

# A New Path for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Way to Economic, Social and Political Justice for All

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June 7, 2000

## Synopsis

The paper starts with a very broad analysis of three major problems produced by the world economic system which usually identifies itself as free market capitalism. Firstly is the growing deterioration in the ecosystem and biosphere, the loss of life and lessening quality of life, and the risk of extinction to all still existing life. The second major problem described is the promotion of a "consumer society" – turning humankind from its essential unity with nature and spiritual values to an impoverished interior life wherein material satisfactions dominate and replace all others. The third major problem spawned by the current world economic system, analyzed in this paper, is the division of humanity into rich and poor, with a constantly growing economic and moral gap fostered between the two groups.

In section two, some of the "bad ideas" which have underlain the design of the old economic system are indicated. Adam Smith, recognized as the main theorist for capitalism and Karl Marx, the theorist for Marxism-Socialism, both have omitted the critical nature of ownership of capital in the productive system by focusing on labor as the sole producer of wealth; the resulting disenfranchisement of non-owners in the distribution of wealth and parallel creation of an ultra-rich class of owner-capitalists has led to great inequity in world society today. Permanent growth in a finite world, placing the human mind above rather than alongside the earth and the rest of life and the distorted concept of development, even "sustainable" development, as growth which exploits nature and treats humans as economic resources, are forms which the wrong ideas have taken today.

Section three outlines four areas of human activity which can help humanity to find the "right ideas," which will make the 21<sup>st</sup> century one for a shared future of a united humanity and a human society which is again at peace with the earth and all nature. Insights from the physical sciences, which reveal an open universe, deeply interconnected but with great diversity and a shared interiority, can form the foundation on which new

economic and political systems are built. The social sciences can similarly serve humanity by learning to appreciate the lessons of reality as revealed by the physical sciences and by providing a coherent social infrastructure most responsive to human needs. Ethics, morality and a concern for justice are able to inject the "glue" for a new spirit of community that is able to unite humankind. The example of Gandhi making non-violence a moral tool of social change in humanity's most violent and destructive century and Francis of Assisi, in the thirteenth century, demonstrating the power of radical poverty is complemented by creative thinking today to move society toward the Common Good and an equitable and just society. Dr. Amartya Sen, 1998 economics Nobel Laureate, proposes freedom as the principal means and primary end of development. Finally, the need for a new economic system and supportive political institutions is proposed. The growing emphasis on ownership as a universal human right appears to be indispensable to the future.

In section four, an example of the restructuring of wealth creation and distribution as a poverty eradication strategy by an indigenous Bangladeshi rural development organization, the Institute of Integrated Rural Development (IIRD), is described. The main characteristics of the development design, some of the results for the poor and some additional contributions made by IIRD to the development process are presented.

In section five, it is suggested that Catholic business schools broaden their outreach to dialogue, learn from and make effective the interconnectedness which has to bind together various economic and financial entities into a single economic system. Awareness of the poor and practical justice can best be promoted through direct experience and service learning.

#### 1. The World Economy and Situation It Produces

"...wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking for it is merely useful for the sake of something else."

Aristotle

"Wealth does not bring goodness, but goodness brings wealth and every other blessing, both to the individual and to the state."

Plato

The present world economy has produced a situation which is best described as a war on nature and life. It is diverting humankind from the higher goals of life by creating a materialistic consumer society and it is creating inconceivable and expanding extremes in wealth distribution. The present world economy has already produced such a disastrous condition for all of life that it is impossible to repair the damage caused to nature, all of life and to human society through simple reforms of the system. Radical change has to occur; the alternative is a total breakdown of civilization and irreparable damage to the support systems for all of life.

#### 1.1 Technology – Institutions – Ideology: A Powerful Global Creature

The invitation for a meeting on "Megatechnology and Development," organized in San Francisco, USA in 1993, read:

‘The forms of technology that are upon us have evolved to a point where they are now of global scale and impact,’ they wrote. ‘They interlock with one another forming yet a more powerful global creature. We may call this megatechnology: computers, television, satellites, lasers, space technology, high-speed travel, agribusiness, combined with the institutional forms that are compatible with them – transnational corporations, trade agreements, dominant political powers, massive military technologies – also combined with the monolithic ideologies of growth, massification, exploitation of nature, superiority of the western world view, and superiority of human beings over all other life.’

The coming together of all of these elements, material and ideological, into an inescapable system was described as the gravest threat, a ‘machine that exploits and kills cultures, nations, and nature.’<sup>1</sup>

This analysis indicates the complexity and raw power of the present dominant economic-political-technological system, controlling the world and shaping life today. The system, or "global creature," possesses the most advanced and effective technology ever available to humankind. Some of this technology has reached the limit of perfection, such as communications at the speed of light. Its institutions are as organized, expertly staffed, and well- financed as any in history. Its ideology of domination and growth feeds on its own power and self-interest, with no strong opposition to confront its abuses and challenge its misdirected course of action. The system seems incapable of being deterred from its present destructive course.

The WTO fiasco in Seattle last year was a direct and, at least, temporarily successful challenge to this mighty system. More and more individuals and institutions are banding together to confront the system which is promoting opulence for the few at the expense of the many and, perhaps, at the expense of the future of life on earth. The gravity of the situation is extreme.

Although the Seattle conflict was at the international level, there are frequent local struggles to prevent the pollution and destruction of communities’ natural resources, to protect rare species from extinction, and to safeguard people dependent on these natural resources from massive "development" projects, such as dam constructions, hydropower plants, clearance of forests, et cetera. The courage and persistent efforts of those who value nature, life and justice has been able, at least to a small

extent, to slow the destruction of the death machine.

### 1.1.1 War on Nature and Life

We must "...subjugate nature, press it into delivering its secrets, tie it to our service and make it our slave."

- Francis Bacon

"We intervene in nature in order to become the 'master and owner of nature.'"

- Rene Descartes

"The first trifle that we overlooked and only recently discovered is that unlimited progress cannot occur within the limited resources of our planet: nature needs to be supported rather than conquered. We are successfully eating up the environment allotted to us."

- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

"When the last tree has been cut down, when the last river has been poisoned, when the last fish has been caught, only then will we be aware that money cannot be eaten."

- Chief Seattle

It is estimated that the rate of the number of species destroyed since 1500 AD has grown as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- Between 1500 and 1850, one species was extinguished every ten years.
- Between 1850 and 1950, one species was extinguished every year.
- Since 1990, one species has vanished from the earth every day.
- From the year 2000 onward, one species will be extinguished every hour.

The ecological problems created by the misguided "global creature" are astounding both in number and the scope of their reach over life. One source lists them as follows:

The critical contamination of the planet's water, air and soil, the manifold harmful effects on animal and plant life, the extinction of innumerable species, the deforestation of the globe, the erosion of topsoil, the depletion of groundwater, the vast accumulation of toxic wastes, the apparent exacerbation of the greenhouse effect, the breakdown of the ozone layer in the atmosphere, the radical disruption of the entire planetary ecosystem – all these emerged as direly serious problems with increasing force and complexity.<sup>3</sup>

In 1992, the Union of Concerned Scientists published the "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity," endorsed by over 1,600 senior scientists of the world, including most Nobel

Laureates. They stated that "human beings and the natural world are on a collision course ... that may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know." Even more strongly stated was their conclusion.

We, the undersigned senior members of the world's scientific community, hereby warn all humanity of what lies ahead. A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irrationally mutilated.<sup>4</sup>

This most serious warning does not seem to have been taken to heart by political and economic world leaders. One of the foremost scientists of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Carl Sagan, has pointed out clearly that the extent of environmental deterioration and prophesied planetary catastrophes may still be a matter of scholastic debate, but it is now beyond question that the engines of industry and irresponsible use of technology are endangering "the delicate ecological balance that has tortuously evolved over the four-billion year period of life on earth."<sup>5</sup>

Leonardo Boff of Brazil warns that the dream of unlimited growth means the invention of destructive rather than productive forces and exploitation of the earth. He says clearly and movingly:

A systematic assault has been mounted on its wealth in the soil, the subsoil, the air, the sea, and the outer atmosphere. War has been waged on all fronts. Victims have been produced on an unprecedented scale: the working class oppressed worldwide, peripheral nations exploited, the overall quality of life in decline, and nature plundered.<sup>6</sup>

#### 1.1.2 Victims of the War on Nature and Life – Present and Future

Between 1989 and 1997, citizens of the United States experienced the following extraordinary natural disasters:

- Two "hurricanes of the century:" Andrew and Hugo
- A "five hundred year flood" in the Midwest in 1993
- At least two "floods of the century:" one in the Southeast in 1995 and a second one in the Red River Valley in 1997
- A "drought of the century" in California

Can we continue to refer to such disasters as "natural?" Should we not now realistically call them "man-made disasters?"

In 1995, the World Health Organization published a report showing that life expectancy for Russian men fell from an already low 64 years in 1990 to just 57 years in 1995. Egypt, India, and Bolivia now surpassed this recent superpower in perhaps the single most vital quality of life statistic maintained by human beings. Russia may be the first country in history to have experienced such a sustained reversal in human welfare. This

startling result was initially blamed upon economic stress, psychological damage and a derelict health-care system. However, with four times the US rate of congenital abnormalities and fetal birth defects, scientists now, more reasonably, blame:

environmental factors, including chemical plants that dumped toxins into lakes and rivers; farmers and factory workers exposed to dangerous pesticides and chemicals; and decades of open testing of nuclear weapons. With their genetic heritage now in jeopardy, the culprit is clear: the Soviet system itself.<sup>7</sup>

Political and military strategy has often helped to create millions of victims. When Japan invaded China and moved toward the "heart of China" in the Northwest, the Chinese broke the Yellow River dikes to stop their advance. The next year, there was a famine and millions died of starvation.

Although the US was a signatory to the International Convention against Biological Warfare since the 1970s, during the Reagan and Bush presidencies, a significant, secretive expansion of the US biological warfare program was promoted. Funding of over US \$ 120 million per year was spent on biological warfare research conducted in over 100 laboratories across the country. "They were taking the most dangerous pathogens known to humankind – the plague, anthrax, botulism, snake venom – enhancing their virulence often enough through genetic engineering, and then cloning large amounts of these new biological weapons."<sup>8</sup>

Some disasters and innumerable victims are "in process" of being on the receiving end of humankind's war on nature and life. Scientists have discovered that the apron of sea ice in Antarctica had shrunk by 25 percent, or 5,650,000 square kilometers, since the late 1950s. Eugene Linden, in his book The Future in Plain Sight: Nine Clues to the Coming Instability, mentions additional concerns about deterioration in the Antarctica ecosystem. Since the 1940s, parts of Antarctica have warmed by about five degrees Fahrenheit. One speculative scenario described by Linden is as follows:

The West Antarctica Ice Sheet is half the size of the US and more than three miles thick at its deepest point. Were it to break up or slide into the ocean, sea level around the world might suddenly rise by twenty feet, imperiling billions of people, inundating ports, drowning megacities like Jakarta, putting almost the entire Florida peninsula under water, and flooding millions of acres of prime coastal agricultural land.<sup>9</sup>

There are too many avenues from which the present world powers are conducting their war on nature and life to allow any respite to those who may hope to change the catastrophic direction in which humankind is moving. Humans are now responsible for putting about 7,000,000,000 tons of carbon dioxide into the air every year. Human growth genes injected into a pig by Dr. Vernon Pursel produced an unforeseen and most horrendous creature. Dr. Martin Malcolm of the National Institutes of Health genetically engineered mice so they contained the entire genome of the AIDS virus in every cell. His

unexpected result was a new super-AIDS virus, transmittable even through air<sup>10</sup>. The examples of disasters and looming disasters are countless.

Takeshi Umehara of Japan in an interview several years ago concisely and poignantly explained our situation and then asked humanity: "Guided by Cartesian philosophy, the modern world is wiping out non-human life, and threatens to bring death to the human species as well. Is it so hard today to see that modernity, having lost its relationship to nature and the spirit, is nothing other than a philosophy of death?"<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2 The Consumer Society, Religion of Materialism and Social Disorientation

"The world would become better off if people tried to become better. And people would become better if they stopped trying to become better off."

- Peter Maurin

"For anyone starting to live literally the words of the Fathers of the Church – ‘The bread you retain belongs to the hungry, the dress you lock up is the property of the naked;’ ‘What is superfluous for one’s need is to be regarded as plunder if one retains it for one’s self’ – there is always a trial ahead."

- Dorothy Day

Although nature has been one main focus for exploitation and destruction on the agenda of the world economic system in its insane promotion of "growth and development," humankind itself has been an equal target. The economic system has promoted a two-pronged result for humankind. Firstly, it has created a new religion, that of materialism, to advance the goals of the consumer society and its supportive market system, which together make up the economic system’s structure. Secondly, it has divided humankind into two completely separate and distinct communities – the twenty percent wealthy and powerful on the one hand and the eighty percent poor and powerless on the other.

Richard Tarnas, in his monumental book The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped our World View, mentions the following list of new banes and stresses to the social fabric, tied to the advance of the modern scientific civilization:

... Urban overdevelopment and overcrowding, cultural and social rootlessness, numbingly mechanical labor, increasingly disastrous industrial accidents, automobile and air travel fatalities, cancer and heart disease, alcoholism and drug addiction, mind-dulling and culture-impoverishing television, violence, and psychopathology.<sup>12</sup>

Eleven years before Tarnas made his list, the futurist Alvin Toffler had contrasted the old industrial civilization with that being born as follows:

On one side are the partisans of the industrial past; on the other, growing millions who recognize that the most urgent problems of

the world – food, energy, arms control, population, poverty, resources, ecology, climate, the problems of the aged, the breakdown of urban community, the need for productive, rewarding work – can no longer be resolved within the framework of the industrial order. This conflict is the ‘super-struggle’ for tomorrow.<sup>13</sup>

Considering the great power available to the economic and political leaders who direct and manage the global economic system, it is shocking to find such lengthy lists of critical social problems facing the majority of humankind today. Many of the critical problems are new ones, created, as Tarnas mentions, by the scientific-industrial civilization. The only apparent logical explanations could be the incompetence inherent in the system, the deliberate lack of concern for humankind’s social needs, or a combination of the two.

Another futurist, Eugene Linden, seems to clearly maintain that the critical social problems are a result of the deliberate lack of concern for humankind’s needs. He claims that the genius of the consumer society is that it translates spiritual longing into material appetites; to satisfy these appetites, purchases must be made which further extends the consumer society’s control. Linden writes that "in effect, the consumer society is a system that integrates both religion and economics into a culture in which material wealth is valued far more than spiritual wealth." <sup>14</sup>

Since consumption is essential to the perpetual growth required by the economic system, anything which reduces consumption is an enemy of the economy. For example people who turn to nature or to spiritual satisfactions, which reduce their need for material ones, harm the system. If such were done on a large scale, it could threaten or even totally disrupt the economy.

It is actually inconceivable that the consumer society can, in the long run, be successful on a finite planet. If the billions of poor in the world would be empowered as consumers, the already overstressed ecosystem could not possibly support such. In 1997, *The Wall Street Journal* published an editorial stating that the "falling birth-rates of the 1990s threaten to devastate growth in the next century." The present global economic system has traveled a road with no outlet – a dead end!

Henry Ford, in his autobiography, states that 7,882 operations or specialized jobs were needed to manufacture one of his automobiles. Of these jobs, 949 required "strong able-bodied, and practically physically perfect men," 3,338 needed men of merely ‘ordinary’ physical strength, most of the rest could be performed by "women or older children," and, he continued coolly, "we found that 670 could be filled by legless men, 2,637 by one-legged men, two by armless men, 715 by one-armed men and 10 by blind men." Toffler, who gives this excerpt from Ford’s own writing, concludes: "In short, the specialized jobs required not a whole person, but only a part. No more vivid evidence that overspecialization can be brutalizing has ever been adduced." <sup>15</sup>

The use of human beings for promoting economic growth has not been merely done as theoretical analysis. The prevalent economic system has throughout its history used human beings unhesitatingly, with no respect for life, to achieve economic growth at any cost. The same exploitation and destruction of life inflicted upon nature has been equally "bestowed" upon humankind. Toffler has again provided examples of the ruthlessness of the economic death machine; let the one following example suffice for the endless ones both buried in history and continuing in the present.

Rubber offers another example. After the turn of the century when automobile production in the United States created a sudden heavy demand for rubber for tires and inner tubes, traders, in collusion with local authorities, enslaved Amazonian Indians to produce it. Roger Casement, the British consul in Rio de Janeiro, reported that the production of four thousand tons of Putumayo rubber between 1900 and 1911 resulted in the death of thirty thousand Indians.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.3 The Rich Versus the Poor – No Longer a Gap, But a Chasm

"If you want peace, work for justice."

- Pope Paul VI

The so-called widening gap between the rich and poor is not a problem left over from history, not is it accidental; rather it is consciously produced by the ruling political-economy of today. Thirty years ago, social scientists warned that the rich-poor gap was widening and that, if the trend continued, it could have extremely deleterious impact on the future of humankind. At that time, the ratio in favor of the twenty percent wealthiest to the twenty percent poorest was thirty-to-one. Now the ratio is sixty-to-one with the escalation rate also increasing.

Nelson Mandela points out that the failure of the free market economy has affected people within capitalist countries as well as the differences between rich and poor countries. He says that "the marketplace has not triumphed and the end of history has not arrived. The evidence is clear: income differentials in many capitalist countries have widened, not narrowed, and poverty and wealth levels between rich and poor countries have increased."<sup>17</sup>

In the US, according to the Internal Revenue Service, the net worth of the top one percent is now more than that of the bottom ninety percent; the trend, of course, is for this chasm to deepen and widen further. According to UN statistics, cited in recent Human Development Reports, the richest fifth of the world's people consumes eighty-six percent of all goods and services while the poorest fifth consumes just 1.3 percent. The three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined gross domestic products of the forty-eight least developed countries. The world's 225 richest individuals have a combined wealth of over US \$ 1 trillion – equal to the annual income of the poorest forty-seven percent of the entire world's population. Several years ago, UNESCO organized a symposium of forty intellectuals to discuss "What happened to

development?" The former president of France, François Mitterrand, addressed the participants with these words:

How can we accept that millions of men, women, and children in the poor Southern countries continue to die in front of our television cameras? If these awful sights lead us to feel compassion, that is all very well. But our reactions of late have too often been only capricious. I fear that those of us in the richer countries of the North have gone in recent years from an embarrassed indifference to a smug indifference....Inequalities continue to grow despite the claim that the global market is the panacea for all ills. Relying on humanitarian assistance and the rules of the market alone are insufficient to cope with a situation where one-fifth of humanity lives below the poverty line....If development is only considered in its financial dimension so that a country can join a world where market forces continue to rule supreme, then social equilibrium and equality will continue to be broken, and strife will continue to break out.<sup>18</sup>

Leonardo Boff maintains similarly that there is little solidarity now between wealthy and poor:

There is practically no solidarity among human beings for dealing with this dramatic situation. Most of the well-off countries do not even devote 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP), the amount prescribed by the United Nations for aid to needy countries. The richest country, the United States, devotes barely 0.15% of its GNP.<sup>19</sup>

The concern of Mitterrand and Boff is reflective of the depth and extent of the realities for the poor in this world of magnificent technology and the most highly productive economy in history. 40,000 children under five die daily from preventable starvation, dehydration, diseases, and neglect. Another approximately 125,000 people over five die daily from similar causes. 150 million young children are seriously under-nourished and 800 million go hungry all the time. Of the 4.4 billion people in so-called developing countries, about sixty percent lack basic sanitation, one-third have no access to clean water, twenty-five percent do not have adequate housing and twenty percent have no access to modern health services of any kind.

Americans and Europeans spend US \$ 17 billion per year on food for their pets; this is US \$ 4 billion more than what the UN estimates is needed annually to ensure basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world. The 1995 UNICEF State of the World's Children Report indicated that about US \$ 34 billion annually was needed to fund the basic needs of the world's poor. It listed six global annual expenditures, any of which could be reduced in order to cover the critical needs leading to immense suffering of the poor. The items and amounts listed were golf for US \$ 40 billion, wine for US \$ 85 billion, beer for US \$ 160 billion, advertising for US \$ 250 billion, cigarettes for US \$ 400 billion and military expenditures for US \$ 800 billion.

Whereas the poor countries now have over seventy-five percent of the world's population, they only have three percent of the scientists. Usually when there is a crisis in the world, it leads to an exodus of intellectuals to the US or other developed countries. The creativity from such people adds to the further progress of the wealthy, although the cost for their development is born by their former country. As the fantastic technological advances and integration of the world economy are fundamental to further economic growth, the already stunning differences between wealthy and poor countries must grow even greater. The extent to which the situation of the poor can deteriorate in such an unjustly and inequitably structured world economy can be seen in the following example from Eugene Linden:

In Africa, an organization called the American Anti-Slavery Group has produced evidence of the return of outright slavery in Mauretania and the Sudan. The group reported in the New York Times that as supplies of slaves secured by raids increased, the price of a woman or a child dropped from US \$ 90 to \$ 15 between 1989 and 1990.<sup>20</sup>

It is now evident that, for the first time in history, the wealthy can manage without the poor. The poor are no longer needed to grow the food of the wealthy, to clean their homes, provide child-care for their young ones, manufacture goods, provide other services and fight their wars. As a result, the poor are now increasingly marginalized, kept on the lowest social and welfare allowances which keep crime and social disorder at levels acceptable to the rich. The warning for humanity is so grave that it now comes from the heart of capitalism and is as explicit as possible:

World Bank President Jim Wolfensohn points out that today five billion people live in market economies – up from one billion just ten years ago. Characterizing inclusion as ‘the key development challenge of our time,’ he notes that ‘in too many countries, the poorest ten percent of the population has less than one percent of the income, while the richest twenty percent enjoys over half....If we do not act, in thirty years the inequities will be greater. With population growing at eighty million per year, instead of the three billion living on under two dollars a day, it could be as high as five billion....Without equity, we will not have stability. Without a better sense of social justice, our cities will not be safe, and our societies will not be stable. Without inclusion, too many of us will be condemned to live separate, armed, and frightened lives.’<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Where Did We Go Wrong? – Or – Bad Ideas Produce Bad Results

"...the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

- Albert Einstein

"The probability that you may fall in the struggle ought not to deter you from the support of a cause you believe to be just."

- Abraham Lincoln

"If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are going."

- Chinese Proverb

"To ask larger questions is to risk getting things wrong, not to ask them at all is to constrain the life of understanding."

- George Steiner

Adam Smith is recognized as the "founding father" or original theorist for the economic system which today would likely identify itself as free market capitalism. Smith realized that the mercantilist system in Great Britain at the time was not favorable to the economic growth possible with the changes in production which were occurring during the eighteenth century. He greatly admired what Isaac Newton had done for physical science 89 years before through the publication of Principia in 1687; his intention was to similarly organize the theoretical framework for economics.

Smith's pragmatic spirit helped him realize that consumption had to be democratized as the foundation for the economy. Under the mercantilist system, there was a dual structure of consumer-citizens and subsistence-laborers; his desire for laborer-consumers seemed a dangerous leveling to many. He saw the government's role, in relation to the economy, as providing security for private property – defending the rich against the poor. Otherwise, government was not to interfere with the natural functioning of the processes of production and the market. Social responsibility was irrelevant to his economic system. Natural and human laws as well as moral approval were all arraigned in support of free commercial enterprise.

At the heart of Smith's reconstructed economy was labor. Labor created wealth. The division of labor led to increases in size both of employment and market. Labor was the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities. By labor, all the wealth of the world was originally purchased. The value of price was fully centered on labor. Smith failed to see the role of "capital" as an equally important partner in production. In 1776, when he published his masterpiece Wealth of Nations, mechanization of production had not become very prevalent. However, the economic paradigm developed by Smith, ignoring the critical and growing role of non-human capital assets in producing wealth, has had a deleterious effect on the perception of generations of economists and on the theory and practice of economics through the present.

The main diversion from the capitalist model formulated by Adam Smith was initiated by Karl Marx who accepted Smith's contention that labor alone produces wealth. However, Marx insisted on the social responsibility of the economic system, at least in theory. Since labor produced wealth, distribution of wealth also must be to labor.

Both capitalism and Marxism-socialism accepted a common assumption, namely that continuous growth and market expansion are fundamental to the system. The major difference was in the distribution of wealth, the beneficiaries. Neither model actually provided for social development. The capitalist model has led to:

...great social disparity, class, gender, and generational struggle, injustice, and overall poor quality of life. In...socialism the result has been a great deal of massification, authoritarianism, and lack of participation and creativity on the part of citizens....Both these models of society have broken with the Earth. They have reduced it to a supply of raw materials and natural resources. Persons have been reified as human resources or human capital, constituting the great reserve army at the disposition of the owners of the means of production (state or capital).<sup>22</sup>

As Boff has indicated, both these models broke with the earth and so have built upon an unrealistic foundation. Their use of human beings as simply resources or capital for production has betrayed the deeper human realities of creativity and love. Failure to perceive the productive role of capital has been another common error. Smith's claims that consumption was the key to prosperity and that there was no social role for economics have distorted the system and added to humankind's present social frustration and spiritual impoverishment.

## 2.1 "Sustained Economic Growth"

The US President's Council on Sustainable Development defines sustainable development as "sustained economic growth." At the Rio Summit, an Italian energy giant advertised: "We are growing with the planet." The growth model has become so ingrained into the consciousness of those promoting global capitalism that they can stupidly claim that even the planet is growing, which of course it is not.

The term sustainable development became fashionable in 1987 with the United Nations Brundtland Report titled "Our Common Future." Sustainable development was defined as "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the orientation of investments, the paths of technological development and institutional change are in accordance with current and future needs." Though ecology is recognized as a concern of development, the economic paradigm is still one of growth, technological expansion and exploitation of nature. In this paradigm, the main culprit is poverty; poverty leads to stress on the environment. The solution is development and growth which reduces poverty and improves the environment. In such a context of wrong identification of the causes of our problems, there is no hope for proper solutions. The myth of progress, of uninterrupted and unlimited growth which has captivated humankind's imagination for the past four centuries has to be seen now as misleading. The belief that countries must show annual increases in production of goods and services and that countries are classified as developed, developing, or least developed is no longer a viable framework for humanity.

Andrew Kimbrell stated at a meeting on megatechnology several years ago:

We are told that science will allow us to know everything; technology will allow us to do everything; the free market will allow us to buy anything. Despite the supposed pluralism in modern religious beliefs, this trinity outlines the real religion of our time. Now doubt about the modern religion is beginning to grow. That simple belief and trust in it has been broken. Science hasn't stopped disease; in fact, we are as concerned as ever about coming plagues. Technology has destroyed much of the environment and is now threatening the jobs of untold millions. The market hasn't decreased poverty; rather the gap between rich and poor is larger than ever.<sup>23</sup>

Pope Pius XI in his encyclical "On the Reconstruction of the Social Order" (Quadragesimo Anno) states:

...this (capitalistic) economic system ... does violate right order when capital hires workers, that is the non-owning class, with a view to and under such terms that it directs business and even the whole economic system according to its own will and advantage, scorning the human dignity of the workers, the social character of economic activity, and Social Justice itself, and the Common Good.<sup>24</sup>

People have become dwarfed by productive capital in almost all economic activities. Tools, machines, factories, manufacturing processes are increasing in size and complexity; people are becoming more dependent on the system. Whereas one hundred years ago in the US, sixty percent of the population earned their livelihood from agriculture, the percentage had decreased to three percent by 1990.<sup>25</sup>

Egypt is not experiencing sustained economic growth. 500,000 persons enter the job market each year. Per capita income fell from US\$ 750 to US \$ 620 in eight years.

From 1980 to 1993, the US Fortune 500 firms decreased total jobs 4.4 million. During the same period, they increased sales 1.4 times, assets 2.3 times, and the CEOs' compensation 6.1 times. The monopolization and concentration of power in the world economy is constantly increasing. Of the one hundred largest economies in the world, fifty are now corporations.

The present world economic system is badly failing to provide an improved quality of life for humanity. The misconception that the human mind was capable of taking from nature its resources and secrets to lead humanity out of ignorance, oppression, poverty and suffering to prosperity, happiness, and freedom is not succeeding. Science, capitalism, the free market and the political and governmental structures have fallen far short of expectations.

The world is more and more questioning Western Civilization's leadership which has led humanity down an erroneous path with false claims of happiness and prosperity. Disguised as Western values, innumerable crimes have been committed:

...Ruthless expansionism and exploitation – the rapacity of its elites from ancient times to modern, its systematic thriving at the expense of others, its colonialism and imperialism, its slavery and genocide, its anti-Semitism, its oppression of women, people of color, minorities, homosexuals, the working classes, the poor, its destruction of indigenous societies throughout the world, its arrogant insensitivity to other cultural traditions and values, its cruel abuse of other forms of life, its blind ravaging of virtually the entire planet.<sup>26</sup>

Not only is Western leadership proving more and more unacceptable to the world community, but the values upon which it has built the global economic system, political and governmental structures and other institutions are being found lacking in meeting the aspirations of the majority of mankind.

There are basically no international democratic political institutions to deal effectively with the globalization process. Not only that, but the national political and governmental structures have become obsolescent. Alvin Toffler describes the situation, saying:

Our so-called 'contemporary' political systems are copied from models invented before the advent of the factory system – before canned food, refrigeration, gaslight, or photography, before the Bessemer furnace or the introduction of the typewriter, before the invention of the telephone, before Orville and Wilbur Wright took wing, before the automobile and the airplane shrunk distance, before radio and television began working their alchemy on our minds, before Auschwitz's industrialized death, before nerve gas and nuclear missiles, before computers, copying machines, birth control pills, transistors, and lasers. They were designed in an intellectual world that is almost unimaginable – a world that was pre-Marx, pre-Darwin, pre-Freud and pre-Einstein.<sup>27</sup>

The US Pentagon is often viewed as the epitome of US power, organization, and efficiency. It is certainly the most heavily financed single institution in the world community. A couple of decades ago, Pentagon officials lost track of US \$ 30 billion in foreign weapons orders. They could not discern the cause – was it due to colossal accounting errors, and failure to bill purchasers the full amounts due or was the money perhaps misappropriated? A Department of Defense comptroller, at the time, had said: "The sad fact is that we don't really know how big this (confusion) really is. It will probably be five years before we'll be able to sort it all out."<sup>28</sup> There are constant similar examples of the incompetence of this mighty institution. Within the past two years, it was discovered that China had obtained highly classified military information being stored by the Department of Defense. Not long after this incident was discovered, an entire computer with other highly classified government information disappeared.

Croesus was the wealthiest man in the world in his day; he was also perhaps, the most ambitious. Cyrus had built up a strong empire in Persia; Croesus wondered greedily and with trepidation whether he could seize this empire. He sent emissaries to the oracle at Delphi, with many rich gifts, to ask "What will happen if Croesus invades Persia?" The immediate answer was: "A great empire will be destroyed." At once, he organized all the soldiers he could command, he invaded, was humiliatingly defeated and spent the rest of his life at the court of Cyrus as a "guest" with nothing to do.

The story of Croesus can serve as a parable for humankind today. We have put all our trust in an economic system which we mistakenly believe will resolve the colossal problems we face while, badly misled by our wrong interpretation of the realities of our situation, this very economic system is leading us to disaster.

George Soros, a Hungarian-born billionaire, perhaps not unlike Croesus in spirit, a consummate capitalist, has come to the realization that the system which made him wealthy is actually our enemy. "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." <sup>29</sup>

The renowned French essayist Montaigne said: "It takes courage to be afraid."<sup>30</sup> The concept of development gave humankind a faith that science and technology would free us from the constraints which bound all past civilizations. Evolution and progress have been considered inevitable. It is obvious where these fictitious ideas are leading humankind and the world. It is now urgently necessary to learn from our mistakes, take up new and correct ideas and build institutions and systems which will serve all of humankind, all of life, and our Earth.

### 3. Right Ideas for the 21st Century

"Man, according to the Stoics, ought to regard himself, not as something separated and detached, but as a citizen of the world, a member of the vast commonwealth of nature...and to the interest of this great community, he ought at all times to be willing that his own little interest should be sacrificed."

- Adam Smith

"Through our scientific genius we have made of the world a neighborhood; now through our moral and spiritual genius we must make of it a brotherhood."

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Since Adam Smith provided the theoretical framework for capitalism, Karl Marx did similarly for socialism and the so-called contemporary political and governmental institutions were developed, a great deal of new intellectual "discoveries" have been made. In contrast to the past influence of reductionist science, humankind now appreciates that integrated systems are more appropriate to reality than compartmentalized ones. Truth is no longer viewed best through specialization – it becomes fragmented; systematic integration is essential for appreciating the complexities inherent in reality.

In the past, too much stress was placed upon stability and not enough on change. The idea of causality was previously viewed as central to all theoretical analyses; now humankind realizes that chance and necessity play most critical roles in the physical universe, in evolution theory and in all patterns affecting life. Besides, the long-held conviction that the evolutionary process began with simple organisms and developed into complex ones is no longer universally accepted; the opposite seems equally true. The human mind is no longer understood by scholars as separate from and superior to nature. The genetic structure of the universe convincingly demonstrates that all is homogeneity. The Native American saying: "All life is one, all life is holy, all life is beautiful" has been at least partially validated in the findings of genetic research.

### 3.1 Multi-pronged Construction of the Future

In order to create a new future, the first requirement is for a new vision, a dream of what that future could be. An engineer who rose from his profession to become the head of the most prestigious educational institution in the world provides a vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

It is time for a new revolution – a kind of humanized process of change that offers the only solution to our problems. From this time on, maybe for the next hundred years, everything should be devoted to changing everything – the physical structure, the type of products, the economic system, the value system. My message to politicians is that we must convert the target of investment from the road system and bridges to the brain system.<sup>31</sup>

In the following four sub-sections, varying areas of human concern, which can assist humankind to construct a new future, are examined. Firstly, new perceptions from the physical sciences, which show us most concretely what our reality actually is, will be discussed. Secondly, some "discoveries" in the social sciences, including multi-disciplinary efforts to find truly humanized social structures which can help humankind to live in fulfilling, meaningful ways, are mentioned. Thirdly, what the perspective of ethics, morality and the search for justice has to contribute to our future cause is discussed. And, finally, some insights into the institutional structures of a new, human, ecological, global economy, with the

appropriate political and governmental support systems for the 21<sup>st</sup> century are briefly outlined.

### 3.1.1 New Insights of the Physical Sciences and the Future

Quantum physics has led the way in teaching humankind that the well organized scientific world of the previous 2½ centuries is not at all reflective of the intricately complex and variable nature of physical reality. Many practical scientific breakthroughs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have helped lead humanity down completely new avenues of knowledge and understanding about life and the universe: the most striking discovery and mapping of DNA in the 1950s and the subsequent explosion in genetic engineering and biotechnology research, space exploration and findings on the size and composition of the universe (and the possibility of innumerable other universes), scientific applications to computers, communications technology at the speed of light, rapid travel, energy development and so many other important fields related to human activity.

Dr. Ilya Prigogine and co-workers have shown that chemical and other structures leap to higher stages of differentiation and complexity through a combination of chance and necessity. The Nobel Prize was given for this work. The laws of strict causality appear now as caricatures of the description of change. Entropy and evolution are engaged in a constant interplay, leading sometimes to change and at other times to stability. The universe teaches us that there is always the possibility of some instability leading to some new mechanism. Order comes out of chaos. There is the spontaneous formation of coherent structures. We live in an open universe with flexible systems all around us.<sup>32</sup>

Physical science teaches humanity that there is a constant interaction among three open processes. Many different terms have been used to describe these vital processes. For the first process, the terms which are common are complexity, differentiation, diversity, variation, disparity, multiform nature, heterogeneity and articulation. For the second process, common terms include inferiority, autopoiesis, subjectivity, self-manifestation, identity, inner principle of being, voice. For the third process, usual terms are connectedness, communion, interrelatedness, interdependence, mutuality, reciprocity, complementarity, interconnectivity, affiliation, kinship.<sup>33</sup>

Physical science gives humanity a clear model for developing institutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century which will correspond to physical reality. Our institutions must allow for diversity, foster interiority and promote connectedness.

### 3.1.2 Social Sciences, Patterns of Interconnection and the Future:

The philosopher-systems theorist, Ervin Laszlo, claims: "(We are) part of an interconnected system of nature, and unless informed 'generalists' make it their business to develop systematic theories of the patterns of interconnection, our short-range prospects and limited controllabilities may lead us to our own destruction." <sup>34</sup>

In spite of the revolutionary changes in the physical sciences during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the social sciences, the economic, social and political systems and institutions have, for the most part, remained caught in the Descartean-Newtonian perceptual framework of a mechanical universe discovered through linear cause-effect analysis. The failure of the social sciences, particularly economics and political science, to provide new models related to the structure of reality uncovered by the physical sciences has prevented humanity from building a constructive future. Rather, the earth, all life and humanity in particular, have dissipated immense God-given resources, leading to the danger of extinction of life on earth.

By putting together the natural forces of evolution and entropy in the social sciences, as Ilya Prigogine has done for the physical sciences, we can:

see how richly these two different processes interplay in complex organisms, from the human brain to an economy....Indeed, once we...recognize that any truly complex system – whether a biological organism, a city, or the international political order – is likely to have within it both change amplifiers and change reducers,...we begin to glimpse a whole new level of complexity in the world with which we are dealing. Our understanding of causation is advanced. <sup>35</sup>

Social reality usually changes more rapidly than values. Although humanity has progressed from the uniformity and massification characteristic of the industrial age, the value of tolerance for diversity in individual and family lifestyles, in the religious and cultural diversity encountered so much more frequently due to

improved communications and travel, and so many other forms of diversity has not developed apace. Similarly, the imposition of outdated systems and institutions, through the globalization process, on diverse social, ethnic, and cultural groups has created unfortunate and unnecessary tensions and suffering, especially for the peoples of poor countries.

An exception to the general failure of the social sciences to create models more in tandem with the known physical reality and more responsive to the needs of today's world is the meta-disciplinary science of socio-economics. This science begins with the assumption that economics is not a self-contained system, but that it is embedded in society, polity, and culture. It draws upon economics, sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, history, law and management. In that it regards competitive behavior within a societal context that both enables and constrains competition and cooperation, it faithfully represents the interplay of evolution and entropy, of change amplifiers and change reducers.<sup>36</sup>

Another exceptional development in the social sciences has been the work of Czech psychotherapist Stanislav Grof. Grof has spent a lifetime in what he terms "deep exploration therapy" both through use of drugs and non-drug methods. His findings from lifelong research of himself and colleagues has been published in several works, including the extraordinarily convincing Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death and Transcendence in Psychotherapy. Particularly relevant and striking is his contention that the birth experience plays a most critical role in the formation of personality and of impact on behavior. The relationships of the individual's experience to social and historical events is likewise thought-provoking. Grof says:

Modern science has developed technologies that could solve most of the urgent problems in today's world – combat diseases, starvation, and poverty, and develop renewable forms of energy. The problems that stand in the way are neither technological nor economic; they are forces intrinsic to human nature and the human personality. Because of them, unimaginable resources are wasted in the insanity of the arms race, power struggle, and pursuit of 'unlimited growth.' These forces also prevent a more appropriate division of wealth among individuals and nations, as well as a reorientation of ecological priorities that are vital for survival of life.<sup>37</sup>

That there are examples of the social sciences searching to relate more fully to the physical reality of the universe, as uncovered through progress in the physical sciences, is certainly a sign of hope and encouragement. However, further delays in the formulation and promotion of appropriate designs for the economy, the polity, and society risk irretrievable losses for humanity and life. In the comments and instances provided above, it is possible to discern issues of diversity, interiority and interconnectedness common to both the physical and social sciences. It would be exciting to explore how a more full integration of the physical and social sciences could assist humanity to construct new systems and institutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 3.1.3 Ethics, Morality and a Future With Justice

"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

- Great Law of the Iroquois

"We have not inherited the Earth from our ancestors, but have borrowed it from our children."

- Native American Saying

Moral and ethical issues have, more and more, become public matters. The public has begun to demand responsibility from economic and political institutions for "right action" and to challenge institutions which are found wanting in taking social and moral responsibility for their behavior.

Amitai Etzioni says: "It is common practice...to refer to values that agitate against lying, stealing and killing as 'moral,' and values such as equality, freedom, and justice as social values."<sup>38</sup> The terms are used in this context in this paper. Questions of social and economic justice, the "Common Good," ecological issues, fair treatment of women and minorities and the like are now demanded boldly by the public from corporate owners and executives, national and international political leaders.

All ages have produced dissenters from the established way of doing things, people who challenged what they saw as inconsistencies in behavior, misbehavior or outright injustices. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new spirit and methodology for correcting abuses was demonstrated by Mohandas Gandhi of India. Non-violence (ahimsa) was a method for challenging oppression and moral wrongdoing by accepting personal suffering to help the oppressors realize their wrong action and motivate them to change to right and just behavior. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave leadership to effectively challenge racial

injustice in the US. Cesar Chavez did similarly for the oppressed migrant farm workers, also in the US. Many other leaders of oppressed groups worldwide have realized the power of this methodology and the truth-force (satyagraha) which animates it.

Gandhi made it clear where his approach came from:

I learned the lesson on non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other, ultimately made me ashamed of myself and cured me of my stupidity in thinking that I was born to rule over her.<sup>39</sup>

The need for self-change was constantly emphasized by Gandhi. The impact of non-violent action was always meant to be twofold – to purify oneself and to convince oppressors of their wrongdoing so that they would act morally.

Francis of Assisi lived in thirteenth century Italy but his life is seen as highly relevant to the situation in today's world by many. His life of radical poverty was directed at overcoming the possessive spirit, the desire to dominate and subordinate things to the human will. The positive side of this radical poverty allowed the practitioner to be centered on others not on oneself, to be totally available for others. For Francis, the "others" became all life, all creation.

Although Gandhi and Francis may mainly provide inspiration for the renewed spirit of human community and unity with all life, as well as the desire to overcome the selfish individualism, desire to dominate and control others, to exploit the earth and fellow human beings, there are numerous voices raised today for a shift in consciousness, a renewed sense of responsibility for all humanity and all life.

Takeshi Umehara says:

Modern ethics, which make individualism the absolute value, have now reached their limit, causing us to forget that our essential responsibility is not self-expression or personal freedom, but passing on life to posterity. Certainly what is needed today is an ethics in which the highest value is placed not on the absolute rights of the individual, but on the continuity of life, the continuation of civilization, of the species, and the ecological system of the planet itself.<sup>40</sup>

Pope Pius XI's encyclical "On the Reconstruction of the Social Order" forcefully challenges the inequity produced by the economic system and insists that the Common Good must be the norm for wealth distribution.<sup>41</sup> Pius XI emphasizes that the Common Good and Social Justice are identical and that the responsibility for ensuring social justice is vested in institutions, not individuals. Not only the economy but all social life is to be just. The economic and social order require that every person in society, from the distribution of wealth, will be able both to meet the demands of necessity (basic needs)

and will be protected from pauperism in cases of illness, unemployment and old age.<sup>42</sup> In paragraph 85, Pius XI furthermore advocates that the Common Good must be the most important concern of each industry and profession.<sup>43</sup> Such a proposal certainly challenges today's *status quo* wherein each industry, labor union, profession or other organized group of people tend to see its interests as divorced from the national interest and its main focus is on itself. The preeminent position given to the Common Good is obviously equally applicable in considering the responsibility of each nation for the overall welfare of the world community.

Dr. Amartya Sen, the 1998 economics Nobel Laureate, in his 1999 book Development as Freedom, has put issues of justice and ethics at the center of the debate on development. In his thoroughly erudite but easily readable manner, Dr. Sen indicates that the focus on freedom as both the primary end and the principal means of development could be a structural change which would put human and social issues, now largely neglected, at the forefront of development planning, implementation and evaluation. He explains:

The basic concern...is with our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value. This approach can give a very different view of development from the usual concentration on GNP or technical progress or industrialization, all of which have contingent and conditional importance without being the defining characteristics of development.<sup>44</sup>

Freedom could be the guiding perspective in the process of development. Political, economic and social consensus could be unified by the linkage of various types or aspects of freedom. Development would require removal of major sources of unfreedom: "...poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states."<sup>45</sup> Dr. Sen stresses that the lack of substantive freedom sometimes relates directly to economic poverty: "...which robs people of the freedom to satisfy hunger, or to achieve sufficient nutrition, or to obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to be adequately clothed or sheltered, or to enjoy clean water or sanitary facilities."<sup>46</sup>

A freedom-oriented approach can be used with varying emphases on the relative claims of efficiency and equity. Dr. Sen does not intend to decide to what extent concerns for wealth creation and wealth distribution should be given priority. However, he insists that humanity has to pay serious attention to some basic but neglected issues in public policy, such as dealing with poverty, inequality and social performance from the prospective of freedom.

Akbar Ahmed, an Islamic scholar, expresses the widespread concern about integration of the Islamic world into the globalization process. He correctly views that the question has two sides, namely the Muslims' own faithfulness to their religious and cultural identity and the attitude of the West in responding to the rest of the world in friendship and sincerity. Ahmed says:

The test for Muslims is how to preserve the essence of the Koranic message, of adl and ahsan (balance and compassion), ilm and sabr (knowledge and patience), without it being reduced to an ancient and empty chant in our times, and how to participate in the global civilization without their identities being obliterated.

The challenge for those in the West is how to expand the Western idealistic notions of justice, equality, freedom, and liberty beyond their borders to all humanity without appearing like nineteenth century imperialists, to reach out to those not of their civilization in friendship and sincerity.<sup>47</sup>

In the past, corporations were criticized on essentially economic issues – such as underpaying workers, overcharging customers or forming cartels to fix prices. However, today corporations are challenged moreso on issues of morality and social responsibility. Issues such as asbestos poisoning, pesticide dangers, ecological damage, racism, sexism, support to unjust political regimes are now in the spotlight. The new demand by the public is for "a corporation no longer responsible simply for making a profit or producing quality goods but for simultaneously contributing to the solution of extremely complex ecological, moral, political, racial, sexual, and social problems."<sup>48</sup>

Finally, to create new economic and social structures suited to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the concept of "ownership" as a universal human right has been gaining increasing support worldwide. William Greider maintains that the implementation of such a concept could help guide humankind along the path of economic and social justice. He says:

Much like the Buddhist notion of work as 'right livelihood' is intended to deepen humankind's appreciation, gratitude and humility, so too could the notion of 'right ownership' be applied in a similar way, redirecting mankind's acquisitive instinct into economic and social patterns more in keeping with fundamental notions of economic and social justice, and better able to foster a shift in consciousness from a person-centered to a more bio-centered world view.<sup>49</sup>

#### 3.1.4 New Institutions for a New World Order

"We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

- Thomas Paine

"I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court, can save it."

- Judge Learned Hand

"People are like porcupines in the cold: they freeze if they get too far apart, but they stick each other if they get too close."

- Schopenhauer

The physical sciences have uncovered for humanity a much clearer and deeper understanding of reality. The social sciences have taken some initial, hesitant steps toward formulating systematic theories of interconnection to guide humanity to construct new systems and institutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ethical theory and moral courage have pointed out new paths by which humanity can travel in order to create a more just world. However, the wearisome task of building new institutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be undertaken in order to bring to fruition the beautiful new vision which will assist humanity to live as citizens of the world and of the universe.

William Greider has suggested that ownership may be a key factor in leading humanity from the present mentality of individual progress at the expense of all life to a mentality of concern for all life. The Center for Economic and Social Justice (CESJ) in Washington, DC, an institution for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has committed itself, since its founding in 1983, to promoting ownership as a universal human right. Inspired by the innovative vision of Louis Kelso and operated by a dedicated core team led by Dr. Norman Kurland, CESJ has dynamically labored to help make ownership a reality for millions of ordinary workers and of the poor in the USA and worldwide. Built upon rock-solid philosophical and ethical principles of justice and equity, this 21<sup>st</sup> century institution provides an admirable model of what can be accomplished by persistence and hard work. Curing World Poverty, a 1994 publication of CESJ and the Social Justice Review of St. Louis, provides the theoretical foundation for the "ownership movement" promoted by CESJ.

Likewise inspired by the genius of Louis Kelso, *Binary Economics: The New Paradigm*, co-authored by Robert Ashford and Rodney Shakespeare, succinctly and brilliantly presents the new economic system first conceived by Kelso in the 1950s. Using the existing market economy as a basis for its new paradigm, binary economics restructures the system in order to promote ownership as a right for all. Using the existing credit system whereby wealthy owners expand their ownership through non-recourse corporate credit and repay loans with the earnings from the newly-acquired capital, the binary system makes it practical even for paupers to become owners. The authors insist, however, that "the binary property right is a market right, not a welfare right." <sup>50</sup>

Dr. Muhammad Yunus, founder and managing director of the renowned Bangladesh Grameen Bank, as one of the world leaders in making credit a right of the poor, would surely support the credit proposal of binary economics. He eloquently maintains:

Poverty is not created by poor people. Poverty is created by the institutions we have built around us. We have to go back to the drawing board and redesign those institutions so that they do not

discriminate against the poor as the present ones do....The denial of credit to the poor amounts to 'financial apartheid.'<sup>51</sup>

A major shift in perspective concerning the creation of wealth is at the heart of the new binary economics paradigm. The authors explain:

The conventional productivity approach emphasizes the human contribution. It places human beings at the center of production, with capital instruments, technology, and all the resources of the globe and universe revolving around the humans. In contrast, the binary view does not see human beings as the center of production. It sees production as starting with the sun, the rain, the earth, and the seeds. It certainly sees the work of humans, but then it also sees the work of animals, tools, machines and structures. It sees the productiveness of human beings as limited but capable of unleashing the ever greater productiveness of capital.<sup>52</sup>

Through ownership, not only do justice and equity become more easily capable of realization, but political democracy is strengthened. As all become real stakeholders in the economy through ownership, they also become active participants in the political arena in order to ensure that the polity supports and furthers the economic systems which they share in owning.

Of course, binary economics has been received with hostility by the majority of traditional economists. To learn that the education they received was faulty, the professional life they have built up and in which they have become recognized experts is now being undermined, such a situation causes, in most, reaction and rejection rather than careful reflection. The authors disarmingly explain:

Like the revolution in thinking that came about when people stopped believing the sun goes round the earth, and instead came to realize that the earth goes round the sun, binary economics provides a new view of reality that simplifies centuries of misleading and unnecessary theoretical complexity based on a faulty frame of reference. But discerning the new view does require a willing suspension of belief in the prevailing view of fundamental reality – an erroneous view that conventional economics has embedded in twentieth century thinking.<sup>53</sup>

In any case, binary economics offers one of the great promises for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Capitalism and its "free" market have failed the vast majority of humankind. Even in so-called developed countries, the ranks of the poor and the insecure are growing rapidly. In the poorer countries, man-made economic disasters are now at least as common as natural, social and political ones. Creative thinkers and social engineers must ready themselves for replacing the old guard and meeting the awesome challenges spawned by the bad ideas and faulty systems of the past.

Another extremely important advocate for the promotion of ownership is Jeff Gates. With his broad, global overview of the inroads which ownership is making internationally, Gates makes us aware of the potential for ownership, in myriad different forms, to spring

up and transform the world. Through his eyes, the "ownership solution" could be seen as the greatest decentralization process in history – already catching fire and transforming both the economic and political scenario from Palestine to Moscow, from China to the US.

Jeff Gates reminds us of one of the early important proponents of ownership when he recalls in The Ownership Solution:

Pope John XXIII directed his attention to one very important social principle: Economic progress must be accompanied by a corresponding social progress, so that all classes of citizens can participate in the increased productivity...From this it follows that the economic prosperity of a nation is not so much its total assets in terms of wealth and property, as the equitable division and distribution of this wealth...Experience suggests many ways in which the demands of justice can be satisfied. Not to mention other ways, it is especially desirable today that workers gradually come to share in the ownership of their company, by ways and in the manner that seems most suitable.<sup>54</sup>

John XXIII's concern for workers' ownership is seen by him as the way to bring together economic and social progress for humanity and to create a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Ray Carey, through his 2000 publication of An Inquiry into the Nature of Democracy and Capitalism, has joined the growing number of those forcefully pushing for universal ownership as the vital change in the economic system needed to rectify its abundant deformities and facilitate participation, equity and justice in the marketplace. Coming out of a lifelong involvement in industry, starting from the bottom and reaching the higher management echelon, Carey has himself implemented and found the explosive power for good and for success in democratizing capital.

The science of economics originally developed out of the concept of household management of resources and referred to the rational management of scarcity. The past four hundred years have seen the reign of the growth paradigm – economics as the science of unlimited growth – as the only noteworthy economic system. The call today, from so many diverse areas of the globe, for a new economic system is universally accompanied by the requirement that the new system will be truly sustainable, respecting the ecosystem and the finite limits of the earth. Leonardo Boff perhaps most clearly expresses the characteristics of the new, desired economic system, termed by him as "an ecological economy:"

In its origins it (economics) was not a technique for unlimited growth but for rational management of scarcity. Today scarcity affects the whole Earth, and hence economics must be an ecological economics. How can the economy be doing well if the Earth is doing poorly? The purpose of ecological economics is to

bring the economy of human beings into line with the economy of Earth, with a view to the sustainability and quality of life of the world, of persons, and of other beings in nature. This means doing justice for the present generation and also for the one to come, so that it may inherit a sustainable society and nature. An ecological economy seeks to preserve the entire capital of nature, to create conditions so that it may evolve.<sup>55</sup>

Another brilliant Brazilian is in absolute harmony with Boff's view. Ivan Illich states: "Sustainability without development, or subsistence is simply living within the limits of genuinely basic needs. Shelter, food, education, community and personal intimacy can all be met within this framework."<sup>56</sup>

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, corporations can be held accountable for moral and ethical positions as well as economic performance indicators. Systems, such as credit, can be redesigned to serve the poor and help eliminate poverty. Ownership can become a universal human right and radically transform economics, the polity and the social order. An ecological economy can be constructed which focuses on the rational management of scarcity. However, if there are not complementary changes in the political and governmental institutions, it is unlikely that the desirable economic revolution could succeed on a global scale.

The world has been divided over several centuries into numerous independent nation-states. Particularly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century much of the power that resided in these states has been taken over by a network of economic institutions, which are now of a transnational character. At the national level, most decision-making for governance is concentrated in the nations' political and governmental structures. At the transnational level, there are very few such structures and the existing ones are badly underdeveloped. At the same time, since decision-making is concentrated at the national level, there is too little scope for local or regional participation in political life.

The great need for formulation of the new political structures to meet the needs of each successive age was foreseen by a great creator of new structures, Thomas Jefferson:

Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment....I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions....But I also know that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind....As new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Wealth Creation and Distribution as a Poverty Eradication Strategy in Rural Bangladesh: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model

"Unless we attempt the impossible, we will be condemned to face the inconceivable."

- Written by Revolutionary Youth on Paris Walls in 1968

"The poor man 'tis that counts his flock."

- Ovid

"He needs but little who desires but little."

- Probably fragment of a play by Publilius Syrus

"It isn't because things are difficult that we do not dare, but because we do not dare that they are difficult."

- Seneca

"...when it is dark enough you can see the stars."

- Historian Charles Beard

The Institute of Integrated Rural Development (IIRD) is a Bangladeshi non-governmental development organization founded in 1987. The six rural areas of the country where it is now promoting development contain about 220,000 families and 1.1 million people. Of these, about 65,000 families, or 325,000 persons, are included in IIRD's special poverty eradication programs. However, about eighty percent of the population of the working areas benefit, at least indirectly through drinking water and sanitation, homestead tree plantation, protection from floods, new employment, improved education for their children and through similar activities.

For the families in the intensive poverty eradication program, IIRD provides greatly increased opportunities in both social and economic spheres. Through its interventions, IIRD helps to reform and radically change the existing social and economic structures which are directed toward maintaining the status quo, helping the wealthy to become wealthier and preventing the poor from coming out of poverty.

Every year now about 7,000 children of the poorest families enter the educational mainstream; growing numbers of those who become sufficiently literate are able to use their education to get regular employment from IIRD and other development agencies in various development fields, such as primary school teaching, social work and the like. Due to the present very low status of women in society, IIRD strongly focuses its development to favor women's involvement and participation. In each working area, several hundred people obtain employment in development activities for at least a few years; eighty percent such employment goes to local women. Similarly, sixty percent children in the primary education project are girls. About ninety percent credit funds are channeled through women. IIRD targets the most poor through very careful identification

surveys, through extension services which regularly reach the homesteads of the poor and through design of development activities which will most effectively and rapidly uplift large numbers of the very poor. Multiple activities can assist individual families when necessary. Emphasis is to permanently strengthen the family economy through access to land and its proper economic management, employment, credit opportunities, and skill training, including family-level management of new financial resources.

With at least forty percent families in rural areas below the basic daily calorie intake requirement, it is essential that any development model would be able to uplift families quickly and in large numbers. IIRD's goal is to assist families to reach a subsistence level, whereby they can meet their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, education and health care as well as having sufficient economic resources to maintain such a level. Once families reach such a level, IIRD makes them "graduates" of its poverty eradication program so that efforts can be concentrated on those yet unable to meet their basic needs. The challenging goal of reducing the poverty level by fifty percent in each working area is monitored closely by the organization. At least once in three years, a new listing of poor families is made, with graduates moving out of the poverty eradication program and those added which have fallen into poverty or migrated there from elsewhere. Since the start of work in 1987, in its first working area, Dhunot, the poverty level has been reduced from 37.4 percent to 24.1 percent.

Between July and August 1999, a detailed random questionnaire and interview survey was conducted of 334 of the 2,895 families in Dhunot which had graduated from poverty between 1996 and 1999. Various significant economic improvements mentioned by the graduates included the following:

- 292, or 87.4 percent, experienced an improved family economy
- 256, or 76.6 percent, indicated that their access to land had increased while only 21, or 6.3 percent, said that their access to land had decreased.
- For those whose land increased, the average was a little more than one-half acre per family; annual income from the new land was estimated at an average of 6,878 taka per family, or about US \$ 134.

Construction of this development model has required a good number of additional efforts due to the political and social environment. The democratic structures in this 29 year old country are still weak. Corruption is quite ingrained and widespread. Unlike the majority of development organizations, which seem prepared to "compromise" with the situation, thereby strengthening it, IIRD has maintained its organizational integrity contributing its example to reversing the status quo. Such has sometimes been very costly in terms of getting things done quickly, but this extra contribution to the development effort may be, in the long-run, a most significant one.

Likewise, IIRD has been implementing most of its development activities through local "human resources" and has had to make a great investment in training, patient supervision and other support, but the benefits have included real human development for local people, the building up of an "army" of new development workers for the country

and the salaries and other payments to workers have remained in the local areas, contributing to local economies.

A self-help spirit is built among local people and a sense of ownership of the development process through their many contributions – land donations for development centers and schools, voluntary and semi-voluntary development work, free hospitality to visitors and development workers, cash contributions, et cetera. Activities may be realized a little more slowly, but implemented work becomes more permanent, more managed and owned by the local populations and more replicable.

Finally, the IIRD development model injects into interior rural areas more long-term planning to complement the usual short-term interventions made by most governmental and non-governmental development agencies. Not only is the IIRD goal of reducing poverty by fifty percent and closely monitoring the reduction process unique in Bangladesh, but its program strategies are flexible and adapted to each developing area. Diversification of both the local food production pattern and the overall economic structure is extremely important for IIRD. The rural tendency for mono-cropping of rice and for the economy to be only strongly developed in the agricultural and business and trade sectors is offset by focusing upon extensive fruit and timber tree plantation, vegetable gardening, promotion of fishery through excavation of ponds and large inland water bodies – while sponsoring more productive fish culture methods – introduction of small industry activities and simple technologies able to benefit even the very poor, illiterate users.

From the grassroots level, in one of the most difficult contexts, IIRD is succeeding in building a new future for long-neglected and desperately poor peoples. In an open universe, IIRD is linking educationally, financially and through visitors and volunteers from developed countries to make its small contribution to the creation of a united world, founded on equity and justice.

## 5. Curriculum and Pedagogical Materials for Catholic Business Schools – Some Suggestions

"What then must we do?"

- Luke 3:10

"Power is never a good unless he be good that has it."

- Alfred the Great

On May 21, 2000, the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan spoke at the commencement ceremonies at the University of Notre Dame. His words:

It is particularly shameful that the United States, the most prosperous and most successful country in the history of the world,

should be one of the least generous in terms of the share of its gross domestic product it devotes to helping the world's poor...Industrial nations have been cutting back on development assistance to poorer countries despite several decades of unprecedented prosperity...Nearly half the world's population survive on less than two dollars a day, and 1.2 billion make less than one dollar a day....<sup>58</sup>

Two days later, speaking at the Oliver Tambo Memorial inaugural lecture at Georgetown University, South African President Thabo Mbeki made an impassioned plea to rich countries, such as the United States, to help poor nations like his own that are struggling in 'an ocean of entrenched poverty.' He urged wealthy nations to hear 'the cries of the poor.' Mbeki said the scale and extent of poverty in Africa was so enormous that in 1999, the Commonwealth Heads of Government called global poverty a structural fault in the world economy. Citing UNDP statistics, Mbeki mentioned that more than eighty countries in 1999 had lower per capita incomes than a decade ago.<sup>59</sup>

Is it conceivable that those preparing themselves for active participation in the global economy can ignore the statements of such world leaders and can fail to pay attention to the realities described? Only if ethics and morality can be divorced from the rest of life, could it be possible for Catholic educational institutions to avoid dealing with questions of justice, solidarity and equity. A specialization should not prevent any student from seeing and understanding the whole. Especially with the great advances in communications technology, dialogue could be possible with business schools elsewhere and with national and international financial and development institutions throughout the world.

Not only should Catholic social teaching on economic questions be included in the curriculum of Catholic university business schools, but supportive materials from non-religious sources, materials such as binary economics, ought to find a place. In his 1988 book The Moral Dimension: Toward A New Economics, Amitai Etzioni says:

... neoclassicists tend to study the market, or even the economy, as if it was worlds apart from the polity, culture, and society, while some other social scientists study the latter as if there was no economy at their core. Because theories seek to explain only the relations among variables that characterize a particular slice of the world that they define as 'theirs,' the difficulties that analytic segregation poses are often relatively limited. However, when one turns to act within the world, rather than merely study it, one must deal with the world-as-it-is, with its complexity, and must concern oneself with all the major relevant factors, conditions, and constraints.<sup>60</sup>

The interconnectedness, which the physical sciences have demonstrated to be characteristic of the universe, must increasingly become integrated into the educational curriculum.

Experience is a powerful educator. Concern and action for social justice to be present on the university campus and in its neighborhood should evidently be shared by all members of the university community. The experience of living with, even briefly, the poor, locally or internationally, or taking part in a service project could help students to realize how the poor are left out of the economic system.

There are also potentially very useful research projects which could be undertaken and which might contribute to a new vision and an economic system more viable for humanity. One such project might be to compare the concept of "freedom of choice" in Dr. Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom and the proposal for making ownership a universal human right.

## 6. Conclusion

The present global economic system is creating disaster for humanity and all life. Whatever good the system may have produced has been offset by the negative impact it has had on nature and humanity. Many of the catastrophes which have been predicted in the past may not have been realized up to the present, but others are occurring daily and many are known to be in process of happening, ingrained in the future. Particularly, this paper has touched upon three areas where the impact of the global economy has had extremely serious, negative results due to the nature of the system itself.

The "powerful global creature," composed of advanced technology, related institutions and the ideology of continuous growth, maximum and rapid profit, and monolithic power is continuing on its destructive path with no sensitivity or concern for the victims of its systematic "progress." And the victims are uncountable. The economic system is literally conducting war on nature, humanity and all of life. The three topics around which this paper discusses and gives examples of the negative impact of the economic system on its victims are:

- The exploitation of nature, destruction of numerous forms of life and serious damage to the ecosystem upon which all of life depends for its survival.
- The strategic creation of the consumer society which disembowels humanity, making human beings into solely materialists, deliberately excluding the natural and spiritual in order to push forward its agenda of so-called progress.
- The creation of a great chasm between two humanities – the beneficiaries of the economic system and those exploited to make it succeed, the owners and their slaves.

Following the brief presentation of the negative impact on the ecosystem and all life caused by the very nature of the global economic system, was an even briefer analysis of the bad, incomplete, misguided ideas which have produced the unfortunate situation created by humanity. Failure to recognize capital as the main producer of wealth and thus centering economic theory fully around human beings, as well as the amoral and asocial

attitude of the system have combined with the permanent growth ideology to lead humanity to the dangerous position in which it has placed itself and all of life.

The *raison d'être* for the paper has been to outline potential responses to the problematic situation now faced by humanity. The goal has to be the replacement of the present economic system by a new system; supportive new political institutions will be required, which emphasize decision-making at both the transnational and local levels. Many of the tools for creating the new systems are already in the hands of humanity. The key roles which both the physical and social sciences must play, enlivened by the ethical and moral spirit at the center of life, are mentioned with some specific, outstanding examples.

The example of a unique and successful rural development organization in Bangladesh is described to demonstrate that new economic systems already exist at local levels as models upon which a new global system, suited to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can be formulated and promoted. A few ways for business schools to become more a part of the creative process required at this critical juncture for humanity are likewise mentioned.

The disaster is evident. The response to meet this disaster must be implemented now. The tools are in hand. The models are available. There is no cause for discouragement, fear or hesitation. As a 20<sup>th</sup> century Bangladeshi poet has written:

Dreams do not disappear – everyday you grow in experience;

What man has known in his tired history

Through his perceptions – what he has never learnt –

Like incense burning in the womb of a graveyard,

Did not life arise – oh ocean –

In the vulture's screaming assault?<sup>61</sup>

## Notes

1. Turning Away From Technology, ed. Stephanie Mills (Sierra Club Books, 1997), 1.
2. Leonardo Boff, Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 1.
3. Richard Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 363.
4. Jeff Gates, The Ownership Solution: Toward a Shared Capitalism for the Twenty-first Century, (Addison Wesley Longman, 1998), 130.
5. Carl Sagan, Billions and Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millenium, (Ballantine Books, 1998), especially 79, 87, 164.
6. Boff, 65.
7. William Greider, One World Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism, (Simon & Schuster, 1996), 127.

8. Turning Away From Technology, 77.
9. Eugene Linden, *The Future in Plain Sight: Nine Clues to the Coming Instability*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 86.
10. Turning Away From Technology, 78-9.
11. *At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, ed. Nathan P. Gardels, (La Jolla: ALTI Publishing, 1995), 189-90.
12. Tarnas, 363.
13. Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, (Bantam Books, 1980), 17.
14. Linden, 254-5.
15. Toffler, 49-50.
16. *Ibid.*, 90.
17. *At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, 294.
18. Quoted in *At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, 297-8.
19. Boff, 1.
20. Linden, 78.
21. Greider, 290-1.
22. Boff, 67-8.
23. *Turning Away From Technology*, 65.
24. Rev. William J. Ferree, S.M., Ph. D., *Introduction to Social Justice*, (Arlington/St. Louis: Center for Economic and Social Justice/Social Justice Review, 1997), 17.
25. Robert Ashford and Rodney Shakespeare, *Binary Economics: The New Paradigm*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999), 372.
26. Tarnas, 400.
27. Toffler, 414-5.
28. *Ibid.*, 412.
29. Gates, 249.
30. *Essays III*, 6, 1588.
31. Yoshikawa. Tokyo University.
32. Toffler, 306-9.
33. Boff, 155.
34. Toffler, 303.
35. *Ibid.*, 305-6.
36. Ashford, 55 (footnote 42).
37. Stanislav Grof, *Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death and Transcendence in Psychotherapy*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985), 427.
38. Amitai Etzioni, *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics*, (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 106.
39. Sagan, 220.
40. *At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, 192.
41. Ferree, 11.
42. *Ibid.*, 18, 21.
43. Ferree, 37.
44. Amartya Sen, *Development As Freedom*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 285.
45. *Ibid.*, 3.
46. *Ibid.*, 4.
47. *At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, 36, 42.

48. Toffler, 234-5.
49. Greider, 292.
50. Ashford, 47.
51. Greider, 239.
52. Asford, 315.
53. Ibid., 312-3.
54. Gates, 273.
55. Boff, 134.
56. At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times, 74.
57. Toffler, 418.
58. Kofi Annan, Bangladesh Observer, 22 May, 2000.
59. Thabo Mbeki, Bangladesh Observer, 24 May, 2000.
60. Etizoni, 237.
61. Jibanananda Das, Selected Poems, trans. Fakrul Alam, (The University Press Limited, 1999).

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