A Gathering Of Voices

The Don Klein Invitation
to Reflect Together on Our Times

December 2021
Catastrophic Conditions

Twentieth

2000  2025

The Twenty-First Century

2050  2075  2100

Twenty-Second

2.4 Celsius
We are sandwiched between two prolonged World-Scale Catastrophes
There’s a path to avoid catastrophe. Our insights, spirits & work will help shift the world onto that path.

There’s a path to avoid catastrophe, but it will not be taken. Our children and grandchildren will live in catastrophic conditions.

What could make that thought bearable?
Psychiatrist Victor Frankl lived through four concentration camps in three years.

Sometimes catastrophe is real and cannot be evaded.

The question then is the meaning we make of it.

**Meaning of our Collective Journey through this**
The Engines Modernity used to build a Better Life
Now generate Catastrophes

NATIONALISM
Governments & Militaries

BUILDING MATERIAL
WEALTH & POWER
Business, Industries
Finance, Governments

The Crisis in Our Collective Purposes:
The engines for building a future are now its destroyers
1. Doing what they do, the engines of building power & prosperity are now suicidal.

2. The whole world of peoples/countries is here: How do you use nationalism to make something good of this?

3. Industrialization & its energy base are destroying the planet: How do you use industrialization to handle that?

Facing up to the sheer destructiveness of what had been the engines of doing better...
National Military Forces
Implementors of Catastrophe
The Twenty-First Century

World Wars, Civil Wars, Cold War, Revolutions

Purges, totalitarian terror states, genocides
The Twenty-First Century

200,000,000 killed by governments over last century

Built capacity to kill 200,000,000 in 6 hours

*It’s what governments do.. and will do again*

“Been there, done that…”
Deep Memory

For 500 years, World-scale warring every 80 - 100 years

Like Malibu’s Fires, it will return
Wealth, Finance, Industry
Producers of Wealth
Producers of Catastrophe
Captivated by the grand project of studying the material world, getting control over it, to become prosperous

Competing for control of markets & resources

We alone offer the goods/services you need/want: utter dependence on the system

Get resources for self:
ranked importance
Competition, Dominance

Danger, Mistrust
Will, Power, Anger

Killing, shorten life spans,
disempower, malign

Producers of Catastrophe
Modern Economic Realities Not Recognized

Howard Richards

Market, Capital-Centric economy can’t produce enough good jobs for every person

Anonymous

Can’t industrialize everything, for all humankind

Can’t digitalize humanness
Sorokin
We have been on the adventure of mastering the material world, seeking material rewards

Rebirth of collective creative purpose hinges on emergence of what we left out in this grand endeavor

What has been missing are journeys into meaning of another kind…
Our modern institutions have grown murderous & suicidal

And they disconnect us from deeper parts of ourselves where other ways to organize life are stirring

What else can you organize life around that will make something good of our world now?
We have it in us to be peaceful or dangerous

Kill or be killed, hunt down, Vicious sadism
Get resources for self: ranked importance
Competition, Control
Danger, Mistrust
Terror, Control, Anger

Attachment: tend & befriend
Nurturing: Kuni
At home, interest in each other, empathy, warm hearted
From early on we’re learning how life is here

Loved, Nurtured, Object of Joy; your love & being are welcomed

Kill or be killed, hunt down, Vicious sadism

Get resources for self: ranked importance

Attachment: tend & befriend

Competition, Control

Nurturing: Kuni

Danger, Mistrust

Trust in relationships, Interest, empathy, warm hearted, joy

Terror, Control, Anger

Loved, Nurtured, Object of Joy; your love & being are welcomed

ACE: unwanted, ignored, neglected, attacked

Sense of goodness, discovery, desire to make others happy

Fight for Psychological Development/Survival
Looking for what’s gone missing in us
1

Kill/be killed, hunt down
Fight, Flee, Immobilized

Dominate resources
Competition
Rebel, submit

Anger, fear, contempt,
humiliation, pride,
Superiority, inferiority

I have my back, let others take care of their own backs

Attachment

Nurturing

At ease in life,
Interest, excitement, enjoyment, joy
Warm hearted,
Creative
Compassionate

Sense of trust/safety
With others: talking
A different feel for life, different Spirit, different in Body

You find something of your heart, your spirit

Kuni, Tribe: see them on their way (their spirit, their heart, their life)

Attachment

Nurturing

At ease in life, Interest, excitement, enjoyment, joy
Warm hearted, Creative
compassionate

Sense of trust/safety
With others: talking
The feeling that something sacred exists in the innocence and trust that was at one point experienced…

to be brought back into a present so overwhelmed with cynicism and fear

A way to recuperate the soulful good

This makes for…

Attachment

Nurturing

At ease in life, Interest, excitement, enjoyment, joy
Warm hearted,
Creative
compassionate

Sense of trust/safety
With others: talking

Strong enough for happiness, loving, Being loved

When Blood and Bones Cry Out, John Paul & Angela Jill Lederach
Seeing all Humans from a Compassionate Heart

Attachment
Nurturing
At ease in life, interest, excitement, joy
Warm hearted, creative
Compassionate
Sense of trust/safety
With others: talking
Needed time to repair
Next Cataclysm is upon us too soon

Massive damage to relationships, trust, hearts, spirit
Degraded the sense of humanness

Transgenerational Transmission of trauma
Transgenerational Transmission of Goodness

Seeing all Humans from a Compassionate Heart
Military Intelligence
Seeing from a compassionate heart
Spy Masters General Durrani (ISI) & Mr. Dulat (RAW)

- Gestures disrupting fatalism
- Small improvements in life & dignity
- Institutionalized Joint Crisis Control Working Groups

Invented 30+ years ago by Soviet & American Military
To same effect..

The “madness” persists

Why?

Cooperation

- **Vulnerability** is okay, we both have it, okay to acknowledge, help each other with it
- Face tensions as a shared threat to manage together
- Talking together: regarding each other as trustworthy
Another Missing Feeling
& its meaning

Sorrow
For intelligence, governments:
what relationship to their
historically-situated sorrow?

Life in Modern Institutions = Defenses that Tune Out
sorrow, compassion, bonds
Modern Governments
Seeing from a Compassionate Heart
Modern Governments Live in Trauma Frame

Government

Bureaucracy

Military

Wealth

Taxes

Mono-agriculture
Modern Governments Live in Trauma Frame

- Control resources
- Dominate
- Competition
- Superiority, inferiority
- Paranoia, Anger
- Each out for themselves
- Kill/be killed, hunt down

Government

- Bureaucracy
- Military
- Wealth
- Taxes
- Mono-agriculture

Modern Governments Live in Trauma Frame
Aim for Post Traumatic Life

- Government
  - Bureaucracy
  - Military
  - Wealth
  - Taxes
  - Mono-Agriculture

- Everyone has everyone’s Back
- Attachment: Cooperative, Institutionalize talking, Tend & Befriend
- Nurturing into strength & empathy; Vulnerability is safe
- At ease together, Want to know each other, Good hearted, Creative

Victor Frankl & Dr. J story
If people have lived through threat to destroy their collective meaning & values

Fear, humiliation & rage may live on, focusing on another group as posing such a threat when they do not

South Africa, Helene Lewis: the British, the Boers, the Blacks

The India/Pakistan Partition?

China - Uyghurs: the cultural revolution?

Russia & ‘the liberal West’?

Right wing in US?

No one is going to take away your culture/nation now
What in us has gone missing in modern ECONOMICS?

Disembedded from heart and spirit

Life without a larger philosophy than profit and power over its future

Without a spirituality embedding us in the transcending cosmos

Can philosophical and spiritual life come alive given the dominance of economic life?

U.S. General Lee Butler

It was like

waking from a dream
Entering the Post-Colonial

Reading Ubuntu Revisited by Mfsunwela Benghu

The labor & shock of taking in an entire different theological/moral world..

And finding horizons on humans that could not be reached from our own thinking

We try to lock out the shock of other wisdoms by locking out immigrants and maintaining barriers of nuclear weapons
IsiNguni saying: “I am because we are; I exist because the community exists.”

The task of human life is to grow in humanness: goodness, justice, honesty, respect, love..

This is the primary life task of all humans.

To do this is to become human. To do otherwise is to fail in becoming human.

Society, which is a total of self-defining values, commits crimes against a person when it fails to equip or enable him/her to realize the promise of being human. Therefore the society denies him/her the opportunity to be the best human being they could be.
Children need a sense of foundation and support in order that they may grow to realize their full potential in every respect of their lives. There is no greater gift, which we can give to our children than a sense of roots and a promise of wings.
The song ‘Children’ locates us in a place where children see much violence, where children are hungry because their parents have no money to buy food, and where children die early from diseases that are preventable.

“I live in a settlement. The song is about all the children I see everyday living such hard lives of poverty, the orphans that roam the streets in the settlement - it is an emotional song.”

Yet every morning in Kaugere we also hear the voices of the children who attend CUMA, singing their joyful morning songs, showing that while violence in its varied shapeshifting forms is remarkably resilient, so are children, as they reach beyond themselves engaging in celebration - ceremonies of healing.. They teach us how to be human.
“The song ‘Children’ is a lament for the lives of children who are crying and dying on the hills outside Port Moresby.”

Does the philosophy of buying and selling and accumulating wealth above all else steer us directly to such suffering, to help

Or does it steer us clear of it?

Do we become human because of this philosophy or become less human?
To respect other people, you automatically give your self dignity.

Ubuntu accepts that humankind is an integrated whole comprising different cultural, religious and language groups.

In all of them, all humans face the task of developing into humanness, i.e. into goodness, justice, honesty, respect, love

This is a journey that excites and enlivens. In our present situation in the world, there is a desire from all responsible people for moral regeneration, and very often reference is made to Ubuntu. The belief is that one day mankind will be measured by its compassion.
This is to step into a future that is not yet existing around the world, to see as people will one day see -- and in fact, in Ubuntu, they already do see.

That all identifications with country or language or religion or business pale before the central life task, to become human — just, compassionate, loving

To be less than this is to be less human

What is missing in the grand project of material well being must be recovered

For then we will have a sense of how to be a good world now
This is not a story of Catastrophe as the Grand Finale.

It is a story of Catastrophe as Crucible

Where what has been missing comes to life

And goodness prevails,
& our philosophies guide us there
Everything in Ubuntu rhetoric reveals unity between the person and the cosmos.

This cosmos is a unified spiritual totality
Teilhard de Chardin

Telos of Universe

Crimes against Humanity

Crimes against Earth

Crimes against Humanness

Incapacitating by concealing reality, lying, creating images/stories that degrade relational values & humanness
Modern economic systems encourage trying to dominate and control the world & the future, to be the definers & shapers of the world

Absence of something greater than all of us, something transcendent, awe awakening, wondrous.. Earth, Cosmos, Spirit..

We are less frantic if we are not trying to control that which is greater than us, but trying to work within its framework

Good that we can attend to details and organize them, but It is important to feel our smallness in the large drama, the mythic life of our time, so we know the meaning of it all, where we are going, where it is necessary to go as human beings. There lies our dignity

Sun, many water pots
Don klein
Sailing into the sunset, into night, into sunrise
Earth & Cosmos are Larger than us

Left hemisphere studies details,
R comprehends Cosmos and spiritual unity/Telos

Sorokin
the sensate/material world needs to recover the spiritual
& relational as life’s center

For this we enter the Crucible
Covid is the announcement of what it means to enter,
offering a last chance at understanding to prevent the worst
It is necessary to understand where we are in creating shared purposes that are fruitful
Sailing into the Dark Night of our Collective Souls

CATASTROPHE as CRUCIBLE
A Gathering of Voices

What will animate life now?

National power or cooperation and mutual aid? Pursuing material wealth or becoming human, relational & spiritual?

Catastrophe may not be totally avoided. It’s what we make of humanness that will make the difference.