



Earth Manifesto

A Sharp Analysis and Scathing Critique of Misguided and Misguiding American Leaders

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Please give these clear-eyed Big Picture understandings close consideration.

In a bona fide liberty-loving democratic republic, the people are protected from being ruled ruthlessly by wealthy dominion-demanding plutocrats or giant corporations, or by religious fanatics or repressive authoritarian regimes. *We the People* generally prefer a fairer and more honest populism in which we are guaranteed broader freedoms and truer social justice, and fairer environmental justice prevails. We want to be able to enjoy our lives, our liberties and our individual pursuits of happiness, while socially benign peaceful coexistence reigns across the land. To succeed in establishing these social goods, we must refocus our national priorities.

To really improve matters, we need more widely shared prosperity and improved security for the populace, and we need adequate investments in the social safety net and reasonable environmental protections. And we need these propitious conditions at the same time that our leaders are not running the country into excessively risky levels of national debt. To achieve these common good goals, we need new leadership and real significant reforms, NOT merely lower taxes on the highest levels of income and a new salvo of rich people-imposed austerity measures.

Our colonial forbearers courageously declared independence from the British monarchy in 1776 because they were outraged at despotic abuses and usurpations of power by King George III and his government. Then, eleven years later in 1787, delegates representing the people of the new nation spent four months in a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, forging a commendably fair Constitution with a primary purpose of creating a new form of government that would be safeguarded through a strong system of checks and balances that would prevent any future despots from gaining and abusing power.

To achieve this goal, they declared that the government's legitimacy itself, and its moral right to use the power of the state, are only justified and lawful when the people over which that political power is exercised give their consent. This theory of consent is historically contrasted to the divine right of kings, and was often invoked as a charge against the legitimacy of colonialism. In 1948, Article 21 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed with this ultimate gauge of legitimacy, stating: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government".

Since the legitimacy of leaders in our democratic republic relies on the consent of the governed, and since Trump Republicans represent only a minority of the people, current leadership is broadly illegitimate. Besides, most Trump supporters only gave their consent after being subjected to an intense barrage of manipulative propaganda, emotion hijacking attack ads, goaded fears, riled up racial prejudices, Big Lies and diabolical machinations related to the ideological makeup of the Supreme Court. And since Trump's illegitimate triumph, far from governing reasonably, Republicans have been ruling with deceit, moral turpitude, discriminatory zeal, fiscal irresponsibility, extreme ecological myopia and an agenda that mercilessly panders principally and without scrupulous principles to the elite few.

Only a misled minority consents to the ruthlessness of Republican rule today, due to its valuing of profits over people's health and well-being, and its egregiously idiotic ecological insanity, and the treacherousness of its well-compensated puppet politicians and apologists for domineering crony capitalists in their profit-prepossessed crusade against working people and the health of providential living conditions for life on Earth.

The status quo is rigged severely irresponsibly against the people. First, conniving Republicans stole the election. Why, it is practically unbelievable how long the litany is of schemes and scams and frauds that they have perpetrated during the 2016 election campaign and throughout their illegitimate reign. The sordid details of this infamy are spelled out in *See Clearly - Sanity During Insane Times: Book Twelve of the Earth Manifesto*.

See clearly what's happening here, and why it's so seriously wrongheaded. Wealthy donors, led by the secretive Koch conclave co-conspirators and their well-heeled cronies, have colossally corrupted our economic and political systems. Encouraging this corruption, five conservatives on the Supreme Court gave their stamp of approval, stating in their narrow majority opinion in the 2010 *Citizens United* ruling that Big Money in our elections cannot corrupt our politics, or even create the appearance of corruption. They maintained this opinion despite the plainly evident extent of the corrupting influence of allowing Big Donors to control and decide almost everything. "Not a puppet, not a puppet!", Trump exclaimed in denial.

These indignities are being compounded by the fact that many of the scams being perpetrated are textbook examples of wrong-headed malfeasance and activities that bend or outright violate the rules of law. The American people are further being subjected not only to this litany of ruses, but to deep psychological distress and insecurity due to the extremely divisive nature of demagogic attempts to blame others and exacerbate prejudices and pit people against each other. "United we stand; divided, the despots win."

As a pathetic consequence of the ways the status quo is rigged, the ruling class is wantonly endangering and outright harming the people in the United States. And right now, they are trying to get rid of more and more regulations, so we are losing sensible safeguards against roguery, influence peddling, cost externalizing schemes, environmental damages, insider trading and all manner of con jobs, including tax evasion and emoluments improprieties.

Meanwhile, look what's going on here. Republicans in Congress rammed through a Tax Cut Act last December, without public hearings and without honestly considering the real consequences, and here's what it will do. The public treasury will borrow an additional \$2 trillion or so over the next 10 years, running up the already dangerously high \$21 trillion national debt, and give more than 80% of the spoils of this illegitimate economic stimulus to the top 1%. The interest costs of this con job obligation will be owed by each and every taxpayer in every future year, basically forevermore, in light of the fact that none of the borrowed principal will likely ever be repaid. In fact, the interest expense cost will almost certainly compound, as we continue our deeply irresponsible deficit spending ways, year after year after year. The interest expense on \$10 trillion will total \$10 trillion every 20 years or so, over and over again, conservatively assuming that the prevailing rate of interest on long-term government borrowings averages only 4%. This Santa Claus is generous to system-corrupting beneficiaries year around.

A side effect of this swindle is increasingly extreme inequality. Since fairness is a founding principle in a democratic republic, spiking degrees of inequality between the Few and the Many threaten our democracy and our collective well-being. It also puts our personal freedoms and individual and national security at greater risk. Peaceful coexistence in American society will not be achieved through more unjust laws or more severe austerity measures, or by waging a harsher war on drugs - and poor people -- or by slashing government spending on healthcare, education, the social safety net, physical infrastructure or sensible protections of the environment.

All of these swindles compound the folly of the multitude of consequential scams involved in rigging the status quo. Those who are responsible for enabling these outcomes that radically harm people are profoundly socially irresponsible.

To save us all -- and their own necks -- the wealthy ruling class should discover a new urgency in finding much better ways of fairly sharing the profits generated through the exploitation of natural resources and working people. Billionaire Nick Hanauer would concur, judging from the brilliantly simple insights he conveys in his Memo "to My Fellow Zillionaires", *The Pitchforks are Coming ... for Us Plutocrats*.

Let's fix the wrongs! Balance, moderation, Right Mindfulness and Right Action are called for. See *Common Sense Revival - Book One of the Earth Manifesto* for a fuller understanding of related ideas.

[Riff on the Undesirability of Extreme Inequality](#)

Inequality today is more extreme than it has been at almost any time in the history of the USA. The gaping gap between the rich and the vast majority of everyone else is worse than it has been at any time since the Roaring Twenties, and this state of affairs will continue to become more seriously extreme for a variety of reasons, according to the French economist Thomas Piketty in his blockbuster tome on economics, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*.

Barack Obama called increasing inequality a "defining challenge of our time." One reason this is true is because of the daunting implications of the observation attributed to the brilliant Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis: "We must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both."

If the American people are truly committed to pledging allegiance to an indivisible democratic republic, a nation that really stands for liberty and justice for all, then we need to remedy the extremity of the imbalance between rich and poor, and heed the cautionary words penned by the famous Greek essayist Plutarch some nineteen centuries ago, when he declared that such imbalances are "the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics."

In their fascinating book *The Lessons of History*, the great historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote that, when the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest becomes too extreme in a country, as has happened periodically throughout the centuries, such an "unstable equilibrium generates a critical situation" that results in either "legislation redistributing wealth or revolution distributing poverty." It seems obvious that the best choice for good leaders would be to champion plans that would reduce inequality through intelligent legislative actions guided by fair-mindedness, honestly egalitarian national policies, precautionary principles, farsightedness and greater empathy for the suffering of those whose interests are under-represented in our societies.

The wise Athenian statesman and lawmaker Solon is credited for having saved Athens from debilitating strife by forging sensible compromises between the rich and the poor at a juncture in time when inequalities of wealth and power had reached extremes in ancient Greece. Solon is regarded as "the father of democracy" for the fair-minded progressive reforms he instituted way back in the 6th century BCE. Historians say that Solon repealed almost all of earlier harshly draconian laws that had been enacted by a legislator named Draco.

Today, inequalities between the top 1% and the masses of poor people and those in the declining middle class are reaching historically unprecedented new extremes in the USA. This state of affairs is creating critical risks that require bold, honest, intelligent, farsighted, democratically fair and Solon-wise reforms to prevent our great country from sliding into dire straits and violent strife. Unfortunately, "conservative" politicians have seized power in Washington D.C., and in a majority of state governments, and they are taking steps to impose draconian austerity on the populace to defend the status quo of excessive privileges for elites and low tax rates on the highest levels of income, capital gains and inheritances.

Nowhere is this neo-Draconian approach more pronounced than in healthcare reform efforts, where right-wing ideologues are striving to roll back progressive steps taken by President Obama. Conservatives are pushing insidiously draconian new tax and healthcare legislation that would slash federal spending on Medicare and Medicaid, and allow increased discrimination against poor people and women and children and old people and anyone with "preexisting conditions" -- in order to give huge tax breaks to rich people.

In a cynical modern twist, the Draconian Party is trying to spin their harsh policies as having "heart", giving lip service to populist concerns while brazenly handing out more regressive debt-financed tax breaks. Their other top priorities are to ram through narrowly-focused corporate benefits, reduce protections of the health and well-being of people who work for a living, curtail the collective bargaining rights of workers, and expand opportunities for artificially inflating private profits by allowing pollution and climate-disrupting greenhouse gas emission costs to be "socialized" (i.e., rashly foisted onto society and people in future generations). In general, they are committed to myopically sacrificing public lands and the environmental commons so as to increase profits and achieve other short term-oriented goals.

Senate Republicans have demonstrated a willingness to put tens of millions of American lives at risk by repealing the Affordable Care Act in order to give the ultra-wealthy a massive tax cut. This prompted former president Obama to make an observation that applies much more broadly: "After all, this debate has always been about

something bigger than politics. It's about the character of our country -- who we are, and who we aspire to be. And that's always worth fighting for."

In a convincing book titled *The Crisis of the Middle-Class Constitution - Why Economic Inequality Threatens Our Republic*, legal scholar Ganesh Sitaraman expresses the conviction that extreme levels of inequality are existentially dangerous to the continued existence of our democratic republic. A strong middle class, he writes, "inspires a sense of shared purpose and shared fate, without which the system of government will fall apart." Since ancient times, when a small minority of the populace is allowed to become very rich while ignoring large segments of the population that are much worse off, it leads to two undesirable probabilities. The downtrodden may rise up and confiscate the wealth of the rich, or the masses, given little opportunity for social mobility or for improving their prospects, are susceptible to turning to a manipulative demagogue "who would overthrow the government -- only to become a tyrant. Oligarchy or tyranny, economic inequality meant the end of the republic."

Risks of revolution also rise when rich people impose their rule with little regard for poor people and those in the middle class, especially when they disenfranchise a majority of the populace and effectively enslave them with excessively opprobrious tight control over wage laborers. In a review of Ganesh Sitaraman's book, Angus Deaton observed in his article *It's Not Just Unfair: Inequality Is a Threat to Our Governance*: "Sitaraman reviews many possible correctives, including redistribution to reduce inequality; better enforcement of antitrust laws; campaign finance reform to break the dependence of legislators on deep pockets; compulsory voting; and restrictions on lobbying, including the possibility of 'public defender' lobbyists to act on behalf of the people." Let's seize the bull by the horns and address this crucial challenge by adopting these remedies!

Think about the 2014 article *The Pitchforks Are Coming ... For Us Plutocrats*, written by billionaire entrepreneur Nick Hanauer. Addressed as a Memo to "My Fellow Zillionaires", Hanauer expressed this provocative understanding in his Memo:

"At the same time that people like you and me are thriving beyond the dreams of any plutocrats in history, the rest of the country -- the 99.99 percent -- is lagging far behind. The divide between the haves and have-nots is getting worse really, really fast. In 1980, the top 1 percent controlled about 8 percent of U.S. national income. The bottom 50 percent shared about 18 percent. Today the top 1 percent share about 20 percent; the bottom 50 percent, just 12 percent."

"But the problem isn't that we have inequality. Some inequality is intrinsic to any high-functioning capitalist economy. The problem is that inequality is at historically high levels and getting worse every day. Our country is rapidly becoming less a capitalist society and more a feudal society. Unless our policies change dramatically, the middle class will disappear, and we will be back to late 18th-century France. Before the revolution."

"And so I have a message for my fellow filthy rich, for all of us who live in our gated bubble worlds: Wake up, people. It won't last. If we don't do something to fix the glaring inequities in this economy, the pitchforks are going to come for us. No society can sustain this kind of rising inequality. In fact, there is no example in human history where wealth accumulated like this and the pitchforks didn't eventually come out. You show me a highly unequal society, and I will show you a police state. Or an uprising. There are no counterexamples. None. It's not if, it's when."

To achieve a more peaceable world, we need to create more just societies with more fairly shared prosperity and more broadly shared security and freedom. And our concept of freedom should be expansive and more inclusive, not merely the freedom to spend unlimited amounts of money on political influence, or the freedom to not buy medical insurance, or the unrestricted freedom to own guns. President Franklin D. Roosevelt articulated such an expansive vision of freedom in his 1941 State of the Union address, when he declared that there are four fundamental freedoms that people "everywhere in the world" ought to enjoy: the freedom of speech, the freedom of worship, the freedom from want, and the freedom from fear." Stand and Deliver, ruling elites -- give the people expanded freedoms!

Excessively inegalitarian societies become unstable and are unsustainable. An adequately strong social safety net is needed to provide a social insurance policy against violent revolution, and it is risky and wrongheaded to promote ideological rationalizations that serve to make inequality in our society worse and worse and worse.

Think of how fanatically misguided it is for corporate entities to be allowed to exercise overweening power. The sole legal purposes of corporations are to maximize profits and minimize liabilities and responsibilities of management and investors. Corporate entities are thus powerfully driven to externalize costs, foisting them onto you and me, and everyone in the future.

To actualize the greater good, we must be guided by more comprehensive concerns that take into account *The Common Good, Properly Understood*.

Since the goal of establishing a government of strong checks and balances that can stand for time immemorial against both domestic despotism and foreign tyranny is at the very heart of the U.S. Constitution, it is tragic that our democratic republic, founded for the common good, has devolved today into illegitimacy by allowing a demagogue and his nodding co-conspiratorial minions to seize power, and to perpetrate broad abuses of authority against the best interests of the citizens of the republic.

One way that Trump has violated our founding principles is by attacking the free press. The publisher of the New York Times, A.G. Sulzberger, has warned that Trump's savage attacks on reporters and investigative journalists, and on entire news organizations like CNN, the Washington Post and the New York Times, are creating significant danger to responsible reporters, as well as undesirably giving cover to mercilessly corrupt leaders and dictators worldwide, like in Russia and Turkey, where ruthless actions are taken to suppress the free press.

Those who choose to engage in these acts of infamy are being judged by God, some say, so what will happen at the Pearly Gates of Heaven? A more likely scenario has Dante scholars assessing the situation ruefully, and running their algorithms full speed ahead to determine which dastardly circle in *Inferno* each and every one of these usurpers and power abusers should be destined to reside in, for the rest of eternity, after they die.

Forget the afterlife! Just in case, let's demand social justice in the here and now. Let's all throw open our windows and holler "I'm not going to take it anymore!" Let's demand new management, and insist that their only legitimate top goal is to better meet the needs of all the people. They should be required to honestly take the steps necessary to create a fairer and more fiscally sound society, one that is more just and more egalitarian, and therefore more safe, secure and peaceable.

One of Mark Twain's most famous essays is *Corn-Pone Opinions*, which concludes with this point:

"In our late canvass half of the nation passionately believed that in silver lay salvation, the other half as passionately believed that that way lay destruction. Do you believe that a tenth part of the people, on either side, had any rational excuse for having an opinion about the matter at all? I studied that mighty question to the bottom -- came out empty. Half of our people passionately believe in high tariff, the other half believe otherwise. Does this mean study and examination, or only feeling? The latter, I think. I have deeply studied that question, too -- and didn't arrive. We all do no end of feeling, and we mistake it for thinking. And out of it we get an aggregation which we consider a boon. Its name is Public Opinion. It is held in reverence. It settles everything. Some think it the Voice of God."

That perspective puts a new spin on people being "politically correct".

Each and every one of us exists in our unique individual bubble chamber, electrons zipping past. Our personal worldviews are powerfully determined by the circumstances of our birth, our upbringing and whatever hand we have been dealt by the fickle fingers of fate. But to an extent, each of us does have some degree of free will, and it wouldn't be a bad idea for us to give a larger measure of respect to scientific reality, and to ecological sanity. One of my pet theories is that it would be better for everyone to strive to see more clearly -- in ways that are more comprehensive and more inclusive.

A Focus on the Common Good, Properly Understood

We should all laugh together at the perceptive insight in a wry cartoon that appeared in the New Yorker: "My desire to be well-informed is currently at odds with my desire to remain sane." An existential Ha! Humor is good for the soul, but make no mistake about it, these are trying times for our souls, and the information and perspective in this essay could change the world, and do so in a Solon-wise way that could providentially and positively resolve our unfolding national nightmare and set our country onto a more star-spangled course than the

direction in which it seems to be headed today. At this crucial juncture in history, American citizens cannot afford to shrink from engaging and participating in our democratic decision-making.

I invite everyone to read *See Clearly: Sanity during Insane Times*, to understand all of the rash ruses that the ruling class is perpetuating against the American people. And in light of these clear realizations, I urge every voter to vote, and to vote for moderates and progressives, and more honest representatives, and to give a stern rebuke to all the incumbent politicians in Congress who are engaging in scandalous malfeasance, and who are imposing hardships on the populace using deceit and abuses of power in positions of authority. And those who are supporting Trump in a cult-like way, emulating obedient authoritarian followers, as examined by Bob Altemeyer in his insightful online book *The Authoritarians*.

Rich people want to pay less tax, and thus scrimp on the safeguards represented by social insurance policies that could save their own necks from revolutionary strife. They are staunchly opposed to paying increased marginal tax rates on the highest levels of their earnings, even for some of the best investments they could make for society in greater well-being for everyone concerned.

The most egregious instance of this is found in the current Republican drive to slash spending on the social safety net and protections of public health and the environment, while at the same time ramping up military spending and cutting taxes to mainly benefit the highest income earners. This is dangerously misguided policy.

Crucial Ecological Issues

Make no mistake about it, there is an even worse aspect of the Republican agenda and the shrewd schemes that they are pushing to reward hyper-privileged partisans for their political support and campaign contributions. This is in the arena of environmental protections. Republican politicians want to slash spending on protections of clean water, clean air, food and drug safety, environmental science, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA and efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. By these actions, these *Conservatives without Conscience* are condemning countless numbers of people right now, and for all future years and decades and centuries, to radically increased risks of more calamitous hardships, resource shortages, deprivations and natural disasters.

The harshly negative impacts of these retrogressive initiatives on human health can be categorized into a broad array of effects that include climate change factors like extreme heat, severe weather, air pollution, diminished water quality, fresh water shortages, food supply disruptions, spiking risks of diseases, exposures to increasing amounts of allergens, rising sea levels and a worsening degradation of the environmental commons that serves as an underpinning for overall human and biotic well-being. It is a colossal folly to court such catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our Mother Earth.

The big picture understandings in *Climate Change Considerations*, *Carrying Capacity*, and *Population Overshoot* are crucially important, so they are included here by this reference.

Pope Francis issued an important ecological encyclical on climate change in June 2015. In it, he made a strong moral case for the need to mobilize people of faith and others into action to seriously address climate change. The Pope centered his environmental protection theology on the biblical creation story in the book of Genesis, in which God is said to have created the world and declared it "good", and charged humanity with its care. And Pope Francis tied the ongoing environmental crisis to economic concerns and the exploitation of the planet by a wealthy minority, emphasizing the social injustices that these trends cause while wreaking detrimental damages to the downtrodden and the poor and powerless. Jesus Christ!

Pope Francis has called for climate action as a moral imperative because of the perilous effects of global warming that will be most devastating for poor people and folks in vulnerable developing countries, who happen to be contributing the least to factors that drive climate change. Smarter and fairer policies are needed to achieve truer environmental and social justice. All developed countries should make bigger contributions to the Green Climate Fund to mitigate the impacts of climate injustices. Most of all, the United States should give more, because it has been responsible more than any other country for the increasingly rapid build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere in the past century.

The smartest path forward would be to implement Pigouvian incentives such as an egalitarian carbon fee-and-dividend plan that would reduce the profligacy of wasteful usages of fossil fuels. Plans like this would have the effect of giving "extraordinary encouragements" and "extraordinary restraints" to all businesses and individuals. The basis of this idea was first advocated by the insightful British economist Arthur Cecil Pigou, who promoted the idea of implementing subsidy incentives and tax disincentives because such mechanisms in general have the salubrious effect of properly reflecting both social benefits and costs to society that are not accounted for in private transactions. This would be a good means for influencing people's activities and behaviors in sensible ways. A carbon fee-and-dividend plan, progressively designed, would have added benefits of helping reduce inequalities in our society by returning some of the carbon fees generated to all Americans in a highly egalitarian way.

For more auspicious guidance, we should stop ignoring the largest constituency of all -- every person in future generations -- by making a courageous commitment to a truly fair-minded Bill of Rights for Future Generations, as specifically proposed in the Earth Manifesto.

It should be remembered that Donald Trump and Ivanka, Don Jr. and Eric were all signatories of a full-page ad placed in the New York Times in December 2009 that advocated the passage of national legislation to limit emissions of greenhouse gases. The letter succinctly stated: "We support your effort to ensure meaningful and effective measures to control climate change, an immediate challenge facing the United States and the world today. If we fail to act now, it is scientifically irrefutable that there will be catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet."

Bizarrely, the Trump family has opportunistically flip-flopped on this position, apparently deciding that they prefer the power and money they gain by allowing short-term-oriented profit-making on fossil fuels to dictate our national environmental policies, even though they are aware that the consequences will be "catastrophic and irreversible." This is a Faustian bargain with the devil, and a reflection of naked greed unmasked.

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears ...

The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones; ...

O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason.

--- William Shakespeare, in *Julius Caesar*

"Conservative" leaders seem to want us all to stick our heads in the sand, and instead of making honest vulnerability assessments to the unfolding adverse impacts associated with juiced-up fossil fuel profit-making, they are dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency, firing environmental scientists, and eliminating the best scientific understandings from government websites.

I implore all politicians to remember the meaning and value of public service, and to consequently keep from sacrificing the future well-being of humanity merely to pander to narrow goals of corporate executives, fossil fuel profiteers, opponents of collective bargaining, religious fundamentalists, uncompromising gun rights extremists, and wealthy ideologues like Robert Mercer, Rebekah Mercer, Charles Koch and David Koch. The Koch brother billionaires are exerting more influence over American democracy than almost any other individuals in history. They think the Republican healthcare bill is not "conservative" enough, and they are "gearing up to target vulnerable Democrats on the ballot in 2018, pledging to spend upwards of \$400 million ...". Senator Kamala Harris indicates that Charles and David Koch "are specifically coming after some of the most effective voices in the fight to save the Affordable Care Act, like my colleagues Senators Chris Murphy and Bill Nelson." The gamesmanship of extremely partisan politics should not ignore human ethics and morality, and the common good should not be sacrificed with such ruthlessness in the pursuit of money and power.

There are extraordinarily good reasons to cultivate a miraculous healing for the Earth that "awaits this planet once we accept our new responsibility to collectively tend the Garden, rather than fight over the turf." So say Bruce Lipton and Swami Beyondananda in their insightful book *Spontaneous Evolution*.

Understanding Movement Conservatism

The Democratic Party is a coalition of interest groups that share some views and also have many differences of opinions, and Democratic politicians tend to get ahead by making compromises and finding acceptable solutions to the problems and challenges experienced by the citizens they represent. Republican politicians, in contrast, have

for decades been part of a more monolithic structure called "movement conservatism", which has a rigid ideology advocating tax cuts for the rich above all other priorities. Other aspects of this monolithic structure include a captive media like Fox News that pushes the party line almost all the time and promotes alternate facts, deceptive talking points, emotion-exploiting spin and alternate realities that are at odds with truth, balanced perspective and fair-minded understandings.

This monolithic structure is lavishly supported by a small number of very wealthy people who reward loyalty by politicians who promote their causes. Nearly all Republicans in Congress today are "apparatchiks", or politicians with no principle higher than party loyalty. And such loyalty to chaos-generating Trump and the unfolding revelations of his administration's wrongdoing may prove disastrous for the American people, as dissatisfaction grows with their power-abusing ways.

Movement Conservatism has been surprisingly successful in gaining excessively domineering power and control in American society by its unrelenting focus on this overarching goal of giving dominating insider influence to the highest income earners and the wealthiest people, who invest hundreds of millions of dollars in contributions to scheming politicians to gain hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks. This success has been realized by using a veritable litany of corrupt, ideologically uncompromising, power abusing and anti-democratic methods, the most significant of which has been by pushing propaganda that purportedly proves that lower taxes on rich people and giant corporations are the best way to achieve economic growth and the greater good.

This trickle down ideology basically claims that everyone will do better when rich people pay less tax. The tautological truth, however, is that everyone will do better when everyone actually does better, and when the benefits of economic activities and resource exploitation and worker productivity are much more widely shared, rather than when they are excessively monopolized by capitalist elites.

Movement Conservatives disingenuously claim to care mainly about the best interests of the constituents they represent, but in reality they betray them by making unwavering commitments to a far-right agenda of debt-financed and regressively-structured tax cuts that heavily favor the well-to-do while imposing austerity measures on the masses. This betrayal contributes to creating a society that has growing inequality of opportunity and wealth, and increasingly widespread economic insecurity.

Movement Conservatism drives a divisive wedge between American citizens by promoting an extreme ideological framework that includes a whole constellation of Strict Father values, and it undermines opposing Nurturing Parent values of demonstrating empathetic concern for people and protecting them from abuses of power by corporations and governments. This perspective is evaluated in greater detail in the Original Earth Manifesto in 2004 (Book Nine of the Earth Manifesto), which concludes with the understanding: "These family morality worldviews cannot be judged definitively 'right' or 'wrong', according to linguist George Lakoff. A main difference is that conservatism is much more committed to achieving and perpetuating its own ends, regardless of whether the means are fair. Therefore, it is much more willing *to have people suffer harm* so they can be in control and have their greed-driven and power-abusing way."

Now, in the age of immoral, deceitful and emotion manipulating Trumpism, a shrewd demagogue has seized power and is threatening an escalating chaos that could lead to dictatorial abuses of power. *It Can't Happen Here?* "Like hell it can't!"

The Vital Role of Women in Politics

Women have emerged as an animating force behind the backlash to the ruthless rule of Donald Trump, with many storming to victory in congressional primaries. But some of them point out that governor's races are more challenging, because it is harder for women to build as much political and financial support as their male rivals. In several of the biggest states on the map, women have strained to break through or appear at risk of falling behind. Some may win despite being outspent by male opponents, but the financial disparity points to on-going institutional barriers that confront female candidates who try to crack the glass ceiling of vaulting domes in statehouses nationwide.

State capitols remain dominated by self-perpetuating male political networks that determine who is groomed and promoted -- and outsiders who do succeed in forcing their way into the nominating process are often rich men

wielding fortunes.

A far-right fringe candidate in Montana won the Republican primary in June 2018 with the backing of Dick Uihlein, an Illinois billionaire. Curiously, the only Senate race that Uihlein has spent more money on is the one in Wisconsin. As *The New York Times* recently reported, "The Uihleins want to bend the world their way... by audaciously distorting the truth." Nowhere is that clearer than in Wisconsin. Special interest groups funded by deep-pocketed mega donors like Uihlein are doling out really Big Money to buy elections and get candidates elected "who are so far to the right they'd roll our progress back generations. And right now, they're spending big to beat Senator Tammy Baldwin in Wisconsin." This is how Republicans hope to be able to retain control of the Senate in the November 2018 elections, and to thereby be able to continue to push their extreme agenda.

Conclusion

Survival is the ultimate moral good for our kind, and Big Picture perspectives are needed to help ensure our human survival and flourishing. Such perspectives should be comprehensive and should take into account the best understandings of spiritual leaders and deep ecologists and scientists in every discipline. They should not deny the most ethically aware worldviews, or the latest and most accurate scientific understandings.

Survival involves indefinitely sustained biological existence. The human race needs to clearly recognize and respect the fact that we cannot continue to consume much more than can be supplied by natural resources and regeneration and healthy ecosystems. The carrying capacity of damaged ecosystems is significantly less than that of healthy ones, so it is an overarching necessity for us to act to prevent harms to habitats. Otherwise, by upsetting the providential balance in nature, we will upset the indispensable foundation of our flourishing and survival.

"Après moi, le deluge" attitudes did not work out well for the power-abusing nobility in France, whose cavalier treatment of the masses provoked the French Revolution in 1789, or for King Louis XVI who was guillotined in January 1793, or for "Let them eat cake" Marie Antoinette, who met the same fate in October of that year. Republican efforts to roll back environmental protections today, and to reject global responsibilities under the Paris Agreement on climate change, are essentially a dead end "Après nous, le deluge" attitude.

Big Picture perspectives should be better informed by a Buddha-like triumvirate of Right Mindfulness and Right Understanding and Right Action. They should be guided by foresight and respect for the long-term greater good, like that imbued in a Bill of Rights for Future Generations. Greater concern should be given to social justice and environmental justice, and to the proper stewardship of Creation. Greater respect should be accorded to the compassionate caring of spiritual leaders like the Dalai Lama and prophets like Jesus Christ.

The Biblical Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil went extinct, but before doing so, I imagine it having generated a successor species in a majestic Tree of the Awareness of Right and Wrong. Only by gaining a clearer and more ethical understanding of true right and wrong can we find better ways to create fairer, safer and more sustainable societies. The marvelous Tree of Life itself is facing calamitous threats as humanity obtusely prunes away at twigs, branches and even ungodly portions of the trunk itself, and timber barons are practically salivating at the prospects of prospective profits as they sharpen their saws with the benediction of "conservative" opponents of environmental protections. Thanks a lot, Trump and Zinke.

At this crucial moment in human history, it would be wise to honestly review the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report, in which more than a thousand experts in 95 countries had spent four years assessing ecological conditions on Earth. The conclusion they reached was that human activities are having harmful impacts by unsustainably consuming natural resources while simultaneously significantly degrading ecosystems upon which we depend. These experts sensibly warned that humanity should develop a better managed economy and better methods of governance, so that in the course of living our lives we will at the same time better protect the vitality of our environment and future prospects of life on Earth. Let's come together to accomplish such farsighted goals!

Pliny the Elder was a scholar, naturalist and philosopher in ancient Rome who regarded the noblest life in an interesting way. "True glory," he said "consists in doing what deserves to be written; in writing what deserves to be read; and in so living as to make the world happier for our living in it."

I, Dr. Tiffany B. Twain, am a relative nobody, and I regard the seeking of "glory" as a curiously odd purpose, either in gods or in mortals. This is especially true when perceived glory comes at the expense of others, or to their distinct detriment. I feel strongly that all people should try to pay forward some good deeds to our heirs in future generations to help create better and safer prospects for overall well-being for everyone.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain