

Emerging Hope

By Bill Rickard

Something's afoot. Something enormous and hopeful and creative may be emerging throughout the world. Embodying the nurturing principle of the Divine Feminine, an uncoordinated self-organizing "movement" is appearing—without a central leader, international financing, or global agreements. Several key elements—from organizational efforts to higher consciousness to technological innovations—are beginning to coalesce into what may be key events in rescuing the planet and our species.

A shift in consciousness up the cultural spiral, accompanied by the spiritual will to evolve for the sake of the whole, is beginning to emerge. Concurrently, global problems are beginning to be recognized, analyzed, and solved. Forward-thinking persons are showing the way to a more harmonious future. And the miracle is that all of these forces are becoming aware of each other! Perhaps the soul of the world, or the anima mundi as it is sometimes called, is awakening us to our role in following the arc of evolution.

Organizations

United loosely, but cooperatively, many organizations are pursuing the goals of ecological sanity, peace, and justice for all. Paul Hawken's recently completed research indicates there are between one and two million NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) and NPs (non-profit organizations) devoted to these purposes. His incisive analysis of this generally invisible movement is presented in *Blessed Unrest* by Terry Tempest Williams, a book aptly described as "a manifesto of hope for the 21st century." This evidence of a groundswell of the feminine energy to nurture, conserve, and rescue being felt throughout the world is a critical element that must co-evolve with a new human consciousness—sooner rather than later—to preserve our planetary presence.

Consciousness Shift

In addition to the manifestation of the sacred feminine evidenced by the more than one million NGOs and NPs researched by Hawken, there is another trend that is equally important. Research and practice in the evolution of individual and cultural consciousness is becoming more evident. *How* will our species move from the current collective consciousness with its emphasis on individual satisfaction and consumerism to a world-centered consciousness with the common good as its goal? How will the global will to solve the planet's ills that the

growing network of NGOs and NPs are trying to deal with develop?

Many individuals and organizations are now grappling with this consciousness shift. At the forefront are organizations such as the Institute of Noetic Science (IONS), which conducts original scientific research into consciousness, healing and psychokinesis. The IONS 2007 Shift Report, *Evidence of a World Transforming*, is a marvelous summary of worldview shift as well as a detailed review of personal and institutional transformation. Currently, there is a project led by Lynne McTaggart that is trying to determine whether and to what extent conscious human intention can be collimated to affect physical outcomes. Barbara Max Hubbard has developed an organization around the theme of conscious evolution that is producing accessible DVDs concerning the consciousness shift.

Dr. Don Beck has spent the last three decades developing and applying the wizardry of Spiral Dynamics to solving fundamental cultural problems. Based on the early work of Clare Graves, Beck has laid out the values, structure and processes of cultural development complete with some of the characteristics of the next tier of psychological development of individuals. This schema, Spiral Dynamics Integral, has led to practical conflict resolution successes among stakeholders at various cultural levels in actual cases at the sport team, corporate, and national levels. Beck is now forming Human Emergence Centers here in the United States and worldwide.

Andrew Cohen, publisher of *What is Enlightenment* magazine, is a spiritual leader, author, and philosopher. The major goal of his enlightenment work is to raise the consciousness of individuals beyond personal ego so that they will dedicate themselves to following a future impersonal evolutionary path that is centered on the common good. Cohen and Ken Wilber collaborate regularly to map the path to a higher Integral Life, the next apparent step in the shift of consciousness.

Technology and Finance

Thus far, we have seen evidence of the nurturing will of the planet expressed by the number and variety of NGOs and NPs as well as the forging ahead of many initiatives aimed at raising the consciousness of our species. What's left? Material and financial means.

Many of the world's foremost scientists and engineers are acknowledging both a deep understanding of our global problems, as well as recognition that we have



Photo by Wendy Burkland Lombard

solutions to them at hand. Amory Lovins, physicist, energy expert, and co-founder of the Rocky Mountain Institute, notes that “industry...is clearly moving away from the ‘primitive, reductionistic mindset’ that has been dominant for the past two centuries. A new nature-inspired vision in engineering will lead to the smart design of whole systems for multiple benefits—rather than single systems for single benefits.” In an interview with *ODE* magazine, he states that “no major scientific breakthroughs are required to meet the challenges humanity faces.”

William McDonough, former Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia, has designed buildings that give off more energy than they use, clean their own wastewater using living systems, and draw crowds because of their beauty. With his partner Michael Braungart, his revolutionary approach to design is chronicled in the book *Cradle to Cradle* and demonstrated in the DVD entitled *The Next Industrial Revolution*.

Is this pie-in-the-sky dreaming? Can the planet afford to solve the looming catastrophes caused by poverty, global warming, peak oil, and so forth? Lester Brown, former chief of World Watch and currently president of Earth Policy Institute—a non-profit, interdisciplinary research organization in Washington, D.C.—has

published *Plan B 2.0, Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*. This comprehensive analysis includes sections on all the key problems of the planet, from stabilizing population to water shortages from climate change to adult literacy. And he has included an estimate of what the additional cost to the world would be to accomplish the needed changes. His estimate of \$161 billion is dwarfed by his country-by-country estimate of military expenditures—nearly \$1 trillion annually. That is, we are currently spending six times more for the military

throughout the world than it would cost to make a major dent in global problems. Even if Brown’s estimate to solve the problems is off by a factor of six, a solution is still in view. When reading *Plan B 2.0*, you might start with Chapter 13, “Building a New Future,” to gain an overall sense of confidence and hope before plowing through the individual problem-centered chapters and their solutions.

Our lifetime is being presented with a series of one-time possibilities in the creative trajectory of the universe. My interest in grouping hopeful prospects together is to inspire our nurturing and conserving, yet courageous, instincts so that they can be seen alongside the challenges we face. Our personal participation in birthing the new order is our unique birthright. How quickly can we do it? It depends on how quickly we can awaken to the soul of the world and heed Her intent for our evolution.

Bill Rickard is a retired intelligence officer now living in Carrboro, North Carolina. His current interests are tutoring ESL students at the local elementary school, counseling, studying, and writing about the new consciousness. Bill teaches meditation and gives 12-step retreats with his wife, Nancy. He can be reached at bill.rickard@earthlink.net.