

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: The Kairos <thekairos@the-word-is-truth.org> (The Kairos <thekairos@the-wo

CREATION DATE/TIME: 16-JAN-1999 15:32:49.00

SUBJECT: The Truth

TEXT:

Hello friend,

My name is Joseph P. Firmage. You are receiving this message either because you have visited my Internet book site at www.TheWordIsTruth.org, or someone considered it important to refer your e-mail address to me to include in this distribution.

Broadcast messages from me will not be frequent, so don't worry about me cluttering up your mailbox.

Following this brief introduction, I have provided below a URL which will direct you to an "editor's cut" condensed edition of my book, The Truth, published on November 25th, 1998. This condensed edition is first available only in a Microsoft Word 97 file format, other formats will be added later. A hardback version of the complete book as it stands will become available later this year. I understand and appreciate that it is impossible for many of you to allocate enough time to read a several hundred page book, particularly online, so I have taken the time to provide a proper summary of its contents and claims. I've spent millions of dollars to communicate this information at no cost to you, so it is not asking much to take a quiet moment and at the very least read this shortened version. I don't ask that you believe, just that you read and consider.

The Truth represents a rather large hypothesis, whose overall conclusion has enormous implications for every single human on Earth. I have written the book from the perspective of a generalist, with the collaboration of many well-respected specialists. The specialization in which I have been most deeply educated is computer science, and more recently, the Internet economy. But that's only the latest step in my particular journey.

It started from a passion for the stars, sparked by wondrous science fiction shown throughout my youth. It grew into a commitment to science, and physics in particular. The desire to comprehend the deepest functions and meaning of physics evolved into a study of scientific anomalies - always where fundamental new discoveries emerge. Unfortunately, 5-10 years ago, such anomalies found no root in a rational explanatory hypothesis, and therefore the underlying observations have been rejected by science. Frustrated, I left the domain years ago to concentrate exclusively on a growing involvement in computing and communications and various related enterprises.

Sparked again 14 months ago by one of the most remarkable events in my life to date, I returned to these domains to study more recent developments, now aided by the communications reach of the Internet. I found extremely well-respected scientists whose remarkable new theories began to clearly explain the anomalies. The pieces of those old puzzles then began to assemble into a majestic picture, motivating me to return attention to studying a broad cross-section of works as a generalist. Adding fuel to the fire is a growing understanding that

the future of our biosphere and our civilization is at risk and depends in fundamental ways upon the types of discoveries I discuss on the book.

Why are generalists useful to the world? Because we predict the future for the whole of civilization, not simply a single branch of study. As within any field of specialists, many generalists are frequently wrong and many generalists are frequently right. I've chosen to put forth a testable hypothesis which is concisely stated in 17 phrases. The details underneath these phrases are each important, but more important is the coherence of the overall pattern. It is certain that several of the details in a work of this scale are incorrect. But the plausibility of the overall hypothesis requires only that there is good evidence for each primary logical step.

Naturally, there should be a lot of evidence supporting each logical step in order to make the assertions I am making. I believe such evidence is now in print, across my book and in those books referenced by me.

You might think that I am distraught over wild exaggerations in the press and the resulting possibility of damage to my credibility and career, given my choice to communicate this information so publicly. Indeed, though I am no longer with the firm, I have helped to create a \$2+ billion dollar enterprise at the pinnacle of the Internet communications revolution just before the dawn of the new millennium. It's a great place and time to build a career. But, actually, I am more excited than ever before in my life, despite the frightening challenges we all face that I describe below. What I have put together is quality information, I have studied it for over a decade, and its implications are an order of magnitude more fundamental than you have imagined. The implications fire the imagination.

This book simply does not fit into the class of the fringe or fantasy. I do not mean to diminish the works of others who've tackled this subject matter, for I have built my hypothesis in part upon their preliminary research into a phenomenon almost completely foreign to open science. But whatever the ultimate truth may turn out to be, it will have to explain all of the subjects addressed in this book, for everything in this book observes significant phenomenon that are or have actually occurred. I am not aware of an alternative theory that connects each of these large pieces. One thing is certain: there is a human saga, and we must decipher every major clue discussed in this book to understand it.

Even granting this, you may ask why I should bother doing this. Why should I not keep this to myself, and pursue whatever passions I have as a private study?

Why? Because you are my brothers and sisters in a sense more meaningful than the cultural frameworks we use to separate ourselves into groups: we are all part of the race of homo sapiens beings, a fragile yet ancient creation just now waking up to its potential. I care about you, and I am deeply concerned for our shared long term future, the legacy we shall leave. We are destroying our children, our culture, even the ancient biosphere that made us, as we encourage a mindlessly uncontrolled praise of wealth. The Earth has a water cycle and a carbon cycle. It must have a profit cycle. And it will, even if it becomes so disfunctional as to fail humanity, before returning to health. As the great scientist Carl Sagan long maintained, the

discovery of extraterrestrial life will ultimately become the single greatest unifying force ever for humanity. We will need that kind of unity to overcome the next century's challenges.

Meanwhile, the Cosmos beckons us, as if to say "demonstrate the judgment to deserve access to this domain".

In this story, the CEO in me has become a human being, the scientist has turned from a pessimist to an optimist, the skeptic has opened his mind, and the spirit in everything I have sensed with clarity. Whether you agree with my conclusions or not, if a critical number of us can cross similar thresholds in our pursuit of truth, in whatever direction it may lead each of us, a genuine transformation of our society will occur.

Welcome to The Truth, <http://www.TheWordIsTruth.org/TheTruth.doc>, a story that will go on forever. Print this out, it's about 240 pages long. Take it to a quiet place, and read it through at one time. If you find it as fascinating as I do, please forward this message to as many people as you can. My primary objective is to spread this knowledge as far as possible. We can all agree to let the history books determine whether my hypothesis is correct.

The complete book, and a recently started personal journal that will track its evolution, can be found at www.TheWordIsTruth.org.

And to my brilliant co-authors, thank you again.

JOSEPH P. FIRMAGE
INTERNATIONAL SPACE SCIENCES ORGANIZATION

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<http://www.TheWordIsTruth.org/remove.cfm>

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Ed Yardeni <yardeni@ix.netcom.com> (Ed Yardeni <yardeni@ix.netcom.com> [U

CREATION DATE/TIME:18-JAN-1999 22:08:53.00

SUBJECT: WEF Panel at Davos

TO: John A. Koskinen (CN=John A. Koskinen/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

CC: francescairncross@economist.com (francescairncross@economist.com [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

CC: cbraga@worldbank.org (cbraga@worldbank.org [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

CC: Bruno_Giussani@weforum.org (Bruno_Giussani@weforum.org [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

John: Please comment on Bruno's rewrite of my Action Plan Draft, which now reflects your ideas. I like it. Any additional thoughts would be greatly appreciated by the WEF panel, I'm sure. BTW: Instead of flying to NYC, why not Beijing on New Millennium Day? Ed

Bruno: Hope you don't mind my taking this initiative.

Carlos: Welcome to the panel. Did you get a copy of my first Action Plan draft? Also, please confirm that you do not believe in UFOs. (John: FYI, Joe Firmage was originally on the panel.)

Frances: Any changes or additions in Bruno's version that you would like to see?

I would still like a sentence to prod the G8 meeting of Finance Ministers in Feb. to take Y2K more seriously and at least endorse an Action Plan of their own, if not ours.

Ed

At 04:48 PM 1/18/99 +0100, Bruno_Giussani@weforum.org wrote:

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>
>Bruno Giussani@WEF
>01/18/99 04:48 PM
>
>Hope you had a nice week-end. Thanx Frances for providing some laugh
>here... :-)
>
>>>China's reported response to the airline problem - make
>>>the company bosses fly on Jan 1 - is a splendid idea.
>
>Just to bring everybody in the loop: I've sent today to Carlos Braga
copies
>of:
>--Ed's Action Plan Draft
>--Koskinen's reaction
>--Frances' comments
>Please from now on copy all four of us on the discussion:

>
>francescairncross@economist.com
>yardeni@ix.netcom.com
>cbraga@worldbank.org
>Bruno_Giussani@weforum.org
>
>After reading Koskinen's list of all coordinating activities already in
>place, some of which I wasn't aware of, I quite agree with him that it
>would probably be a mistake to call for a new coordinating body to be set
>up, and that the best way to use the Davos platform is probably to
>increase
>the pressure on businessmen and politicians to commit more energy and
>means
>and participate in the Y2K efforts. The International Y2K Coordinating
>Committee overseen by the World Bank seem very much to match the profile
>of
>the Y2K alliance Ed suggested (Carlos, can you bring in more details
>here?)
>
>I would therefore suggest, following Frances idea, to maintain the
>principle of an Action plan, but to turn it much more into a call for a
>closer cooperation with and within the existing bodies under the
>Coordinating committee.
>
>I've spent part of the weekend reading "survivalist" literature and I
>agree
>with John that the list of responses to Y2K failures suggested by Ed could
>be very much misinterpreted by the press, especially in a setting such as
>Davos.
>
>Therefore, I would suggest something like this (cutting back from Ed's
>text):
>
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>
>The Year 2000 Problem: A Call To The World's Leaders
>
>We the members of this panel on the Year 2000 Problem (Y2K) gathered today
>at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland
>call on the world's political and business leaders to fully participate in
>and support the international efforts underway to remediate the problem,
>develop contingency plans in case of failures or disruptions, and inform
>the public in order to build up confidence.
>During the few remaining months before the start of the new millennium,
>our
>world leaders must play a much greater role in addressing this problem.
>They must make Y2K our top global priority.
>Many countries have national Y2K campaigns to increase awareness, to
>assess
>private-sector progress, and to remediate public-sector computers.
>However,
>a considerable number of other countries are paying a low level of
>attention to the year 2000 problem.
>We call all the political and business leaders to personally commit and to
>commit their government and company to:
>
>*Globally coordinated remediation actions, aimed at identifying, on a
>worldwide basis, the vital systems that remain at risk of failing and
>provide whatever resources are necessary to fix them in time. This

includes

>especially globally interdependent systems such as defense, energy,
>telecommunications, air transportation, shipping and logistics, food
>production, manufacturing, finance and banking. First priority should be
to

>insure the functioning of systems that are life-threatening if they fail,
>such as military and civilian nuclear systems. Special awareness-raising
>and remediation efforts should be aimed at developing countries.

>*Contingency & Recovery actions, aimed at assessing the likelihood of
>blackouts and other significant disruptions and preparing and implementing
>contingency and disaster recovery plans in the event of the failure of
>vital systems.

>*Public Information actions, formulating and executing national and
>international information campaigns to build the public's confidence in
>systems that can be expected to function properly, while guiding their
>efforts to calmly implement their own contingency plans to deal with
>possible disruptions, without exacerbating the overall situation. Total
>transparency on Y2K preparedness should be firmly required from any
>individual and organization.

>

>We also call all the political and business leaders to support the
>establishment and the activities of the International Y2K Coordinating
>Committee, overseen by the World Bank.

>

>-----

>

>this could be presented at the meeting of ministers on Sunday Morning, and
>then in the public panel on monday.

>let me know, and be frank

>B-

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>

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Joe Firmage Automessenger <> (Joe Firmage Automessenger <> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:15-MAY-1999 12:45:20.00

SUBJECT: New Writing

TEXT:

Hello,

Joe Firmage here. It has been some time since I last broadcast a message to the visitors to my book's Web site (www.TheWordIsTruth.org), and have just now had time to organize my thoughts following the maelstrom of activity. The time I have available for writing is stretched among the various economic demands on my schedule, integrating a stream of important new knowledge discovered in an ongoing quest of research, and preparing organizational systems capable of supporting a broader set of initiatives on a perpetual basis.

Some of you have expressed concern that I may have been discouraged by the rather shallow coverage given the intellectual point of this quest. Much of the coverage hasn't been heartening, to say the least. But, I have to tell you something: it doesn't matter. I'm perfectly happy to let history be the judge.

Friends, I believe humanity approaches a new era, one vastly richer in possibility than the one anticipated from within the limits imposed upon civilization by 20th Century physics and fragmented religious ideologies. I believe revolutions in our understanding of physics are likely imminent, and the plausible implications are staggering. A sweeping new view of 21st Century science which respects a core body of spiritual truths holds promise beyond all other ontological paths that can be seen. I will shortly help launch organizations which take this into account and lay a stepwise foundation for helping this transformation along.

The firehose of knowledge presently available to serious open-minded thinkers is remarkable. Of course, all domains of study are filled with more misplaced ideas and delusions than truths, particularly at a time when humanity is just beginning to play with advanced tools of communication like computers and the Internet. But underneath a great mass of speculation one can find outstanding gems of first-hand research spanning science, spirituality, and history. I'm in the wonderful and humbling position to see some of the very best new ideas that will drive us down the road ahead. I have become all the more enthralled with a vision that continues to materialize each day. Additions to your library worthy of a new millennium will be recommended shortly, enabling you to follow along on a rigorous path of discovery.

I will soon share the most interesting of these concepts as part of the "Truth Files", the kickoff series of presentations which will be facilitated through "SiteCast" (Internet + live broadcast) capabilities of the International Space Sciences Organization (ISSO). ISSO is the vehicle I have constructed to pursue breakthrough scientific inquiries in the fields of propulsion, energy, and the physical dynamics of consciousness. ISSO will establish a "global classroom" on the Internet for the presentation of ideas that arthritic media refuse to present to the public for serious and sober discussion. ISSO is now scheduled to launch on June 1, 1999. More details on this event and subsequent public lecture series will follow later this month, but what I intend to establish is a platform for minds

far greater than mine to present their remarkable concepts in terms comprehensible to the public.

As a preview of further writings from me, and as an indication of the kinds of breakthrough studies of which you will learn in detail if you choose to stay with me on this journey, I have prepared the following... http://www.thewordistruth.org/new_writing.htm

Please take a quiet moment to download and read the document. It is timely.

Thank you for this slice of your attention today, and please, visit my site. Remember that all ideas are subject to growth as truth demands, and that what you are reading is simply an unedited beginning of a sweeping story, with the most fascinating surprises yet to be experienced.

If you wish to respond to this message, send mail to thekairos@yahoo.com. I hope to review much of what is sent to me, but cannot promise a response to all.

Very best...

J O S E P H F I R M A G E
Founder & Chairman

International Space Sciences Organization
<mailto:thekairos@yahoo.com>

P.S. Check out the May issue of Discover Magazine, and the April issue of Physics Today. Therein can be found clues to the revolutions which we may soon see.

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<http://www.TheWordIsTruth.org/remove.cfm>

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Joe Firmage Automessenger <> (Joe Firmage Automessenger <> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:23-JUN-1999 22:13:08.00

SUBJECT: ISSO Update

TEXT:

Hello,

I am sending you this update with four items of note:

First, there is an excellent source of information I would like to bring to your attention: The Journal of Scientific Exploration (JSE), published by the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE). Neither JSE nor SEE are connected with ISSO, but I believe that this journal is such an excellent and unique source of research in frontier areas of science (including the UFO phenomenon) that I consider it important to spread the word about this publication.

The official description in the Allen Press Buyer's Guide to Scientific, Medical and Scholarly Journals states: JSE publishes refereed research articles aimed at scientific advance and the expansion of human knowledge in areas falling outside the established scientific disciplines. It provides an unbiased professional forum for discussion and debate of anomalous phenomena. Research articles are selected for publication on the basis of scholarship, as determined by peer review, and can be either supportive, critical or neutral.

To the best of my knowledge the journal is the only source of information, discussion and commentary on topics covering the entire spectrum of anomalous phenomena and exceptional human abilities in an unbiased and rational manner. The goal of JSE is neither to advocate the reality of anomalous phenomena, nor to debunk.

I urge you to visit their website at <http://www.jse.com> for further information and, if you wish, to subscribe to this Journal.

Second, posted to the following URL is a first cut at a "New Millennium Library" -- a subset of seminal resources I would strongly advise you to study, to educate yourself on subjects which an increasing number of leading futurists believe will drive humanity's future. If you have the courage to consider seriously the hypothesis that I and many other thinkers now take quite seriously, then carefully review each of the following references in sequence...

<http://www.TheWordIsTruth.org/know.htm>

You may see the 21st Century in a completely new perspective once through these books and sites. Check back at this link before the end of the year to see a more comprehensive list of recommendations.

Third, posted to the following URL you'll find a few remarks on a recent article reviewing my writings.

<http://www.TheWordIsTruth.org/redherring.htm>

Finally, due to the volume of incoming information and the pace of recent activities, I have shifted the launch of the International Space Sciences Organization to July, 1999. I'll send out a notice just before launch, to let you know the details. Sorry for the delay. Bookmark ISSO's forthcoming website at www.issso.org.

Very best,

J O S E P H F I R M A G E

Chairman, Int'l Space Sciences Organization

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Joe Firmage Automessenger <> (Joe Firmage Automessenger <> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:23-JUL-1999 22:34:38.00

SUBJECT: ISSO Update

TEXT:

Hello all,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that on July 28, 1999, the International Space Sciences Organization will officially be launched. I'll be giving the launch presentation through a national radio broadcast from 8 pm to 10 pm Pacific, as a guest of Jeff Rense's Sightings program. Please plan on visiting the ISSO web site at www.ISSO.org on that date for further details. Station listings by city will be provided, and the transmission will also be available on Broadcast.com.

Also, I'd like to bring your attention to two outstanding books recently published.

The first is The Marriage of Sense and Soul, by Ken Wilber.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375500545/o/qid=932758039/sr=8-3/002-8687089-6503053>

Ken is one of the world's most perceptive and lucid philosophers, and his writings are sure to be remembered for decades, perhaps centuries, to come.

In Sense and Soul, Wilber takes the reader through an excellent philosophical discussion of the ontological paradigms of science and religion, and reaches for the conclusion which represents one of the fundamental assertions of my own writings: that science and various traditions of spirituality, however imperfectly institutionalized over time, represent essential and complementary aspects of being.

As readers of my writings know, I believe that science measures and spirit experiences the same ontological unity. Wilber describes more completely than I have thus far a very similar worldview.

The second title I'd recommend you pick up is Future War: Non-Lethal Weapons in Twenty-First-Century Warfare, by John Alexander.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0312194161/o/qid=932758989/sr=2-1/002-8687089-6503053>

The correlation between my writings and Alexander's rests in the idea that the realization of the sweeping visions that are now becoming plausible for 21st Century society require that we pursue real, tangible steps to end the endemic human propensity for use of force in conflict resolution. If mankind

is to evolve on a Cosmic stage and interact with lifeforms advanced perhaps millions or billions of years beyond homo sapiens, we must change our persistent pattern of aggressive behavior. Until there is a fundamental shift in consciousness, no amount of wishing is going to stop conflicts.

No longer a voice in the wilderness, Alexander's work has received the

endorsement of many senior military officials. Popular authors, such as Tom Clancy and Michael Crichton have inculcated Alexander's concepts in their books, thus influencing public opinion. Future War contains the first foreword that Tom Clancy has written. Drafted in 1997, Future War prophetically described the events at Columbine High with uncanny accuracy. Other events are coming to pass. To know our intermediate future I recommend you read this authoritative work.

Having had the opportunity to visit with senior officials from every branch of our military, I can state with the highest degree of confidence that the use of military force characterized by 20th Century conflicts cannot be presumed to be effective in dealing with the fundamental threats of the future. As technology improves the individual's ability to project mass lethal force through chemical, biological, and even nuclear means, the strategic landscape which underlies military charters fundamentally changes. The focus for the investment of our resources sharpens where it has always been directed, but now with far greater intensity: individual ethics and education worldwide -- things no machine of war can ever ultimately deliver.

Of course, it's easier for human beings to live peacefully with each other when their aspirations are given the freedom to soar beyond conflict and materialism, as the 30th anniversary of the greatest achievement in human history should remind us.

With that kind of vision as the high water mark to guide us, we're hard at work...

Best regards,

Joe Firmage

Chairman, Int'l Space Sciences Organization

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Joe Firmage <jfirmage_null@the-word-is-truth.org> (Joe Firmage <jfirmage_n

CREATION DATE/TIME:18-SEP-1999 02:47:12.00

SUBJECT: Summer 1999

TEXT:

Hello friend,

I finally found time to put together a few thoughts on recent events. It is hard to select which of the many interesting happenings of the summer of 1999 deserve most attention. Candidates include the always-remarkable demonstrations of Earth's geologic and meteorologic power, the rather humorous debate over the latest political personality's intersection with America's embarrassingly dishonest War on Drugs, the pain of government-citizen conflict as displayed in disheartening detail in recent revelations of the Waco confrontation, and the first-of-its-kind report recently issued regarding unidentified aerial phenomena written by former senior French military and aerospace officials.

But there are four other items deserving special attention: progress in the effort to prepare for Y2K, the mountainous ecological crisis now coming into clearer focus, courageous acts of statesmanship in the Middle East, and startling observations now surfacing in science.

An Early Bug in the Beta Test of Ideotechnomics

"Virtually all of us who are close to this problem are confident that the American economy is going to come through this just fine," Federal Reserve Governor Edward Kelley said in an appearance on C-Span in recent days. This was one of a string of increasingly upbeat comments by U.S. officials on the readiness of the domestic economy to absorb the Year 2000 date rollover without a fundamental crisis.

I recall first seeing warnings of the Y2K issue in 1995, and like many, disregarded its significance at the time. Feeling somewhat guilty as one of the hundreds of thousands of people who wrote a few lines of "Y2K" code (perfectly ironic as acronym for a bug of abbreviation) a decade ago, I became a student of this subject.

During its earlier years more than now, the software industry has tended not to employ the kind of rigorous quality control methodologies demanded of basic modern infrastructure. Upon realizing the true extent of the challenge in 1997, and seeing a lack of appreciation of the depth of the challenge among executives in Silicon Valley, I lent a hand to a few responsible groups engaged in much-needed efforts to communicate remediation and preparedness strategies.

We have seen thinking among the community of experts shift from profound ignorance of the depth of the required remediation, towards well-founded pessimism motivating action, now towards the tentative prediction that the most expensive technological error in human history has been caught just in time. The global situation is not as clear, and it is hoped that a report

being published by the U.S. State Department, grading more than 190 nations' readiness, will shed additional light on this question. But even granting the possibility that some nations may experience significant interruptions in technology-dependent functions, it appears increasingly clear that the urgency of global Y2K remediation efforts may have avoided any kind of widespread systemic failure. Hopefully, the remaining months will be adequate for the industrial world to complete the most important phases of its corrective plan.

As we pass into to 2000, there are many lessons from the Y2K saga worthy of study.

First, everyone in Silicon Valley has been given a much-needed wake-up call.

We have been reminded that no one can "guarantee fitness for a particular purpose" except the makers. As the pace of technology innovation continues through communications and computing and leaps ahead in biogenetics and perhaps even propulsion, the completeness of our scenario planning and the rigor of our development methodologies need to be continually improved.

Each

piece of our electronic infrastructure is as dependent upon excellence as a skyscraper, suspension bridge, airplane, or moon shot. And from now on, society is in the capsule.

Second, part of the fright of the Y2K problem has been felt because of the certainty of its timing. Rarely in human experience does the flow of events allow a specific date to be known for a threatened social crisis. We should realize that there are far more serious threats to our livelihood than Y2K ever was, but we simply cannot predict The Date beyond which remediation or evolution is no longer possible. Recognizing that Y2K's catastrophic probabilities would not have become improbabilities had various dire warnings not been made, we must make room in normal, optimistic, and happy lives for the sober recognition of the reality of other total risks to human

civilization, and lead and act accordingly. Our inability to predict a date for ultimate crisis should make us more wary, not less so.

Third, we have glimpsed yet again the true power of technology in the hands of natural life. Y2K is an example of how technology magnifies the ability of human ignorance to threaten human life.

Given a pronounced cusp of discovery and innovation unmatched in human history, our judgment must race to maintain pace with our knowledge. In this respect, we might recognize that the next technologically induced human

crisis is likely to be one in which we are afraid not as much of instant stoppage of machines, but rather of an inability to slow or stop them.

Our technology systems are simply individual robots, now being wired together with a common nervous system and many developing centers of function. Each function is increasingly specialized to meet the needs of its

constituents and its master. The ideological master of most modern technology systems is the consumer. You might say that much of the modern Western person's life is now driven by 'ideotechnomics' -- automation servant to the customs of an ideologically-framed economy.

The present state of evolution in the ethics of consumer ideotechnomics and its impact on the biosphere of Earth are the study of many concerned and

intelligent people. As we face deep questions early in the 21st Century regarding the ecological catastrophes that we must somehow avoid, we should ask ourselves the question: to the degree that ideotechnomics forms the substrate of our lives, what are ways that it can reduce happiness and freedom of action for us and our descendants, instead of expanding these truest qualities of life? As we witness the growing reach of wires and waves

coursing with energy around us, we must never lose our sense of the total and unforgettable experience of being lovingly rooted in Nature.

Remember Y2K as you read *When Things Start to Think*, by Neil A. Gershenfeld.

The Sixth Extinction?

Some news items are more important than others, but are often drowned because 'equal air time' seems increasingly to favor profitability rather than relevance as the unit of measure. One such story appeared on MSNBC.com on August 4th.

"We are predicting the extinction of about two-thirds of all bird, mammal, butterfly and plant species by the end of the next century, based on current trends," said Peter Raven, President of the International Botanical Congress at its annual meeting this summer. "The projected rate of extinction for the next 100 years is equal to 65 million years ago."

50,000 of the 300,000 species of plant on Earth are at risk of extinction now. 200,000 species could vanish by the end of the 21st century. In the oceans, 50 "dead zones" have been identified in coastal areas, the largest in the Gulf of Mexico caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorus flowing from the Mississippi. "We're witnessing many signals of the problems that will result from these changes," reports Jane Lubchenco of Oregon State University, "including toxic algal blooms, coral bleaching and sudden disappearance of fish from key fisheries."

There are many reactions individuals can have to news reports such as this. Most people click on to the next site or station, thinking something like "the government or environmentalists will find a solution". Many people click into it one level further, learn more, and shift their thinking modestly. Some people are motivated to act, and contribute or volunteer for a role in the movement. And vanishingly few who do are in positions of influence to accelerate the thinking of many others. It is important this last group of people grows, and I will be greatly surprised if the health of

the biosphere is not a principal focus of the next Presidential election.

My

personal bet is that the self-created environmental problems menacing humanity will force their way to the front of everyone's attention soon.

New

debates will be framed in increasingly clear terms demonstrating the stakes of decisions we may or may not have the will to make in the next 10 years.

How long it takes for these debates to influence everyday actions of several

hundred million relatively wealthy human beings will determine whether we

will have enough time to remediate our ideotechnomic system sufficiently to avert biospheric catastrophe. Imagine the risk of delay: living in a society which discovered that its extinction was inevitable and years away, not from asteroid impact, but from disfunction and decay caused by an old bug in its ideology. On present course and speed, the average 10-year-old child will likely live to experience such a realization.

Here is an opportunity for the science community to step up to the plate, not only with studies, but with a loud voice, and with new ideas and open-mindedness to new ways of thinking about the broader human condition. The solutions we deploy must match the reach of the problems, and thus some kind of shift in the basic behaviors of individuals is a necessary foundation for any robust strategy. Individual choices of this nature, in my view, tend to hinge upon individual ontology.

Across the Line in the Sand

Half a world away from us, the faces of deeply seeded anger fighting wars of old are slowly coming to focus in the lens of media. One of several simmering global ideological conflicts among interpretations of religion, the confrontation between Israeli and Palestinian has reached a pronounced cusp of grace and fragile possibility. As dusty and worn-out warriors recognize their brothers and sisters across the line of chalk, they have begun to shake hands and sign parchment. It has taken extraordinary efforts among countless statesmen to cross the point passed in the last two weeks concerning a section of land in the Middle East.

As reported by CNN, six years to the day after then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat shook hands at the White House, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and top Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas met at a converted army base between Israel and Gaza for a ceremonial relaunch of the twice-delayed peace talks.

"This agreement will bring to an end, God willing, the 100-year conflict that has caused so much suffering between Israel and the Palestinians," said

Levy. "No one among us has illusions. We face a difficult task. The permanent status agreement is the final block in building peace, but it is the most complex of them all."

Abbas, Arafat's deputy, urged a speedy resolution, saying, "We cannot afford to lose more time, for lots of precious time was wasted."

"The past was marked with denial. Let the future be based on mutual recognition of self-determination," he said. "It is time to feel. It is time to reconstruct. It is the time for peace and peacemakers."

Imagine the opportunity now in view, however difficult the steps to reach it. This summer has seen old combatants envision a new threshold in the quest for peace, in a land considered for millennia by much of the world to be a center of spiritual tradition. In confronting questions as inherently challenging as the future of Jerusalem and Palestinian statehood, one hopes that the negotiators can approach their charge with minds open to new

ideas.

If this accord can be seen as the doorway it is, if a new level of trust in common humanity can be held as the highest ethic, hands may find the handle in unison, and swing the door open. Beyond the doorstep of mutual trust is the only path to a better life for those touched by this cancerous conflict.

This much is certain: there are new ideas for solutions outside of the box of present thinking. One day soon, just perhaps, our fighters may see the value in longer-term thinking. They might grasp each other's arms as friends, and even embrace, remembering the common God they share. However far off such a day may be, they will decide to drop their toys of hatred, to

rust in the rains of many springs to come. They will grow food and drink wine together, and begin a new era for their children.

New Observations of Cosmology at the Millennium

There are, in fact, many reasons for people to consider looking at life with an interesting new kind of optimistic wonder. In 1999, a remarkable debate has begun to sweep into the view of the public. It is the discussion among scientists over the accuracy of the Big Bang hypothesis of creation. As brilliantly argued in *Seeing Red* (Halton Arp, 1998) and elsewhere, a century-old debate, 70 years of astronomical observations, and 30 years of growing anomalies are coming to a head. Those of us who are fascinated by the advancement of scientific knowledge are now settling down in our armchairs to watch a debate that will ultimately entwine observational astronomers, physicists, mathematicians, philosophers, and faithful from every major religion. The Genesis of Western institutional science might be mistaken.

"I believe the observational evidence has become overwhelming, and the Big Bang has in reality been toppled. There is now a need to communicate the new observations, the connections between objects and the new insights into the workings of the universe - all the primary obligations of academic science," says Arp, a highly respected scientist whose observations are the growing subject of intense debate.

Other scientists strongly disagree with Arp's views, but there are growing indications that he is right, and that one of the primary bases upon which the Big Bang hypothesis is hinged - extra-galactic redshift primarily as the measure of recessional velocity - is incorrect. Compelling observations have been repeated many times now demonstrating that mysterious objects known as "quasars" are not in fact the most distant objects in the Universe, some of which are alleged to be speeding away from us at several times the speed of light. Instead, quasars appear to be ejecta from the nuclei of galaxies much closer to us. High-redshift quasars have been observed to be physically connected to low-redshift galaxies.

Arps observations go further. Like those of quasars, high redshifts observed in the spectra of young galaxies appear to have a cause other than

recessional motion. His work strongly suggests that quasars are, in fact, young galaxies, given birth from parent galaxies. One can speculate that the anomalous redshift effect might be caused as originating light interacts with vast plasma surrounding the evolving body. If exaggerated redshift in the spectra of young galaxies is not primarily caused by recessional motion, then it is quite plausible that, in general, galaxies are not flying away from us, and "Big Bang" is unintentional science fiction.

These are stunning observations! They should startle every physicist, giving us new reason to reconsider old assumptions.

Debate over a subject of this order tends to become exceptionally heated, for the outcome tends to alter our understanding of ourselves. Cosmological discussion tends to inflame the passions of every individual, and rightly so, for we find our purpose in knowledge of our origin. Surely the ontology of people should not be toyed with lightly.

However, these and other observations are now making visible significant philosophical and observational flaws in one of the chief theories defining the limits of human imagination. I presently favor the view that the Cosmology we're most likely to see emerge when the dust from this debate settles is impossible to anticipate with anything less than philosophical wonder: the creation of matter is episodic in an infinite and eternal Cosmos. If true, this realization will ultimately humble every person, and yet thrill us at the same time. In the process of absorbing the implications of this possibility, we might just gain important insights into the fundamental nature of atoms and energy as well, with all sorts of interesting new plausibilities coming into focus. The question of the ongoing cause of Cosmic microwave background radiation now becomes a fascinating issue to study more deeply, for example. So is the question of the nature of inertia and gravitation.

As our collective consciousness begins to grapple with the concept and meaning of infinity, and as deficiencies in past physical assumptions present themselves, we must not rush to personalize or stigmatize the participants of any faction of the discussions (and I have been guilty of this at times myself). All of us - whether our ideas are proven right or wrong - are essential participants in a process of knowledge perfection. For all the revolutions in interpretation and model which we might face, we know that the quest of physics represents a vital search for truths that contribute to meaning and destiny. Our knowledge of Nature is increasingly refined as we experience more of the awe-inspiring beauty and perfection of her bodies. And we have made true progress in this century, for our knowledge earned within foundation disciplines of science has given rise to the modern world and has dramatically enhanced our ability to learn. The physicist can say with pride that, despite errors and large deficits and even basic gaps, this science has brought human beings closer than ever before to understanding the workings of that omnipresent and mysterious root of being labeled "energy". Given recent insights, perhaps institutional science can also begin to consider other names and definitions given to "energy" by some within its own ranks, by mystics and by spiritual leaders across the millennia.

In the midst of these happenings, a few fascinating people have this summer started to organize a new science enterprise whose mission leaps for the stars. It is a pleasure to begin working with the associates of ISSO. We do not agree on everything, but each of us holds a different version of the same vision: that the greatest ocean of all -- Cosmos -- will be traveled by humans more freely in the 21st century. We hope that the genuine intent of this effort can be recognized and supported.

More importantly, we encourage all to pursue the quest.

Very best,

Joe Firmage

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Bobby Freeman <bobby@la.usweb.com> (Bobby Freeman <bobby@la.usweb.com> [U

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-DEC-1999 14:18:16.00

SUBJECT: last ping or so

TO: Cynthia M. Jasso-Rotunno (CN=Cynthia M. Jasso-Rotunno/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
hey,

thought you might get a kick out of this. this is from our founder of the company & former ceo, joe firmage. he went off to do another venture and i'm on his mailing list for his website. anyway, i just scanned it. but it may give you a feel of how a bleeding-edge new media person like him is feeling on the political fronts (for whatever it might be of interest/curiosity)..

hey, what do you say we take the fam picture all wearing denim or charcoal tops?

ping me back or i'll just talk to you at the casa.

much love,

-bobby

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Firmage [mailto:jfirmage_null@thewordistruth.org]
Sent: Tuesday, December 21, 1999 4:38 AM
To: All Registered Users
Subject: AUTUMN 1999

Hello friend,

It's been a couple of months since I last e-mailed you. In the meantime, the season of restlessness in Washington has come upon us once again, and I thought I'd share a few ideas relevant to the times.

Incumbent and hopeful alike, politicians, committees, and lobbies are polishing shoes and speeches through the winter, as we approach the first election for a new millennium. The rare context in time and a review of the candidates for President suggest that Election 2000 will be unusually engaging. Not necessarily because of debates framed within present party platforms, as Democrat and Republican agendas have edged ever closer to their common center of gravity in recent years. Rather, the four candidates leading the polls are all bright and able men, and each has lived much of his life in the scrutiny of the public's electronic eye. One can anticipate that they will need such experience, since they'll be the first Presidential candidates to face the communications power of convergent media, evolving into potent new forms with an Internet connecting them.

Al Gore enjoys on his side a raging bull economy, and his ideological vector is tuned well to late 1990's just-left-of-center political momentum. President Gore would likely give us a slightly more clunky but less canned policy-driven vision, focused on the trajectory of issues of the preceding administration, and perpetuating Bill Clinton's art of successful incremental change. Gore's challenge, as noted by so many, is to reveal an unmanufactured and unrehearsed emotional importance to America, because he will likely not match the packaging that can be purchased by George W. Bush.

Deserving them or not, the former President's son has masterfully leveraged the vibes of reverence accorded dynastic families in government. Working in its favor, the Bush Campaign was wise enough to sense the need to take its party to task for the shallowness of ethic demonstrated by national priorities like those championed by Steve Forbes. It would seem though that Bush will need great showmanship or the drama of a new crisis to make up for an agenda painfully free of the breakthrough thinking needed for the next millennium. He could always surprise us with something beyond "A Uniquely American Foreign Policy." In any case, he will likely face much stiffer tests of vision and intellect at later whistle stops.

Most competent in direct argument with him is John McCain, a worthy Republican and heroic veteran whose passionate commitment to campaign finance reform has earned him respect from many of the wisest conservatives.

If Americans would take the time to study truthfully the functioning of our systems of governance, they would understand why McCain's hawkish military posture and undeveloped domestic vision might be tolerable prices to pay for

a while, if he could actually drive through real advancements in our king-making process. Enlightened Republicans who vote their belief in the spirit rather than letter of our electoral process will likely be voting for

John McCain in the primaries.

McCain's handicap - an anchor caught in aging party dogma - is the weight that Bill Bradley calculates Americans may be ready to begin releasing. Bradley's speeches have demonstrated an apolitical quality. He identifies the unnecessary failings of our society, laying the emphasis of responsibility on our collective ideology rather than party affiliation. In the midst of heady times on Wall Street and Main Street, he seems to sense the interplay of profound acceleration, globalization of trade and communications; the average ethics of modern living, and uncertainties in future change - important clues to wild cards that the thought leader of a free world might have to deal with in real time. Bradley appears to have the

vision of a genuine statesman. His challenge will be to create a platform around truly important ideas for the 21st century expressed in simple terms,

moving with determination beyond the noise of arguments over rounding errors.

ISSUES THAT DISTINGUISH

I was reading the other day about Warren Beatty's address concerning a presidential bid. He has been lamenting the lack of debate on issues of great moment to many of us - international conflict, environmental destruction, poverty, homelessness, military posture - none of which appear to be moving concerns to the majority of exuberant modern capitalists in this country. I personally think Beatty's speech was precognitive of types of issues the 2000 election will evolve to debate, since basic questions facing humanity in the first ten years of the new millennium will, in fact, yield answers of enormous relevance to the exuberant modern capitalist.

Military Conflicts

One of the first is the question of whether we will continue to encourage the militarization of nations, in principle by example and in profit through industry.

"What kind of war will the U.S. fight in the future," asked Thomas Ricks for the Wall Street Journal on November 12, 1999. "Some defense experts argue that the threat will most likely come in the form of an epic confrontation with a powerful state-of-the-art military. Say, for instance, Iran in 2025 smites its neighbors with chemical weapons and seizes Saudi Arabia's oil fields. Others predict there won't be any more big wars - just a plethora of enemy 'ankle-biters' menacing U.S. troops with nettlesome firefights, as the Americans feed starving refugees on one block while separating warring factions on the next."

Shall we invest our wealth in the military machine's global infrastructure, weapons systems, and youthful vigor, capitalizing it with ideology and equipment prepared to fight World War III? Or, shall we organize a network of relatively nimble and mobile peace-keeping functions, capable of insertion into regional crises? Shall we organize a Space Force?

These are not abstract questions. They are questions facing us here and now, with consequences that will reverberate for generations. They are viewed as central questions by the Pentagon, for our answers determine how our military intends to invest the nearly \$300 billion dollars received from us annually, give or take a new lethal weapon or two.

But a growing number among military leaders privately will tell you, and a few brave politicians openly argue, that these are entirely the wrong questions. They believe that the right questions are more along the lines of these: As science increasingly yields the ability for any determined terrorist to take out a city electronically, biologically, chemically, or

atomically, how does the role of war-making in society change? Does the fact that we spend more money each year on defense than the rest of the nations on the U.N. Security Council combined contribute to the currency and ethical permission of military solutions to conflicts among people? In comparison, how much are we investing each year in addressing the frictions that give rise to military confrontation? What are those frictions and how might they be relaxed? How many of these frictions are caused by fictions?

Is America letting the painful necessity of past military investment and surrounding ideological inertia confound genuine progress towards a peaceful world community?

Giving journalists good reason to punctuate this question, we glimpsed this fall an increasingly rare sharp distinction between the ideologies of Democrat and Republican parties, in the tally of the Nuclear Test Ban Vote. Despite one of President Clinton's finer hours in heartfelt effort for passage, shockingly myopic, ethically vacant, and intellectually defective posturing among Senate Republican leadership resulted in the failure of America to ratify a proclamation to the world with the moral: "We, the inventors of the nuclear bomb and the only nation to have deployed it in conflict, forever foreswear its offensive use, shall not attempt to increase its potency further, and shall open ourselves to inspection of commitment to this oath." Such is the basic spirit of the treaty.

As reported by CNN's John Cloud on October 18, 1999, "Allies were ... upset. Britain's government was 'deeply disappointed'; the Japanese Foreign Minister 'extremely concerned.' To be sure, there was some justification for the anxiety. It's difficult to dissuade India and Pakistan from testing nukes in each other's backyards if the U.S. won't promise to end testing. 'There is a collective sigh of relief in Indian government circles,' says Bharat Karnad of the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi. 'Jesse Helms [who, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led the opposition] has taken India off the hook.'"

The fig leaf postulate of the GOP leadership goes something like this: Mutually Assured Destruction - a game of apocalyptic chicken among nations with twitchy fingers on red buttons and nuclear footballs - is the policy that will convince other countries not to develop and test advanced nuclear weaponry.

Meanwhile, industriousness paid by Cold War inertia invents and spreads ever more perfect machines of destruction, with ever sharpening focus of lethality, packing ever more concentrated bangs, through increasingly invisible systems of delivery, presumably in the future to be orchestrated on "secure" Web sites clicked from distributed centers of command floating and flying about the Earth.

If you were an alien visitor to this world, it isn't very hard to imagine why you might want to keep your distance.

Recruiting troubles across the Armed Forces? The honest assessment that's tough for the American ego to hear is that we've seen only the beginning. Which 18-year old young man or woman wants to prepare to die on a battlefield with satellite-guided, nano-engineered 'brilliant pebbles' zipping through the air, remote controlled from policy joy sticks in Washington, when he can be necking with his girlfriend while watching Titanic, learning HTML in school, and chatting on AOL with friends in Japan about some incredible new MP3 tunes?

Will humans collectively ever cherish, nourish, educate, trust and inspire each other sufficiently to stop the cycles of hatred and let weapons rust? The conflicts raging in Russia and other parts of Asia would suggest not, as our brothers and sisters continue to churn in an underaided epochal reconstruction of their communities, following a century of ravage by war.

My observations are not intended to affix primary responsibility for this situation on the individuals within our military, who are among the most ruggedly honest and ethical of any people I've had the pleasure to meet; we have brave and intelligent family members forming and running the heaviest iron of our collective machine. Rather, I am criticizing the forward-looking relevance, and conveying deep concern about the consequences, of the ideological charters that perpetuate the use of our ingenuity and resources for militarizing our small spaceship. How long will we let the consumer-producer cycle in this painful value chain go on before we vocalize and seriously finance ideas that unify instead of divide, accommodating steps toward an open world community of individual human beings? Are the lines on Earth's map forever to divide, instead of denote, our cultures?

My own young generation has seen the memories of our parents' and grandparents' painful sacrifices. Unlike any generation before us, we are humbled by and grateful to be able to learn from terrifying memories of our ancestors' horrors, passed to us in 70mm film and Digital Surround Sound. Their anguish is engraved in blood painted across our history books. We must question whether we have respect for their lessons - whether we have felt the depth of their sacrifice - sufficient to evolve our momentum beyond both the Hot and Cold War Realpolitik that killed them.

We must evolve the limits of the conceptual paradigm of humanity's future, if we wish to give compass to our present.

I think it's fair to say that most people believe, or least certainly hope, that one day human beings will have figured out how to live together in peace. If such a utopian future is ever to be achieved in reality, there are two great tests among many others that all inhabitants of Earth must figure out together. First, influential individuals must step forward who have the

courage to question not simply the direction of funding for existing world military machines, but the forward-looking adequacy of the aging social programming informing their very charters. Second, positive new priorities for our industrious activities will have to be identified which can go to work quickly. Without coercion, they must truthfully invite harmony among the ethical compasses of individuals across strata of world society, in resonance with the gifts, needs and limits of Nature. These new priorities must soar above the relevance of old grievances and individual profit, giving us real comfort that unlocking our doors in faith one day is right.

Secretly, I think we are coming to know that this is the only sustainable path for the long term. Since our cultural dialogue increasingly evolves in Internet time, I imagine that within startlingly few years we will be asking ourselves what ways we can find to drastically redirect military spending. Other simpler approaches to sustainable prevention of military conflicts will be emerging. We'll be telling our parents, spouses and children to come home, with gratitude and admiration for their courage and sacrifice, hopefully ready and able to use their tremendous skills for more rewarding quests than war.

"Beautiful but hopelessly naive vision, Joe... the rest of us live in the real world," many will likely say. We'll see. The candidates in the elections of the next 20 years are going to be faced with precisely this scale of challenge to their stewardship. I hope their visions can stretch into the hearts of the people of all nations. God help us if they can't.

Enlisting Bugs in the War on Drugs

Focusing the question of military confrontation on another kingdom of life, we find a creature described by Rep. Bill McCollum as "a silver bullet in the drug war". A strain of the fungus called *Fusarium oxysporum* is being cultivated in cannabis sativa, coca, and poppy plants. It has been reported that the Drug Czar under Governor Jeb Bush's administration in Florida wants to try it out.

It is not a great secret to ordinary Americans that those components of the U.S. War on Drugs focused on interdiction have failed to significantly curtail availability. While there are frequently small and infrequently large busts of traffic and traffickers, the supply of certain plant substances demanded by the American consumer has fostered an underground economy of production and distribution that will forever morph to confound the obstacles confronting it.

The distribution system itself smells of the decay of the tens of thousands of children it consumes. Both proponents and opponents of the War on Drugs decry the catastrophic costs to society of the overall situation. But, that is as far as total agreement goes.

Representing a prevalent view on corrective strategy, General Barry M. McCaffrey noted years ago, "the elimination of illicit coca and opium

cultivation is the best way to reduce cocaine and heroin availability". So, the logic now apparently goes, let us find a natural disease and use our rising knowledge of the behaviors of biological agents to cultivate its virulence so perfectly that it can destroy every instance of a species of these evil plants. Now marijuana has been added to the target list.

As far as I can see, the hope is that we might be able to deploy some sort of a biological DEA - like a U.S. Bug Force - making extinct the species it targets, wherever it goes... and however it evolves.

Our world society's basic lack of appreciation of the power of evolution - a wound on truth that religious traditions must themselves disinfect - is the concern that terrifies opponents of this flawed policy. "Fusarium species are capable of evolving rapidly. Mutagenicity is by far the most disturbing factor in attempting to use a Fusarium species as a bioherbicide," wrote David Struhs, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on April 6, 1999 to the Florida Drug Czar, Jim McDonough. "It is difficult, if not impossible, to control the spread of Fusarium species... Some species found in Europe have been found to originate in Florida."

How can we think ourselves wise enough in science, and sure enough in morals, to launch proactive biological warfare on these species? We can neither predict nor control the evolutionary and geographic path such a force would ultimately clear of life.

More broadly speaking, other people equally concerned about the health and well-being of society have starkly different views on the War Against Evil Plants. Tens of millions of Americans who have at one time or another smoked marijuana, me included, believe that more workable policies rest in the direction of decriminalization of consumption. Almost all of us are deeply concerned about the dangers of substance abuse, into which category the legal ones - alcohol and tobacco - yield by far the most destruction. "So why should other substances be decriminalized?" one can logically ask.

The answer seems so simple: people will find ways to buy substances anyway, and those who have no better living to make, make a living fulfilling demand with supply. With profit margins directly indexed to the danger in confounding law enforcement, this market battle attracts and cultivates human infrastructure lacking an alternative vision of "wealth creation" within reach. When the judicial wind blows over these innumerable intermediaries, any hope of a normal life is snuffed out as they are condemned to "correctional" facilities.

Many of us believe instead that decriminalization of the consumption of certain plants is the only path that will end the cycle currently marginalizing a shocking number of Americans. We believe it is foolish to demonize plants as evil, but rather believe that scientific truth (which most teens experience first hand) should be recognized and taught: these substances have powerful effects which can be enjoyable and dangerous, sometimes vital as medicine, and possibly even important for the evolution of consciousness. Like many other substances, and certainly countless

technologies, their use is hard to control, and if consumed improperly or excessively, they can be highly destructive to the body and the mind.

Those of us in the moderation-in-all-things party would say that this perspective of truthful openness applies to all of the natural (a.k.a. "naughty") risk-laden activities of human beings that make us feel good: sex, alcohol, food, rock climbing, loud music, etc. Policies centered on the drum beat of unscientific dogma are now quickly recognized by their intended young audiences as... well... something from a doggy. Hence they don't tend to work.

If we want to address the real problem and not simply pat ourselves on the back for jailing another child, watching while another young "drug dealer" fills the vacuum, we must eliminate profit from illicit drug distribution, and target dependence and addiction as the primary crises. These problems are reflections of the inadequacy of education and other deeper social ills, and prohibition will not cure them. Biological warfare certainly will not cure them. People experiencing the pain of society's wounds will simply turn to other illegalities for relief.

To be very clear, decriminalization cannot occur without a deep commitment to enduring education. The discovered knowledge of effects of these types of substances must be taught at a young age, and updated throughout life. We live in a highly mechanized society, not organically in a garden free of single points of failure, and each individual is a vital function of a community system. The lives of us all depend upon the functions of each of us.

Whenever decriminalization of consumption does become politically correct, the transition is likely to be bumpy and challenging, but there would seem no easier way out of ignorance than education.

ISSUES THAT CAN UNITE

As controversial as such subjects may be, more challenging subjects are ahead for the statesmen and stateswomen of the 21st century, and they are not likely to divide us along familiar political, social or even national lines:

ú What is the strategic future of the United Nations with respect to national and other multinational governing bodies?

ú Will the West step up and lend to Russia significant multi-disciplinary assistance genuinely devoid of financial leverage balanced in our favor?

ú What are the local and global consequences of the AIDS catastrophe looming in Africa?

ú What are the social implications of the advancement of genetic engineering?

ú How will high-bandwidth, point-to-point, global communications transform the behavior and intellect of the typical human being? The typical government? The market economy?

ú How will a globalizing, growth-dependent, consumption-measured, profit-worshipping economy grapple with increasingly obvious environmental limits to resource sustainability, threatening the very tree of life on Earth?

ú What environmental solutions might emerge and how will economic interests shift if easily scalable means are discovered to generate electricity with little or no expenditure of fossil fuel?

ú How will geopolitics evolve if breakthroughs in our understanding of physics yield the ability to influence the force of gravity - turning garages into landing pads?

ú Recognizing that world wars framed the productive priorities of humanity through the 20th century, what kind of vision will frame our future productive priorities?

ú What unifying and rational spiritual meaning can fill the increasingly painful vacuum left in the hearts of people - a void incapable of satisfaction by the matter of profit, divisive religious dogma, and sterilized science?

Hidden in such seemingly-intractable, potentially divisive challenges rest rare and potent opportunities for collaboration, openness, and unity in spirit crossing every kind of background, boundary and border. Such are the subjects our world's leaders must be prepared to tackle in the first years of the new millennium.

Each of us equipped with a connection to the Internet now has a global voice, enabling us to share our reasoning with each other broadly. Every quarter or so, I'll share with you my thinking on these types of questions, inviting you to join me in a humbly challenging quest for useful answers.

It's been a year since founding the International Space Sciences Organization, an enterprise pursuing breakthrough understandings in science.

We are studying the ideas encountered at the leading edge of physics and consciousness research. In 1999, ISSO Science has begun to organize its experimental agenda, and has since been following many promising paths of hypothesis and test. We believe that a few years of concentrated and structured studies can yield several remarkable insights in physics, with significant implications for 21st century society.

We also recognize a responsibility to create educational and entertaining programming to convey the wonders and dangers of scientific knowledge to minds everywhere, enriching with the sense of spiritual meaning which science can, yet does not often, uniquely convey. The ISSO Studio team is just beginning to form, but our first productions have been underway for some time. Stay tuned through 2000.

Having invested much of my greatly exaggerated net worth to bring ISSO to this point, I'm in the process of raising capital for our projects, and one first private briefing has been held. The group that gathered on October 12 talked about a whole range of different still-early concepts, but at the center rested this point: physics does not have answers to its most important questions, yet. There are profound implications following from this fact. Our understanding of Nature progresses in successive approximations of resolution, revealing her most potent secrets only when we are ready. This is why Neanderthals didn't obtain access to nuclear forces to settle arguments over land, food, and mates.

What can be seen in the leading edges of physics and consciousness research, not to mention in the evening news, suggests to me that education in spiritually integrating science is about as high a global priority as can be imagined.

One final note on the subject of positively influencing human affairs. The Carl Sagan Foundation (CSF), a not-for-profit organization, has been formed in memory of one of the greatest visionaries who ever lived. Founded by Carl's wife and partner, Ann Druyan, CSF is presently raising capital for a pioneering effort to transform the healing environment within a new children's hospital in the Bronx. Images of Cosmos and new learning tools from science have been designed into its walls, floors, ceilings, and systems, turning the sterile and frightening landscape of the hospital into a place of discovery and inspiration.

I have been privileged to make the first \$1 million contribution to CSF. I hope that others approached by Ann's team can find room in their hearts for a gift to the children to be touched by this effort, establishing a model for children's hospitals around the world, and expressing thanks for Carl Sagan's inspiration.

Stay well,

Joe Firmage

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Address serious correspondence only to ISSO at:

General - Abigail Lewis (abby@isso.org)
Science - Andrew Mount (andrew@isso.org)
Administrative - Lynore Tillim (ltillim@isso.org)
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