

SUSTAINABILITY: THE UNFACED ISSUE

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“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”
Gen. 2:15 KJV

“The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”
Psalm 24:1 KJV

It's crystal clear; God wants his creation enjoyed and used for human betterment, but also protected, nurtured, and, yes, sustained. He charged Adam and Eve with dressing--- or carefully using---the Garden of Eden; and further instructed them to “keep” or sustain it. But there seems to be something about the term “sustain” that modern society does not understand. Or perhaps I should say that it's modern predatory capitalism that is incapable of understanding.

The issue of sustainability is virtually ignored today by commercial and governmental powers more interested in lining their own pockets and preserving their power than facing what could---without Divine interference---be the end of human life on earth. If this sounds like a stretch, think about what will happen if we in our ignorance and greed continue treating the environment as we have over the past century.

Sustainability simply asks: Can present policies, technologies, and human behaviors continue indefinitely without adverse consequences threatening to human survival? That is the major question after the subterfuge, rhetoric, and vociferous denial is stripped away. That is the question more technology will not solve. It is also the issue that strikes to the heart of our wasteful way of life and the stubborn arrogance preventing many of us from even admitting a problem exists.

Generally

speaking, the question of sustainability is applied to resource use and environmental degradation because that's perhaps where the greatest and most easily discernable threat lies. But there are other areas almost as threatening.

Human health

is one. With life spans increasing amid frantic demands for new and extremely expensive treatments, how can we pay the escalating costs for people who adamantly refuse to care for themselves? Can we sustain the incredible costs for addiction, mental illness, cancer, obesity, heart and circulatory problems, not to mention scores of other issues just as serious although not as numerous?

Another is

retirement costs. Already we hear cries of threatened insolvency as various retirement funds (most recently the Teamsters Central States Retirement Fund) face serious financial shortfalls. Even a generation ago there were five or six contributing workers for every retiree; now that number falls as low as two or three. With the gradual disappearance of living wage jobs and the shortage of workers able to support retirement plans for their peers, many more struggling plans will likely become problems during the next few years. And the king of all plans, the Sacred Cow of Social Security, is threatened with possible privatization, extended working years, and reduced benefits. Will the dream of a retirement spent happily in decency, peace, and income sufficient for a bit more than basic needs be sustainable much longer? Not unless we make some serious changes based upon Jubilee justice and righteousness.

But we seem

to be sustaining one part of our culture very well: the continuous slide of society toward egotism, greed, and impending destruction. It's the height of hubris, or outrageous human arrogance that makes it possible for people having economic and political power to continue their assault upon the earth and most of its people and systems. What are we thinking---if we are thinking at all---about our future as free people?

It's perhaps

a slap in the face to the Human Potential movement, but I think it clear that humans lack the skills and moral values to sustain meaningful societies much longer. It's evolving either toward a world operating on God's Jubilee principles of morality, justice, righteousness, and mercy; or a world strangled by institutional breakdown spawned by human greed and incompetence.

We still

have a choice! Let's do it God's way!

