



# **A Gathering Of Voices**

**The Don Klein Invitation  
to Reflect Together on Our Times**

**December 2021**



# Catastrophic Conditions

Twentieth

The Twenty-First Century

Twenty-Second

2000

2025

2050

2075

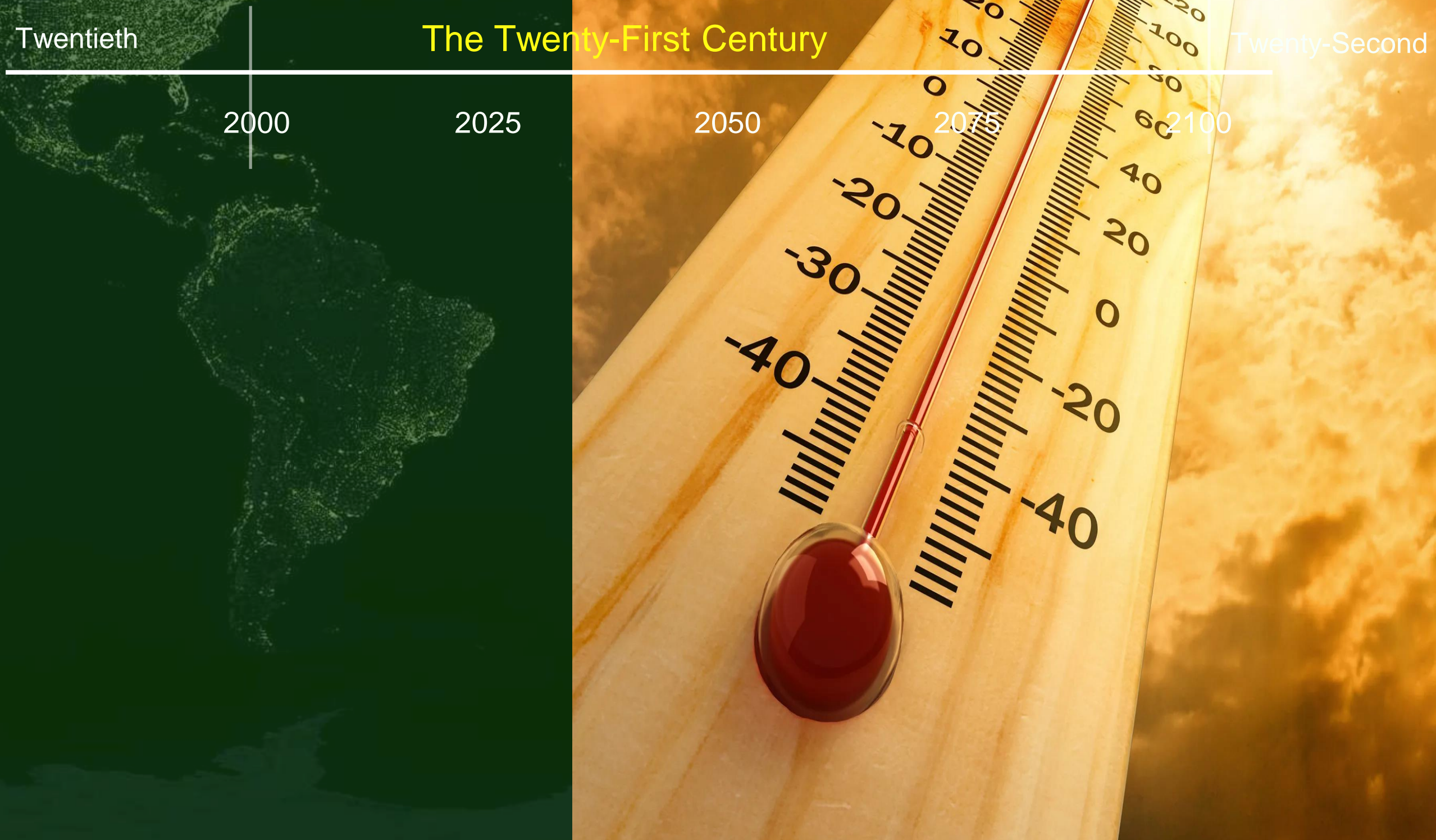
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2.4 Celsius





# We are sandwiched between two prolonged World-Scale Catastrophes







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The Twenty-First Century

2000

2025

2050

2075

2100

Twenty-Second







**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**

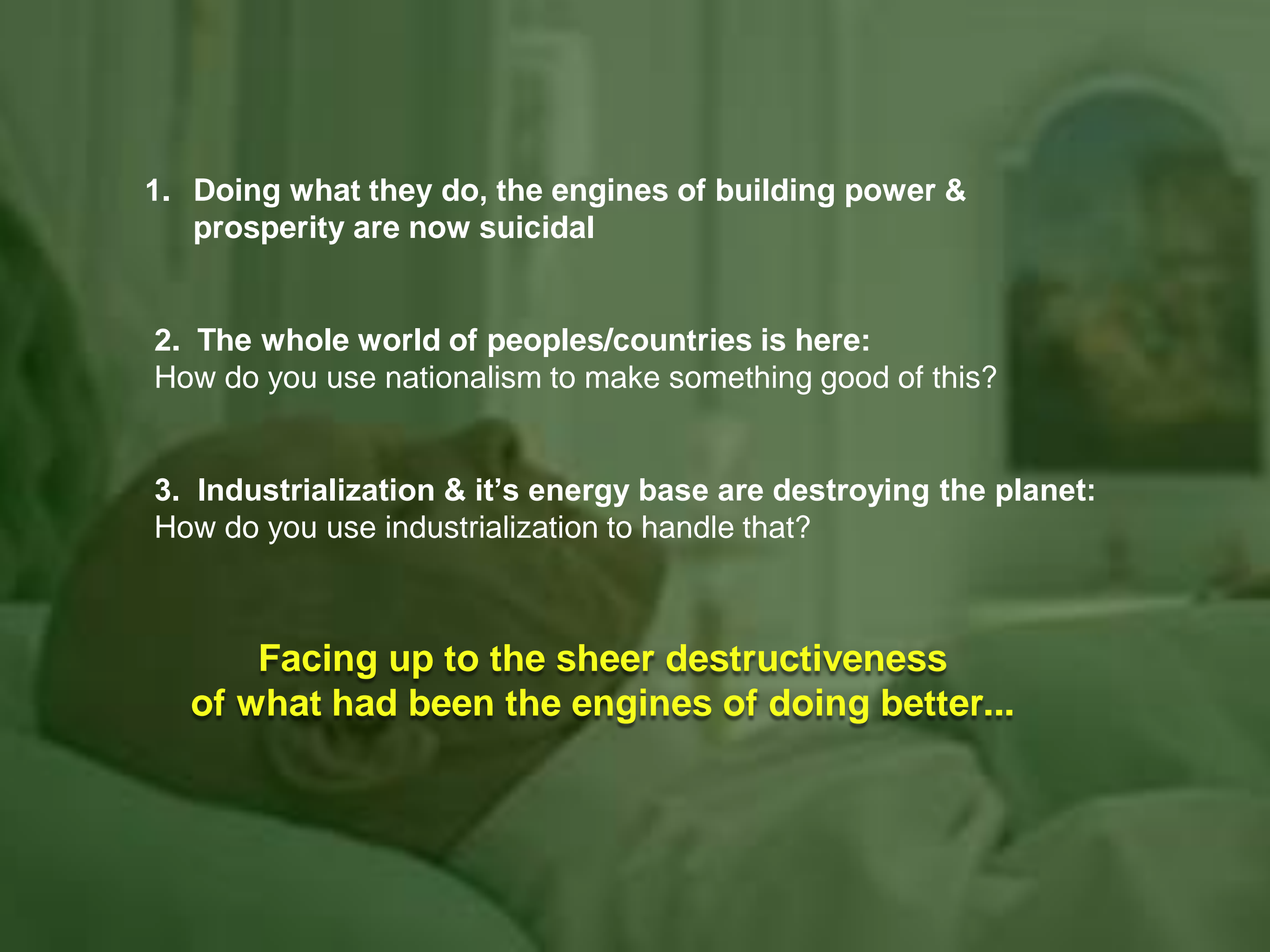
**NATIONALISM**  
Governments  
& Militaries



**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 & it's 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

Twenty-Second

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World Wars, Civil Wars,  
Cold War, Revolutions

Purges, totalitarian terror states,  
genocides





The Twenty-First Century

Twenty-Second

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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...”





The Twenty-First Century

Twenty-Second

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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

The background of the slide is a photograph of an offshore oil rig, viewed from a distance across a body of water. The rig is a complex of metal structures, including a tall derrick and various platforms. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid.

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

Attachment: tend &  
befriend

Get resources for self:  
ranked importance  
Competition, Control

Nurturing: Kuni

Danger, Mistrust  
Terror, Control, Anger

At home, interest  
in each other, empathy,  
warm hearted



# From early on we're learning how life is here

Kill or be killed, hunt down,  
Vicious sadism

Attachment: tend &  
befriend

Get resources for self:  
ranked importance  
Competition, Control

Nurturing: Kuni

Danger, Mistrust  
Terror, Control, Anger

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

**ACE: unwanted,  
ignored, neglected,  
attacked**



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

**Fight for Psychological  
Development/Survival**

**Sense of goodness,  
discovery, desire to  
make others happy**





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





You find something of your heart, your spirit

**A different feel for life, different Spirit,  
different in Body**

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





## Seeing all Humans from a Compassionate Heart

Attachment

Nurturing

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At ease in life,

Interest, excitement,

enjoyment, joy

Warm hearted,

Creative

compassionate

Sense of trust/safety

With others: talking





# Seeing all Humans from a Compassionate Heart

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**Massive damage to  
relationships,  
trust, hearts  
spirit**

**Needed time  
to repair**

**Next Cataclysm is  
upon us too soon**

**Degraded the sense  
of humanness**

**Transgenerational  
Transmission  
of trauma**

**Transgenerational Transmission  
of Goodness**





**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





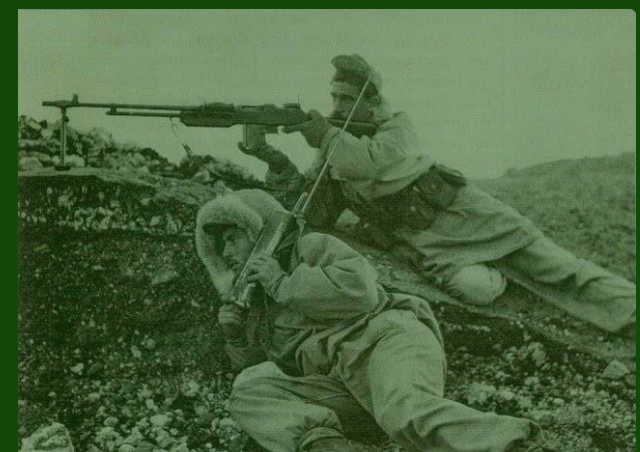
# Another Missing Feeling & its meaning



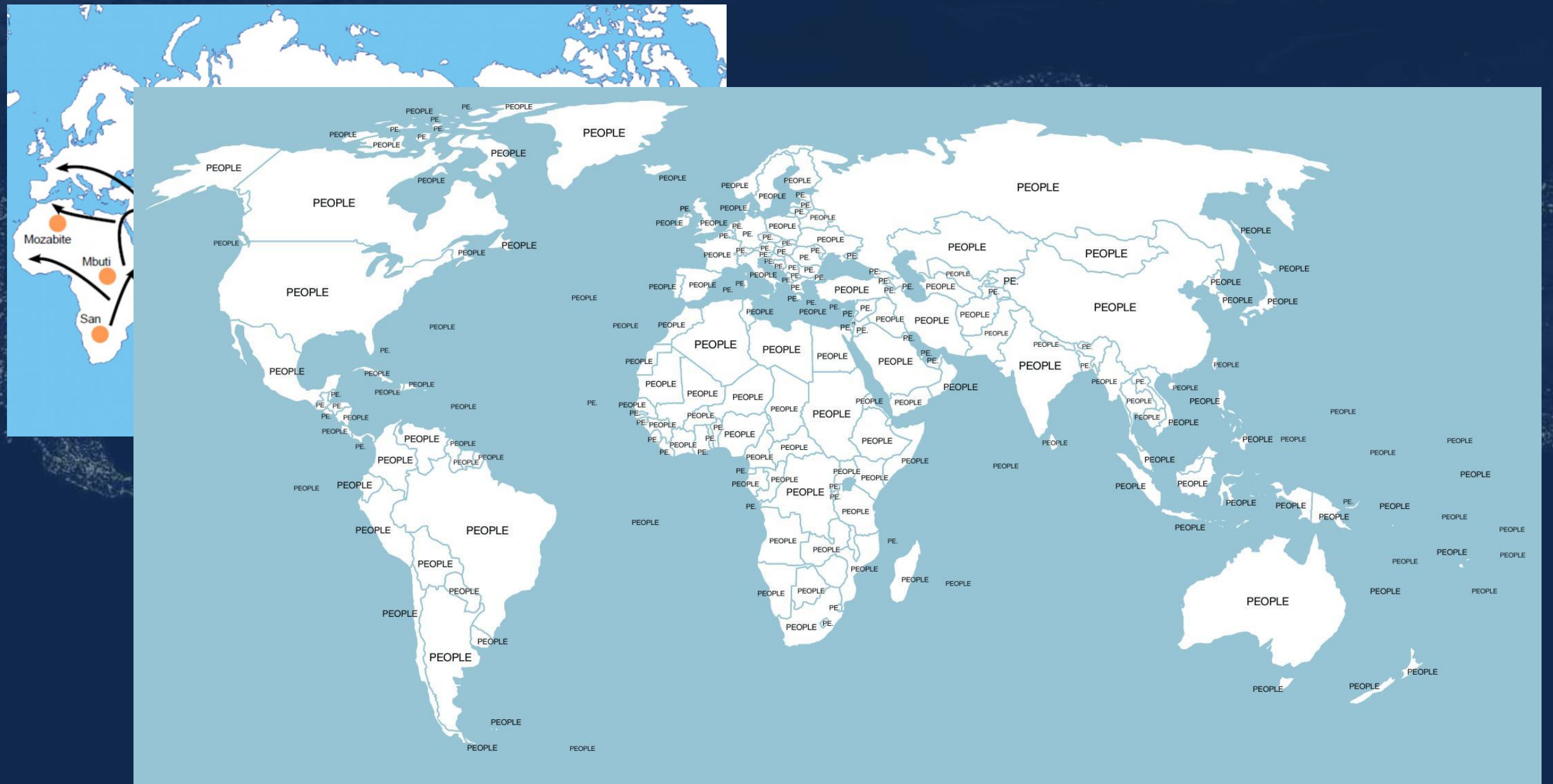
## Sorrow

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

## Government

Control resources  
Dominate  
Competition

Bureaucracy

Military

Superiority, inferiority  
Paranoia, Anger

Wealth

Taxes

Each out for themselves

Mono-  
agriculture

Kill/be killed, hunt down



# Aim for Post Traumatic Life



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



# Mfuniselwa J. Bhengu

## Ubuntu Revisited

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.



# **When Sorrow is the voice of the Present Heart**

**Foreword by Judy Atkinson**

**When Blood and Bones Cry Out, John Paul & Angela Jill Lederach**

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

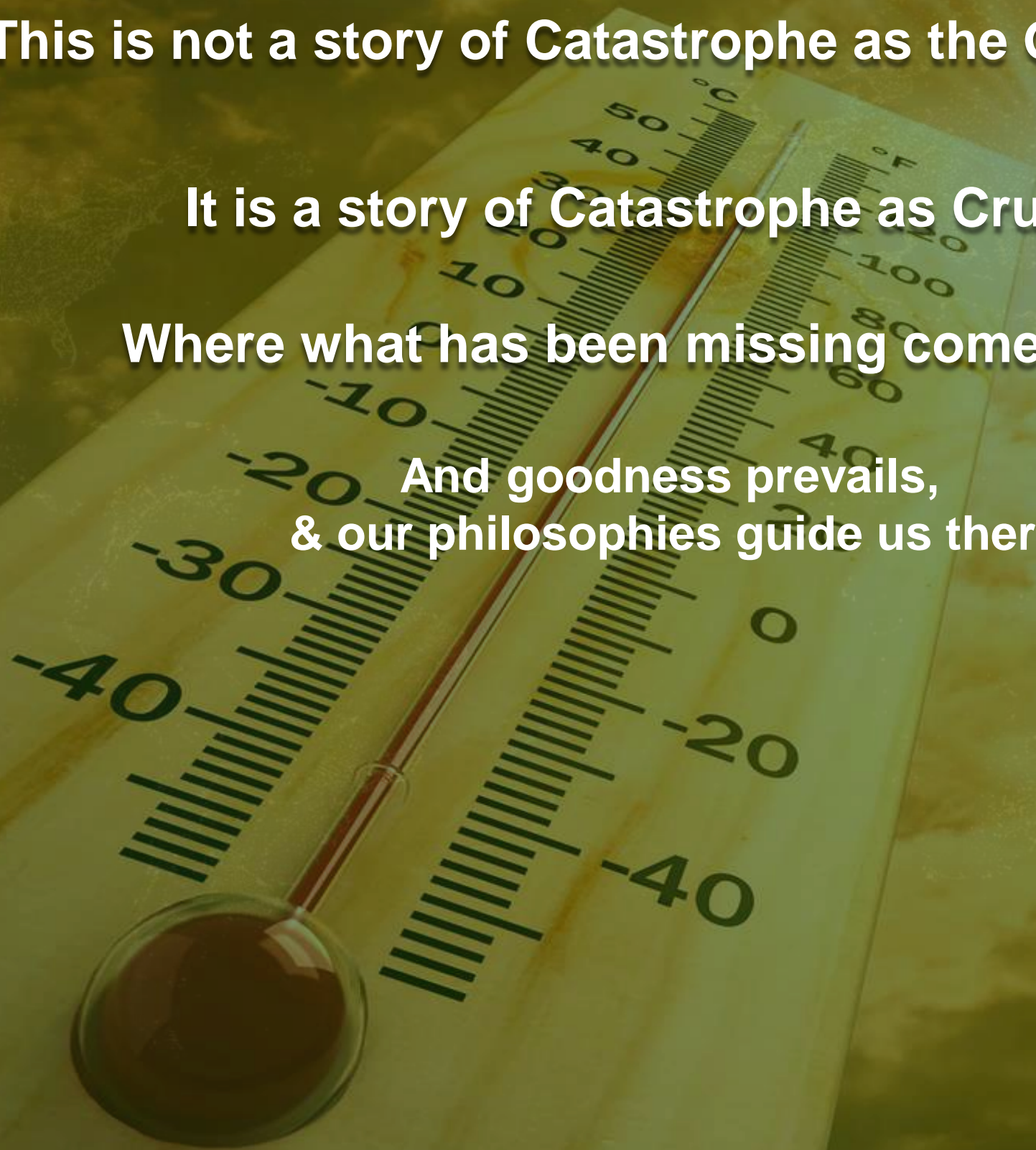
For then we will have a sense of how to be a good world now

**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**



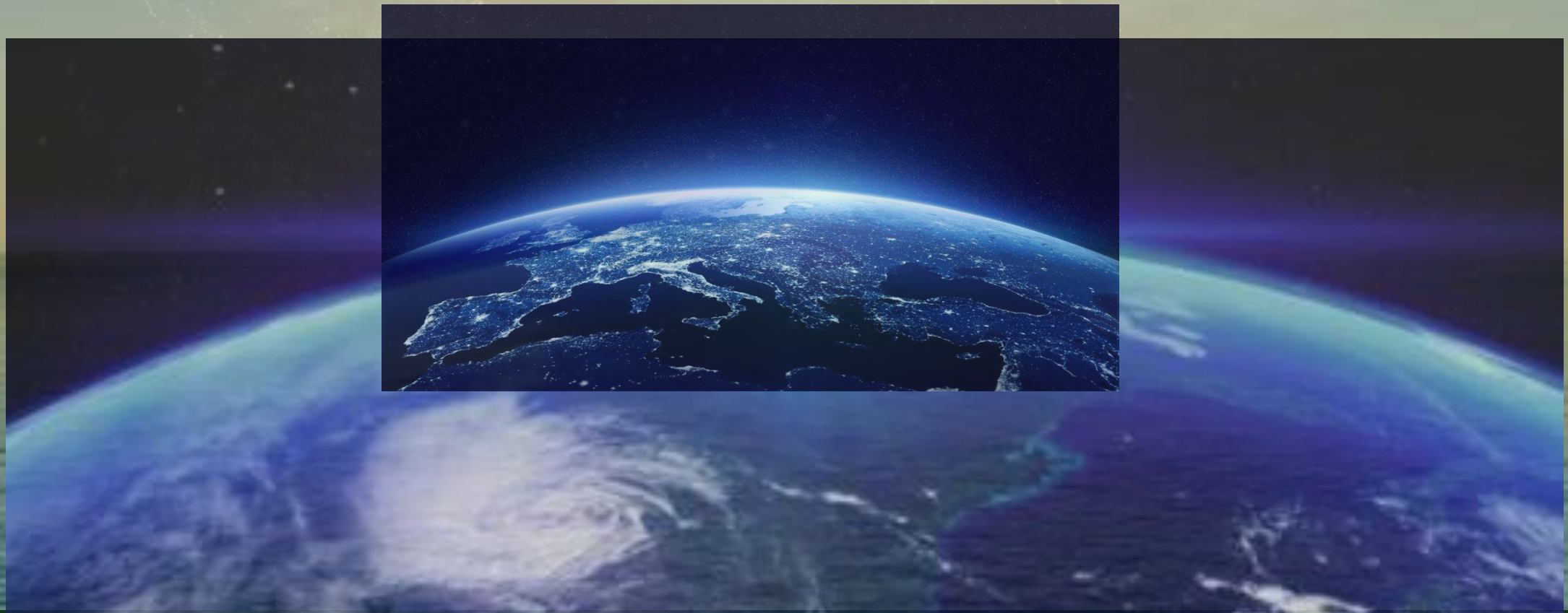
# **Earth & Cosmos are Larger than us**

**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**

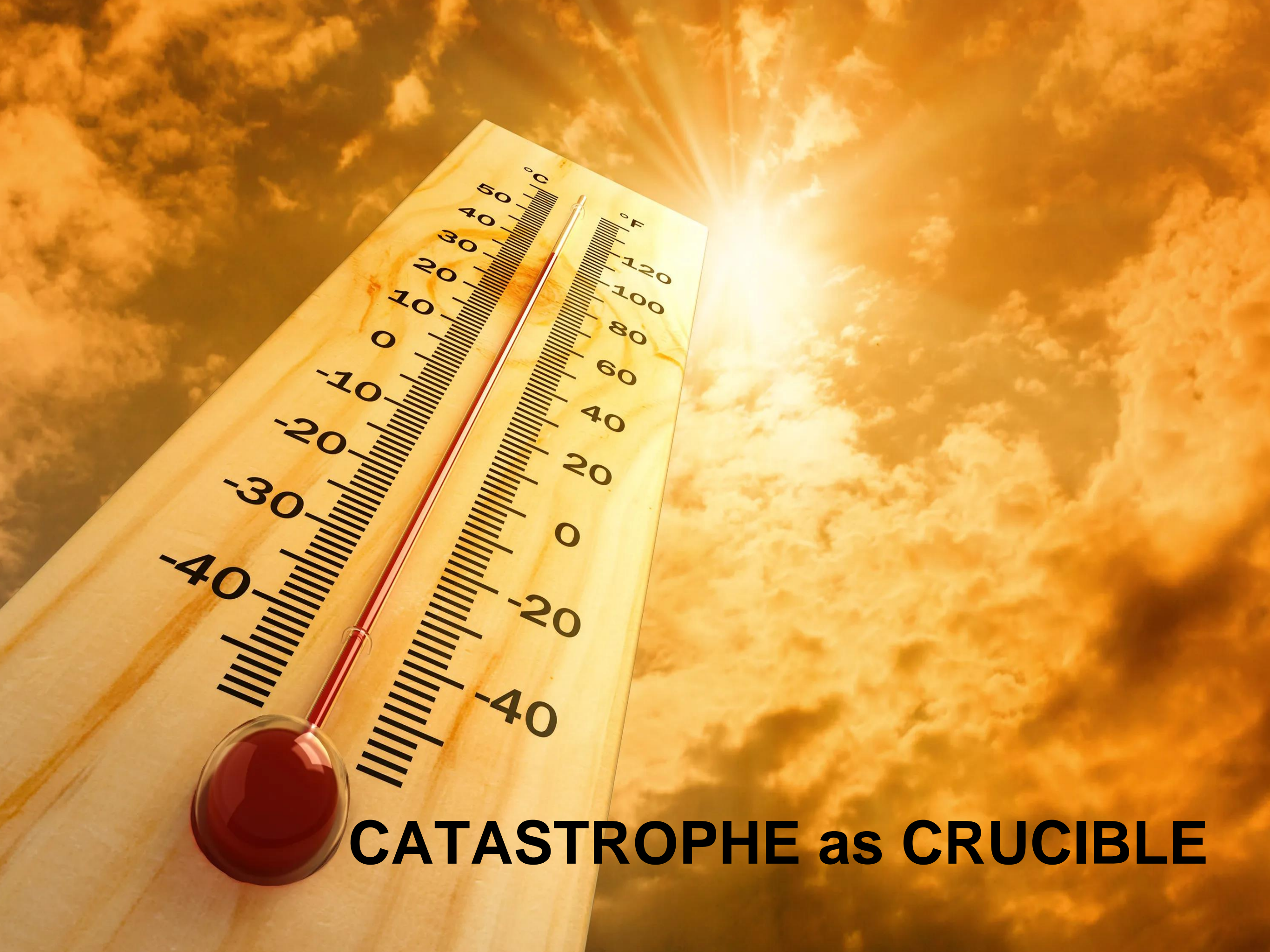






**It is necessary to understand where  
we are in creating shared purposes  
that are fruitful**





**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.