in place because the elite gain advantage from a growing money supply, as in the example of being able to buy property on which the poor cannot even afford to make a down payment. What's more, an elite-dominated media allows them to demonize welfare for the poor, stirring the middle-class to begrudge the poor. This takes the heat off the private banking elite who print and oversee the spending of vast monies on their own pet projects.

Done globally, a living guaranteed income would immediately end world starvation. According to UNICEF Canada, each day 35,000 children die from malnutrition and related diseases.² This daily atrocity is caused by predatory capitalism. Poor nations are stripped of their resources and thus economic viability by militarized global corporations, what Mussolini in World War II called corporatism, as a form of his fascist party, also referred to now as globalization and the NEW WORLD ORDER.

Imperative three: END WAR: CLOSE MILITARY BASES WORLD-WIDE

The pre-existing conditions that have led to the initiation of every war in history were avoidable. Therefore war has never been necessary; nor is war genetic.³ The money saved would easily fund all the green jobs and emergency measures needed to repair and sustain the planet.

Imperative four: END FANTASY-BASED CAPITALISM

From inception, capitalism was predicated on unsustainable infinite growth. The model of infinite growth is based on a simplistic early century delusion that the world possesses infinite resources and infinite space on which to exploit resources. Capitalism was born long before the earth was discovered to be spherical and finite. Fantasy-bred and outdated concepts running the modern world constitute a recipe for disaster, which we are watching unfold.

Imperative five: EMPLOY CYCLICAL GREEN ECONOMY

Another myth must be discarded: that waste somehow disappears when we "throw it away". Waste becomes environmental contamination. In a green economy, manufacturers take responsibility for the entire life of their products, to be returned for recycling. Waste products are not thrown away but used on other fashionable products or neutralized to be returned to the environment safely. Such cradle to grave manufacturing stops the enormous waste being dumped into landfills and oceans.

Imperative six: ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP

The question becomes, "Who is responsible for all the damage and poison?" Should the front line workers come from corporate families who profited from environmental damage? Should they clean up the toxic waste sites? Should the workers be picked randomly from the population? Should the masses of poor who gained little, if anything, from the damage be forced to clean up the mess? Scientists and technologists will have to be employed to find ways to neutralize toxins and turn some of them back to life-enhancing substances. Certainly one shameful gift to future generations we will not be able to escape is the legacy of nuclear waste. In the first phase of cleanup, high quality, recyclable containment facilities have to be constructed.

Imperative seven: OCEAN MORATORIUM

All large scale harvesting of plants, fish, other animals, and petroleum extraction must stop. We must permanently stop all dumping of waste into the world's oceans. Again, the childish myth of *throw away*, magically throwing our waste into non-existence, must be challenged and defeated. Dead zones in the oceans did not begin until after 1970.

The UN Environment Program published its first *Global Environment Outlook Year Book* in March 2004, reporting 146 dead zones in the world's oceans where marine life could not be supported due to depleted oxygen levels. Some of these were as small as a square kilometre, but the largest dead zone covered 70,000 square kilometres.⁴ A 2008 study counted 405 dead zones worldwide.⁵

We have precious few years to save the ocean ecosystems. Pretending that the oceans are fine or putting the cleanup onto future generations is unconscionable. On May 17, Pavan Sukhdev, head of the UN Environment Program's green economy initiative, told journalists in New York that the world faces the nightmare possibility of fishless oceans by 2050 without fundamental restructuring of the fishing industry.⁶

How many dead zones will be created by the Gulf of Mexico oil gusher? If we fail to stop the corporations, who are out of control, then the final destruction of the oceans marks our unwillingness to live on earth.

Imperative eight: STOP SPECIES HABITAT DESTRUCTION

With the end of capitalism, vast tracts of lands can be protected for wild life. Poaching of endangered species will stop. With a guaranteed income, poachers will be able to turn their attention to a productive green life-style. Environmental scientists and protection officers will be hired to oversee reconstructive habitat for endangered and threatened species.

Imperative nine: MAKE FRESH WATER – GREEN THE DESERTS

All land species of life need fresh water. According to a 2006 United Nations report: "Only one per cent of the total water resources on earth is available for human use. While 70 per cent of the world's surface is covered by water, 97.5 per cent of that is salt water."⁷ All that salt water need not be wasted. What many people don't realize is that a huge global energy system is waiting for us to tap—evaporation. We can make tons of fresh water using evaporation.

According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, over 2.5 trillion gallons of water evaporate into the atmosphere every day.⁸ We can easily pump sea water to the deserts, then, let the searing sun evaporate the water. Trapping the evaporation would produce water that could drip irrigate the deserts, which would quickly blossom. Seeds from surrounding areas blow into the deserts. The seeds need only a small amount of water to begin life. Tropical forests would grow and lakes would form. New life-giving ecosystems would be created. This is an example of how we introduce new green jobs.

Imperative ten: MOVE TOWARD A PLANT-BASED DIET

Food production research shows that many pounds of plant material and many gallons of fresh water are required to make a single pound of meat.⁹ The more people who have a meat-centered diet, the more stress is placed on the planet to produce grain for livestock. Critical rain-forest ecosystems are being destroyed, clear-cut to make way for grain production for meat production.

If earth had the same human population as it did 10,000 years ago, high meat consumption would not be a problem, disregarding momentarily the hotly debated ethical issues involving meat consumption. From a purely survival standpoint, the question arises as to how many meat-centred people the planet can physically sustain versus the number of plant-based people the world can sustain. Studies show that we can sustain far more people with plant-based diets.

Ecologists in the 1960s estimated the planet's human limit to be one billion, given the rate of consumption at the time. Today's population is vastly above the Neolithic era and the ecologists' survival estimate. In 2002, the world's population was 6.2 billion people. The number is expected to increase to approximately 7.2 billion people by 2015.¹⁰ You can see the increasing numbers in every country around the world at www.breathingearth.net. As human population grows, a plant-based diet becomes more imperative. Some heavy meat eaters are already moving their diet somewhat, if not for planetary reasons, then for reasons of health. More and more doctors are prescribing, "eat more vegetables".

Birth rates are particularly high in poor countries. These numbers will start to fall with a guaranteed income, as women can afford to take control of their own reproductive cycle.

Imperative eleven: READ SCHOLARLY BOOKS AND ARTICLES

In an advanced technological world, we need to be politically intelligent, so that our technology is used wisely and does not render our existence unviable. We have a lot of work to do in this area, as a recent study shows. Both the public as well as politicians flunked a civics literacy test. The politicians scored 44 percent, while the public was a bit higher at 49 percent. The test was sponsored by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI).

"It is disturbing enough that the general public failed ISI's civic literacy test, but when you consider the even more dismal scores of elected officials, you have to be concerned," said Josiah Bunting, chairman of the National Civic Literacy Board at ISI.¹¹ The institute says that movies and television dull the civic mind. Conversely, they found that civic knowledge is enhanced by discussing public affairs, taking part in civic activities and reading about current events and history.

Current book reading is very low. Pulitzer Prize winning author Chris Hedges says 80 percent of American families did not buy a book last year.¹² There are several reasons for this, such as grinding poverty. People who struggle to obtain the basic necessities of life find little time and energy to read. Further, this stresses the importance of imperative two: a guaranteed survivable income. The majority of books that are read are fiction. We need to reestablish a flourishing scholarship. Read scholarly books and articles to balance fiction reading.¹³

Imperative twelve: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Nothing keeps people thinking far below their civic potential more than a privately owned media that corals thinking by various techniques like omitting crucial information adults need to make mature decisions.¹⁴ Freedom of the press is guaranteed in the Constitution. Yet, corporations have been able to privatize the press, giving them inordinate power to manage public perception.

Concentration of control allows a few men at the top to censor and hide vastly important issues. One example of this is the *out-of-control spending* by the private central banks. Not only has this story been hidden from the public, even the US government can't find out how much money is being made and spent. For example, the Frank Church Senate Committee findings of 1975 revealed that the CIA was receiving secret unrecorded and unaccountable funds. Witnesses refused to disclose numbers. In the end, the committee could only estimate the amount to be over one trillion dollars annually. They did know, however, that the money was spent on crimes, what is euphemistically termed *covert operations* in CIA parlance, in order to make felonies look like necessary national security work.

The 12 imperatives I describe are concepts. Their mechanical constructs are yet to be put in place. We can either clean up our act or continue on our current collision course with catastrophe. The late famous astronomer Carl Sagan said that we are the only intelligent life we know of in the universe. What a shame to throw it all away. To take away the last chance to save humanity in our life time, means that we, the living people today, are the authors of our own extermination—what a legacy.

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1. An example one might consider is the psychological discipline and practice of Vipassana, as taught by S.N. Goenka For information and schedules, google: vipassana goenka.

2. Cape Breton University. Children's Rights Centre, http://discovery.cbu.ca/psych/index.php?children/resources_item/common_questions_about_children_rights/

3. Filter, Bo. 2004. *The Cause of Wars and Aggression: Book 1*. Global Justice Publishing: www.globaljusticepublishing.com.

4. Perlman, David. Chronicle Science Editor. Friday, August 15, 2008. *Scientists alarmed by ocean dead-zone growth*. *San Francisco Chronical*. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/08/15/MNLD12ADSN.DTL#ixzz0oJXTZ2bx>

5. Robert J. Diaz and Rutger Rosenberg. August 15, 2008. Spreading Dead ones and Consequences for Marine Ecosystems. *Science Magazine*, Vol. 321. no. 5891, pp. 926 – 929. DOI: 10.1126/science.1156401. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1156401>

6. May 17, 2010 "AFP" -- NEW YORK

7. United Nations Water for Life Decade 2005-2015. Factsheet on Water and Sanitation. <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/factsheet.html> and UN-WWAP, 2006

8. NASA's Water Cycle. <http://neptune.gsfc.nasa.gov/index.php?section=31>.

9. A few sources to consider: the television documentary *Food Inc.*, John Robbins' 2001 book, *The Food Revolution*, and Jeremy Rifkin's 1992 book, *Beyond Beef*. See www.foet.org/books/beyond-beef.html

10. United Nation's International Decade For Action. Water for Life, 2005-2015.

<http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/factsheet.html> and WHO/UNICEF, 2005

11. *US officials flunk test of history, economics, civics*. Updated: 2008-11-23. www.chinadaily.com.cn