



## Civilization in Crisis

*This excerpt from Escaping the Matrix, by Richard Moore, suggests the depths to which neo-liberal elites may have sunk as a result of their doctrine. Although neo-liberal behaviour appears so heinous as to be unbelievable, Moore presents evidence that his hypothesis is true. I certainly don't believe that all neo-liberals embrace their dogma for the purposes Moore suggests, but one is left wondering what those elites may be discussing in the secret meetings of the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission. We don't know, and their discussions may be perfectly innocuous—or they may not be. Nevertheless with these possibilities afloat, it is no wonder that trust in government is at a low ebb.*

*Before we attempt to tear down the castles of government, however, we would do well to heed the warning of Murray Dobbin: "Any action by progressives that lends credence to the idea that government, by its very nature, is our enemy is an enormous strategic mistake....The response to the rise of the corporate state should be to strategize about how to take government back and make it work for citizens and communities. Part of that strategy has to be to counter the right's efforts to demonize government." (Murray Dobbin, CCPA Monitor, Jul/Aug 2006, 13(3) pp. 32-33.)*

*In the final sentences of this excerpt, Richard Moore hints that there are ways by which we can take government back. Some of those methods are already being tried, tested, improved, and hesitantly put into practice. You will hear more about them in later issues of JUSTnews. —Ed.*

### Civilization in Crisis

By Richard Moore

Only after the last tree has been cut down

Only after the last river has been poisoned

Only after the last fish has been caught

Then will you find that money cannot be eaten.

—Cree Prophecy

I've always been fascinated by the story of Pompeii. Why didn't everyone leave? They could see the volcano beginning to erupt, and they were directly in its path of destruction. When the ashes began to rain down, many stayed: they covered their heads and went about their business, right up until it was too late to escape. How do we explain this kind of behaviour? Were these people in denial or what?

Our civilization has brought us to the point where we have all become like the stragglers of Pompeii. In our case, however, there isn't a single threat to our survival—as individuals and as a civilized society—but a whole collection of them. Perhaps the most obvious is the total dependence of our societies on a finite oil supply. Instead of addressing this problem, our leaders strive to keep the energy economy growing, paving over the countryside with motorways, and increased automobile sales are always seen as a 'good economic indicator.'

On the environmental front we have global

warming, melting ice caps, ozone depletion, acid rain, soil loss and desertification, fishing stock depletion, disturbances to the dynamics of the all-important Gulf Stream, increasing ferocity and frequency of hurricanes, and the pollution of our air, water, and food supplies. Like the people of Pompeii, we can see these ashes of destruction beginning to fall, and yet we, individually and as societies, go on about our business as usual.

Rapidly increasing population levels pose another



The Last Day in Pompeii

threat, stressing global food, water, and available land resources. These resources are further stressed by the operation of the global economy, whereby, for example, America, with 5% of the world's population, consumes 20% of the world's energy resources. In fact, increasing population is by far the lesser of the two stress factors: it is the resource-hungry 'advanced' nations that are the primary reason why our civilization has become unsustainable.

*Unsustainability* is the term that probably best sums up our predicament as a civilization. We simply cannot continue much longer on the path we are following. If we don't do something to change things, the realities of a finite Earth will change them for us. If we don't change our agricultural methods, our soil bank and water tables will be ruined, and we'll be faced with mass starvation. If we don't convert to a sustainable energy regime, declining fuel supplies will cause our essential infrastructures to collapse, leading once again to mass starvation. In each aspect of our economy, we find systems of utilization that are unsustainable. I described this situation in the Foreword, where I talked about our global society, as a system, being *dysfunctional*. The system can't be fixed; it needs to be transformed—or it will bring

transformation upon us, by the collapse of our civilization. I also suggested that the technical problems involved in transforming our societies are not insurmountable—if we turned our full attention, as societies, to addressing those problems. The more insurmountable problem seems to be our political systems, which act not in the interests of people generally, but act rather on the behalf of self-serving elites.

If we were to diagnose the ills of our civilization, using medical terminology, the diagnosis would be that civilization is suffering from both a chronic disease and an acute, life-threatening infection. The acute infection is the unsustainability of our modern societies; the chronic disease is rule by elites—a disease we've been suffering from ever since the days of the first Mesopotamian kings, some 6,000 years ago. We've never been able to shake that disease, but unless we find a way to do so soon, we'll die from our acute infection.

### ***Elite responses to the crisis***

It is not as if today's ruling elites were unaware of the crisis civilization is facing. In fact they are well aware, and it is that very awareness that provides urgency to the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) agenda—which is aimed at seizing scarce resources, and gaining control over

global affairs, in anticipation of the emerging crisis. That awareness likewise provides urgency to the establishment of the new-millennium blueprint—which provides for the control of populations in troubled times, and which centralizes administrative and military functions in an elite-serving world government.

I earlier cited neoliberalism, and the anticipation of its consequences, as being the motivation for most of these agendas. In a short-term sense that was true, but from our current perspective we can see that neoliberalism merely adds to the more fundamental crisis of unsustainability. Even if the worst excesses of neoliberalism were to be eliminated, the crisis would not be significantly postponed. The new-millennium blueprint, seen from this perspective, provides a means of enabling elites to deal with the crisis as they see fit, with full control over resources and their distribution.



**'Escaped' from the Ash**

We now need to peel back another layer of the Matrix onion, and examine the various responses of the ruling clique to the obvious unsustainability of civilization—as it currently operates, and at current population levels. Although public awareness of global warming, peak oil, and sustainability has come relatively recently, our elite rulers, having the vision to plan and create whole blueprints of world order, while managing global finance—and with their think tanks and access to intelligence information—have certainly been aware of the impending crisis for some considerable time.

Let us reconsider, for example, the oil shock of 1973, which ushered in the petrodollar era, and curtailed development in the third world. From the perspective of oil marketing, the 400% price increase can be seen as a decision to 'go for the premium market.' Instead of fuelling the



world's wholesale demand for development at a generally affordable price, the decision was to sell less oil, at a higher price, to those who could afford to pay. As a business decision, this evidently made sense: oil company profits have soared with every price increase.

From the perspective of the crisis of unsustainability, this 'marketing decision' had the consequence of dividing the people of the world into two classes: those who could afford to continue participating in the unsustainable system, and those who were being left by the wayside. In the first class we find the wealthier nations, and in particular those individuals who can command high salaries in service to the corporate machine. In the second class we find the poorer nations of the third world, the residents of our impoverished ghettos, and the homeless and unemployed in our modern cities and towns.

There are many motivations for the neoliberal agenda, but one of the primary outcomes of that agenda has been to accelerate this two-class division of global populations. Officials and the media admit that the gap between the haves and the have-nots is rapidly widening, and they try to explain that away in various ways, or else they promise us that things will get better eventually. But they won't get better: they'll get worse.

In economic terms, the essence of neoliberalism is *monetization*—everything being measured in terms of its value as a commodity on the market. If you're not employed, that's your fault: you need to get retrained so that you will have value on the employment market. If a nation's economy is deteriorating, that's because it is not *competitive* enough, i.e., it is not offering enough value to the all-powerful 'investment community.' Such a nation needs to lower its corporate taxes, relax its regulations, and cut back on public services, so that it will have more 'value' to offer on the investment market, particularly as regards privatization opportunities. The Matrix conditions us to accept this state of affairs with shows like *The Weakest Link*.

The neoliberal agenda does not include a safety net for those left by the wayside. As we can see today in Europe, existing social welfare structures, long part of the postwar blueprint, are under frontal assault as the free-trade neoliberal program advances. All over Europe we have seen, and are seeing, mass protests as job-protection measures are eliminated, services are cut back or privatized, and industries are destroyed by foreign competition.

Safety nets of all kinds are being systematically destroyed all over the world, even as employment declines, and energy-fuelled inflation increases. In the third world, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) has wholesale destroyed whole social infrastructures, casting millions into abject poverty, and leading directly to mass starvations. In America, the Social Security pension system is under threat, which is likely to mean the safety net will be removed for the elderly.

America never did have many of those safety nets that Europeans are now vainly struggling to preserve.

Farm subsidies, which have provided a safety net for farmers under the pressure of free trade, are under threat as the free-trade agenda moves ever forward. The welfare dole system acts currently as a safety net for many in the West—far too many—but that safety net is nothing we can count on. Providing a dole offers little value as a capital investment, other than as a means of pacifying the population, and that kind of value doesn't count for much in the neoliberal marketplace—particularly if other means of social control are available.

What happens to those left by the wayside as the remaining safety nets disappear? What happens when human life is treated entirely as a commodity, its welfare provided for only to the extent that it returns value to the neoliberal marketplace? We can see part of the answer to this question in the mass famines and genocidal civil wars that have plagued Africa. The media shows us the pictures, and bemoans the fact that the attention of the 'international community' is elsewhere. In the actions of the 'international community' we see reflected the priorities of those who are running our societies. Untold billions are available for military campaigns to secure oil supplies, but African people, who contribute little to the global economy, and have no political clout in the West, can just be left to die.

***"Depopulation should be the highest priority of foreign policy towards the third world, because the US economy will require large and increasing amounts of minerals from abroad, especially from less developed countries."***

—Attributed to Henry Kissinger, "National Security Study Memorandum 200: Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests", April 24, 1974.

A search on Google reveals hundreds of hits citing the above quotation. However, on downloading and reading the memo, NSSM 200, I was unable to find that particular passage. Perhaps the quote is a hoax, or perhaps it was deleted before the memo was declassified and made public. I've nonetheless featured the alleged quote, because genuine or not it serves as a very good summary of what the full NSSM 200 document is actually about, if you read between the lines. Consider this passage, which explains why U.S. planners are so concerned with population levels:

**The real problems of mineral supplies lie, not in basic physical sufficiency, but in the politico-economic issues of access, terms for exploration and exploitation, and division of the benefits among producers, consumers, and host country governments (NSSM, 40).**

That is to say, the U.S. wants to ensure its own access to resources, and it wants that access to be on favourable terms. The document explains in great detail why high

population levels interfere with such access, and is therefore a threat to U.S. “security and overseas interests.” The actual policy proposals in the public NSSM document are not extreme, they emphasize voluntary measures. However, those voluntary measures have clearly not been successful, nor were they likely to be. The following passage suggests that stronger measures, not fully specified, were being anticipated.

**There is an alternative view which holds that a growing number of experts believe that the population situation is already more serious and less amenable to solution through voluntary measures than is generally accepted. It holds that, to prevent even more widespread food shortage and other demographic catastrophes than are generally anticipated, even stronger measures are required and some fundamental, very difficult moral issues need to be addressed (NSSM, 14).**

This language is a bit evasive. It is suggesting that measures “stronger” than “voluntary” may be required. In straight talk that means, “imposed measures may be required.” And in the context of the document, it is third world governments we are talking about, which may or may not “voluntarily” adopt depopulation policies. So, once again in straight talk, the passage is saying, “We may need to impose depopulation measures on populations, against the will of their governments.”

If we consider this elite line of thinking, expressing a need for ‘imposed depopulation,’ and if we look at the mass starvation in Africa, accelerated by the IMF and ignored by the ‘international community,’ we cannot avoid considering the hypothesis that intentional genocide may be part of the elite agenda for dealing with civilization’s crisis: those left by the wayside are ‘useless feeders,’ a waste of space, undeserving of capital investment: why not just quietly get rid of them?

Such a hypothesis, if taken seriously, amounts to a very serious accusation against elite planners, and is not to be undertaken lightly. On the other hand, as these people regularly manipulate whole nations into wars, with millions killed, why should we put anything past them? In this case, as regards genocidal intentions, we might take into account the role of the CIA in African genocide episodes, episodes that were allegedly being ignored by the ‘international community.’

**By December, 1996, U.S. military forces were operating in Bukavu amid throngs of Hutus, less numerous Twa refugees, Mai Mai guerrillas, advancing Rwandan troops and AFDL-CZ rebels. A French military intelligence officer said he detected some 100 armed U.S. troops in the eastern Zaire conflict zone.**

**Moreover, the French intelligence service, DGSE, reported that Americans had knowledge of the extermination of Hutu refugees by Tutsis in both Rwanda and eastern Zaire and were doing nothing about it. More ominously, there was reason to believe that some U.S. forces either**

**Special Forces or mercenaries, may have actually participated in the extermination of some Hutu refugees.**

**...It was known that the planes that the U.S. military deployed in eastern Zaire included heavily armed and armoured helicopter gunships typically used by the U.S. Special Forces. These were fitted with 105 mm cannons, rockets, machine guns, land mine ejectors and, more importantly, infrared sensors used in night operations. U.S. military commanders unabashedly stated the purpose of these armed gunships was to locate refugees to determine the best means of providing them with humanitarian assistance.**

**Towards the end of 1996, U.S. spy satellites were attempting to ascertain how many refugees escaped into the jungle by locating fires at night and canvas tarpaulins during the day. Strangely, every time an encampment was discovered by space based imagery, Rwanda and Zaire rebel forces attacked the sites (Madsen).**

We now have quite a bit of evidence to suggest that the ‘genocide hypothesis’ deserves serious consideration. To begin with, we have the basic economic context: the combination of radical neoliberal economics, together with the systematic removal of safety nets, creates a situation where increasing millions of people, globally, will be in abject poverty, and will be playing no role in the global economy. A world is being intentionally created in which millions, even billions, will have no place.

Next, there is the attitude of elite planners to population growth: for them it is a matter of strategic importance to reduce population levels, using imposed measures if necessary, so as to make resources readily available to the advanced economies.

Next, there is the elephant in the kitchen of actual mass die-offs in Africa: the systematic tolerance of these events by the ‘international community’ is lacking any acceptable explanation. What we do know is that this tolerance must reflect the priorities of leading governments, particularly the U.S., which typically takes the lead in UN interventionist activities.



**Outside Geneina, Sudan, October 2004**

Women from Geneina and surrounding villages collect grain left on the ground after bags of airlifted supplies dropped by the UN World Food Programme exploded on impact. *National Geographic photo*

If we were setting up this new blueprint for a new millennium, we couldn't just ignore this problem. Rather than having starving people on every street corner, wouldn't it make more sense to have some more organized and less publicly visible way of culling redundant populations? If you find this notion unthinkable, recall that little more than a century ago the native populations of Australia and North America were being openly and systematically exterminated: they were redundant to the development plans of the colonizing governments.

Consider how die-off episodes, e.g. starvation in the Sudan, are treated in the media: we are shown the wretched faces, we are given some shallow explanation of why this is happening, and then we are given a number to call to make a contribution. The subliminal message: governments can't solve these problems; it's up to you and me.

In this vein, we can also note the increasing reliance on NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to take the lead in relief efforts. Overall, we are seeing a passing of the buck regarding responsibility for responding to human tragedy from governments and the UN to individuals and NGOs. If these people fail; it's their fault; they don't care enough. Realistically, the individuals and NGOs have no chance of responding in any significant way to the impending scale of impoverishment. Those who are passing the buck are well aware of this.

Let's step back now, and review what this section on civilization's crisis has been about, looking from a broad perspective.

The first observation was about *sustainability*: the way our civilization uses resources is simply unsustainable; drastic changes are inevitable, of one kind or another, not too long in the future, with or without our help. That is the crisis we face, as a civilization.

The second observation was about *transformation*: we can't just fix our current systems; they are inherently unsustainable. We need a comprehensive, bottom-to-top, reinvention of our economies, taking into account the hard reality of sustainability—and this is not beyond our technical capacity, if our societies were so motivated.

The next observation was about *elite rule*: civilization's actual response to its crisis is being decided by a clique of behind-the-scenes manipulators who have little regard for anyone's welfare other than their own. This clique is showing no signs of responding to the crisis in any kind of acceptable way, as regards the welfare of most of humanity. It is worth noting, as well, that civilization has been characterized by elite rule for some 6,000 years, and most of that was based on slavery.

Next came a *diagnosis*: our civilization is plagued by both a chronic illness (elite rule), and an acute infection (unsustainability). Until we cure our chronic illness, we can't do anything about our acute infection.

Our next observations were about the *elite responses* to the crisis: the new-millennium blueprint, with its elite-controlled world government, enables a small clique to 'manage' the unfolding of the crisis and to decide how resources will be allocated and distributed, and who will be left out. By use of police-state methods, and with military forces centrally controlled, the means will be available to deal with any unrest, or to enforce any extreme measures, that may accompany this 'management' process.

Under neoliberalism, and with safety nets eliminated, the world is being divided into those who are part of the system, and those who have no place in the system. The homeless in our towns and cities, and the recent mass die-offs in Africa, can be seen as symbols of this division.

As the realities of our unsustainability crisis begin to take effect, the ranks of those 'left by the wayside' can be expected to swell into many millions, even billions. There is considerable evidence to suggest that organized genocide may indeed be part of the blueprint for this neoliberal world. But even without that, there will be the same mortality result, except the deaths will be distributed more randomly.

After this review, let's update our diagnosis: our civilization has a chronic illness (elite rule), an acute infection (unsustainability), and it is being subjected to a treatment (the neoliberal world system), that aims to 'cure' the infection by discarding excess population (those left by the wayside) so that remaining resources can be used by those for whom the system has a use.

Unless we want to simply bemoan our fate and watch all this come to pass—until the day we too are among those dying by the wayside—we need to face this crisis, and view it as a challenge and an opportunity. We need to figure out how we can take command of our destinies, end elite rule, and go on to transform our societies and economies, responding intelligently to our crisis of unsustainability.

You might be wondering what I mean by *we* when I say "*We* need to face this crisis, etc." In that regard, permit me to repeat here the words of Lappé, as featured in the opening pages of this book:

We've lived so long under the spell of hierarchy—from god-kings to feudal lords to party bosses—that only recently have we awakened to see not only that "regular" citizens have the capacity for self-governance, but that without their engagement our huge global crises cannot be addressed. The changes needed for human society simply to survive, let alone thrive, are so profound that the only way we will move toward them is if we ourselves, regular citizens, feel meaningful ownership of solutions through direct engagement. Our problems are too big, interrelated and pervasive to yield to directives from on high.

—Frances Moore Lappé, *Time for Progressives to Grow Up*

When I say *we*, in this context, I mean *we the people*, ordinary people, regular citizens—as expressed so eloquently by Lappé. But does this make sense? Do we really



have the ‘capacity for self governance’? What kind of ‘direct engagement’ can enable us to feel ‘meaningful ownership of solutions’ to our problems? What would self-governance look like? How would it function? How, indeed, can we even exist: how can we ordinary people somehow come together and agree on what we want and how we’re going to proceed toward achieving it? What does we the people look like, in terms of political arrangements?

These are by no means easy questions to answer, but answer them we must if we want to live to see a better future than the one that has been mapped out for us by our elite rulers. The rest of this book can be seen as a quest, in search of answers to these questions. To get our bearings, in preparation for this quest, let us go back to before the Matrix existed, and look at how human societies evolved. If we can

## Wisdom Councils

*In the excerpt above, Richard Moore writes, “We need to figure out how we can take command of our destinies, end elite rule, and go on to transform our societies and economies, responding intelligently to our crisis of unsustainability.” An experiment with just these purposes has begun in Victoria, B.C. in the form of “Wisdom Councils.” Here is a description of Wisdom Councils taken from the Victoria group’s website, [www.wisedemocracyvictoria.com](http://www.wisedemocracyvictoria.com)*

A Wisdom Council is a group of 12-15 people, chosen from an institution, city or province by a process of random selection. It is important that the members participate as individuals, and not as representatives of any group or special interest. This lets them think and speak from the heart, rather than worrying about what others might want them to say.

A Wisdom Council has no pre-set agenda. It decides for itself what issues to address and how to address them. With the help of Dynamic Facilitation [a special facilitation process], it reaches a consensus statement on the issue it has chosen. This consensus statement is presented to the institution, city, or province in a public meeting, and then the Wisdom Council is dissolved. The public meeting starts a discussion that engages the broader community.

After a short interval—perhaps three or six months—a new Wisdom Council is selected, and it goes through the same procedure. It may address the same issue, or a different one. The ongoing Wisdom Councils stimulate a continuing discussion of issues chosen by ordinary people, based on consensus statements drafted by ordinary people speaking from their hearts.

**Consensus Statement of the Second Victoria Wisdom Council, June 23, 2007 (abbreviated)**

“The future is going to be more and more challenging if we don’t recognize the long-term implications of our actions today. We need to accept and embrace that society is rapidly changing because of developments in technology. We need to manage change so that we keep the positives of the past—our humanity,

understand how we got to where we are as a civilization, we may gain some perspective on how we might go about shifting our course. Excerpted from *Escaping the Matrix* by Richard Moore, 2006, *The Cyberjournal Project*. Redwood City, CA, USA, pp 56-66, with permission from Richard Moore. The book can be ordered from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and most other popular online book sellers. The list price is US\$15.95; many sellers offer discounts. If you order using the ‘Amazon.com’ link on Moore’s website (<http://EscapingTheMatrix.org>), the author receives a small additional royalty.

*American-Irish author Richard Moore is a full-time political writer and host of one of the oldest online discussion communities on the Internet, [Cyberjournal.org](http://Cyberjournal.org). He was raised in California, and lives in Wexford, Ireland.*

family and community connection—while recognizing and benefitting from the opportunities and avoiding the pitfalls this change creates.

“Things will change for the better if we can increase public participation in government decision-making, thus reversing the current trend of less participation and apathy. We aim to put our talk to action.

“We want a government that is chosen by, accountable to, and representative of the people. A government that:

- is elected by the people, accountable to its promises, and transparent;
- enables all to have equal opportunity to benefit from our wealth and resources;
- is easy for the individual to participate in, is accessible, where everyone has an equal voice and impact. We can start to create this government locally, here in Victoria. Victoria can lead by example.
- Locally: require city council to mandate more referenda to put important issues to the people;
- Regionally: make the Capital Regional District (CRD) elected, transparent, and accountable;
- Nationally: direct the Prime Minister to appoint only people to the Senate who have been elected by the people, thereby creating a representative Senate.

“A key issue for us is how to balance individual and collective rights and responsibilities. Solutions need to be implemented on many levels, reflecting a holistic approach.”

*Wisdom Councils were developed by Jim Rough, who is also the founder of Dynamic Facilitation, the facilitation technique used in Wisdom Councils. Dynamic Facilitation quickly helps people determine and resolve what’s really on their minds. The process builds trust, respect, and the spirit of community, and helps people find solutions even for seemingly impossible problems.*

# Portrayal of a Possible Future

Richard Moore states that “drastic changes are inevitable, of one kind or another, not too long in the future, with or without our help.” A look at what those changes might be puts Moore’s article in clearer perspective.

Possibly the most detailed examination of what our future could look like, under a number of assumptions about what we might or might not do to modify it, was undertaken by the late Donella Meadows and co-workers in the early 1990s. They used “World3 Model,” the then most comprehensive computer model, to continue their earlier and better known work, *Limits to Growth*, in *Beyond the Limits* to avoid some of the pitfalls that had detracted from their earlier work; they were careful not to over-

state their case, or to make their predictions too time-specific. One of their main conclusions was that because many of the changes we are witnessing are occurring exponentially, when things start to go wrong, they will do so very rapidly all at once. Their message, however, was generally optimistic: if we take action, we can reduce the damage, and the sooner we act, the less damage there will be.

Unfortunately, we have taken little action to date, and therefore the most relevant scenario in *Beyond the Limits* is Scenario 12, where little action is taken until 2015. In their Scenario 13, they show what might be done if higher goals are set for food and industrial output, but such action appears unlikely in today’s neo-liberal political climate. Scenario 12 is possibly more realistic for another reason: in 1992, although rising levels in atmospheric carbon dioxide were known, its consequences for climate change were not, and therefore atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> does not figure in the model, except, perhaps, as one of the factors under “pollution.” Their model output shows pollution decreasing in 2060 (Fig. 1), whereas we know now that that is probably unlikely for

CO<sub>2</sub> levels. The authors’ original projection for pollution is shown in Figure 1, but an alternative course showing pollution remaining at the 2060 level has been added, with a question mark. If CO<sub>2</sub> levels are taken into account, the current projections for other factors in Scenario 12 may turn out to be optimistic.

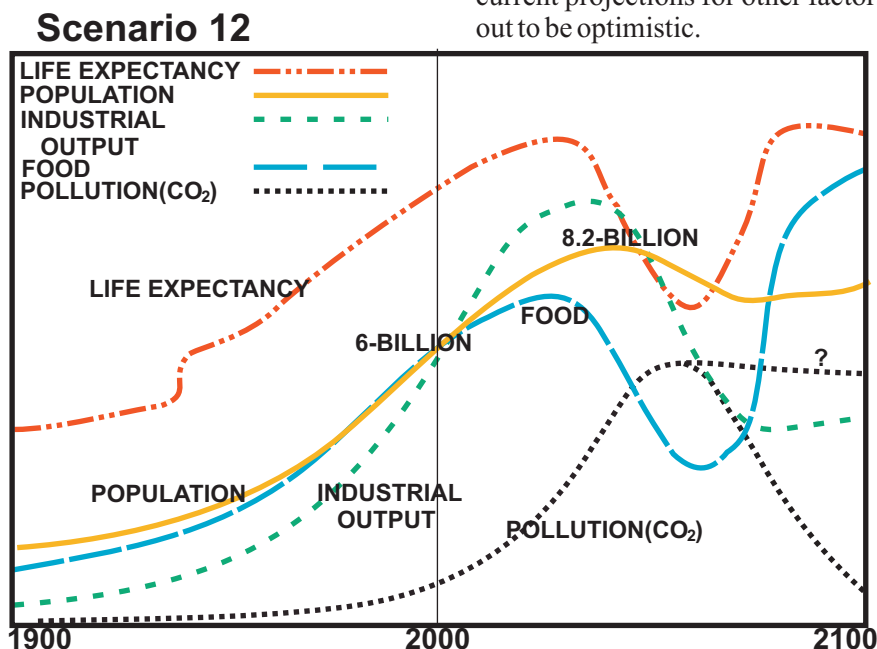


Fig. 1. Some past and possible future trends in population, life expectancy, food, industrial output, and pollution, modified and redrawn from Scenario 12 in *Beyond the Limits* (Meadows, D.H., D.L. Meadow and J. Randers, McClelland and Stewart Inc., Toronto, 1992). These trends were produced by the then most powerful computer model assuming that we will adopt policies of stabilized population and industry, with technologies to reduce emissions, erosion, and resource use in 2015.

What Scenario 12 (Fig. 1) suggests, and it is only a suggestion, is that population levels will continue to rise to about 8.2 billion by around 2040, and then decline to about 7.4 billion by 2070. In those 30 years, human population will fall by nearly a billion people because of a reduction in life expectancy starting in 2030. Life expectancy is shortened by food shortages, disease epidemics, and reduced industrial output. Reduced industrial output may mean an economic depression, probably at least as bad as that of the 1930s. There is no way

of graphically showing the social disruption that these changes will occasion.

This is a grim picture, but no reason to give up hope or to take no action. A majority of Canadians are rapidly steeling themselves for tough action; only our major political parties still believe that markets will correct the situation. As Richard Moore says near the end of the excerpt reprinted here, “we need to face this crisis, and view it as a challenge and an opportunity. We need to figure out how we can take command of our destinies, end elite rule, and go on to transform our societies and economies, responding intelligently to our crisis of unsustainability.” Amen!

— PEKS

If sufficient comments, suggestions or other views are received by JUSTnews in response to this Discussion Paper, they may be published collectively in a later Paper.

# JUSTnews

is published by  
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice  
Bob Stevenson, President  
president@cusj.org  
telephone 613-729-3765

## Editorial Committee

Philip Symons, Editor, Mel Johnston,  
Bert MacBain, Nichola Martin, Julia Varga

## Production Team

Ruth di Giovanni, Bert MacBain,  
Bob Van Alstyne, Gerry Hayle

Submissions to or enquiries regarding  
JUSTnews should be addressed to  
the Editor:

2125 Lansdowne Rd.,  
Victoria, BC, V8P 1B5;  
FAX 250-592-6484  
philmar@islandnet.com

The views published herein do not  
necessarily reflect views and opinions of  
the Canadian Unitarian Council, Canadian  
Unitarians for Social Justice or all  
Canadian Unitarian Universalists

## PLEASE CHECK YOUR LABEL!

**JUSTnews** relies on annual CUSJ  
membership dues to cover its costs.  
Please check the top line of your mailing  
label (below) on this issue to see if you  
are due to renew. You can use the  
renewal form just here to the right ➡

If you do not have a mailing label, please  
consider joining CUSJ. One of the benefits  
of supporting CUSJ is that you will  
receive your very own copy of **JUSTnews**  
regularly!

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### The CUSJ purposes are:

- to develop and maintain a vibrant network of Unitarian social action in Canada and elsewhere and to proactively represent Unitarian principles and values in matters of social justice, and in particular
- to provide opportunities, including through publication of newsletters, for Unitarians and friends to apply their religious, humanistic and spiritual values to social action aimed at the relief of (1) poverty and economic injustice, (2) discrimination based on religious, racial or other grounds, (3) abuses of human rights whether of individuals or peoples, (4) abuses of democratic process, and
- to promote peace and security, environmental protection, education, and literacy in keeping with the spirit of Unitarian values

These purposes are an integral part of the Constitution of CUSJ, adopted at the CUSJ Annual Meeting in Mississauga, ON, May 19, 1999, and amended at the 2003 AGM.

I agree with the above Statement of Purpose, and wish to:

☐ join or ☐ renew membership in CUSJ.

Enclosed please find my donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Add me to the CUSJ ListServ: ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ I want to know more

Name of Congregation (if a UU member):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail to:** CUSJ Membership, c/o Bob Staveley,  
P.O. Box 40011, Ottawa, ON, K1V 0W8

Publications mail agreement No. 40037866



Return address:  
140 Roger Rd.  
Ottawa ON  
K1H 5C8

Printed on recycled paper