



# planet

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# Ecological and spiritual revolution

**HANNE STRONG** says that the key to restoring the Earth lies in respecting the natural law observed by ancient and indigenous peoples

Since the beginning of time, of human life on this planet, ancient peoples intimately understood that unless they lived in accordance with natural law they would not survive. They spoke of this original set of instructions given to them by the Creator, and knew and lived by these laws, which guide humankind's relationship to the four life-giving elements – earth, water, air and fire (energy) – and teach respect for the oneness and interdependence of all life.

Indigenous peoples throughout the world are now breaking their traditional silence to warn us of the consequences of ignoring natural law, and to offer their help. The Kogi tribe of Colombia, who have maintained absolute isolation for hundreds of years, have come forward to warn that the Earth is in danger... that unless we stop violating natural law, the world that contains and sustains us is coming to an end.

'We must live in harmony with the Natural World and recognize that excessive exploitation can only lead to our own destruction. We cannot trade the welfare of our future generations for profit now. We must abide by the Natural Law or be victim of its ultimate reality.' (Tadodaho Leon Shenandoah, Grand Chief of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy.)

## Shared wisdom

The wisdom keepers from around the world – Aborigines, Tibetans, Hopi, Iroquois, Anishnabe – all share such prophecies and remind us of what universal natural law instructs. It teaches, for instance, that no one owns the land: we must take only what is truly needed from the earth, and give something back. Today people transgress it, neglecting to express gratitude, and failing to comprehend that for every action there is an effect.

We violate these ancient wisdoms, disrespecting those who inherently embody them, rather than learning from them how we must live in order to survive. We have chosen an approach of subduing and dominating Nature, considering the planet as a commodity, greedily plundering the organs of our Mother, the Earth. Sustainable global development is achievable only

through a fundamental shift in the way we think about and treat both the Earth and each other.

The environmental challenges we face – though clear and widely recognized – have not stimulated responsive action at the level necessary to rectify them. Perhaps our greatest challenge is overcoming this apparent apathy and taking action at a level commensurate with the dangers to the environment. The magnitude and imminence of these perils is stunning – loss of cropland, toxic agricultural technologies, irrevocable loss of plant and animal species and biodiversity, limited water, large scale water and air pollution, global climate changes, deterioration of the ozone layer, dependence upon toxic and/or non-renewable energy/fuel sources, desertification, deforestation.

There is also a great need for people, especially the young, to discover greater meaning and dignity in their lives, and find positive, healthy, productive alternatives to unemployment, isolation, boredom, alienation, addiction and violence. Even in the most prosperous neighbourhoods, where people are well fed, clothed and housed, there is still a great need for renewal of the human spirit. Fear, alienation, anger and resignation are prevalent, creating the dispirited context which shapes youth.

## Failure to address the issues

Societal challenges are the amplification of such individual human imbalances, converging into collective patterns. ►

Penny Tweedle/Panos Pictures





Policy-makers place the most emphasis on strategizing and financing national security – but meanwhile we have no adequate system for responding to our endangered environment, which is inextricably linked with societal survival. The costs of failing adequately to address maladies of heart, mind and spirit are enormous. Programmes designed to help do not usually address the essential spiritual and ethical issues that are at the root of the problem.

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both environmental integrity and social stability. Multicultural application of Earth restoration training fosters the evolution of human consciousness throughout the world, leading us from careless, selfish patterns to understanding how to care for the whole.

Natural law generates a lifestyle rich with simplicity and humility, with

purity, truth, generosity and love. But, having forsaken the universal law given by the Creator, we are suffering greatly from a loss of heart and spirit. Unless we relearn natural law and demonstrate love and reverence for the Earth, we will continue along our presently chosen path of rapid self-destruction. Only when we understand the Law of Interdependence – that all damage done to nature is damage done to humankind – will we be able to reverse the destruction of our four life-giving elements. Only when we experience the interconnectedness of all can we begin to change at the source – our human heart and mind.

The human race has gone through many stages, from hunter-gatherer to the agricultural revolution, the industrial revolution, and the science and technology revolution. Our technological industrial focus developed momentum over years of greater and greater separation from the laws of nature – and isolation from the nurturing and centring influence of time spent in nature. Our perception that science and technology are the answer to everything is an illusion, perpetuating this imbalance. The real answer lies in an ecological and spiritual revolution. Business and industry must devote their brilliance, and some of their profits, towards restoring the Earth. Government and non-governmental organizations must redirect efforts and funds from projects that do not work to restoring and protecting our planet.

### **Education holds the key**

At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, world leaders raised the question of whether, without fundamental change, modern society is sustainable on the planet. There are two basic positions among those who accept the severity of the situation. Some feel that we must do better what we are already doing, a belief that encourages us to continue addressing the symptoms of current environmental and social crises. Others believe that doing the same things in a better way is not sufficient, that we must do something fundamentally different.

As a devoted student and messenger of natural law, I believe, after years of contemplation, that the most promising solution to the roots of our problems lies through education. This belief led to the creation of the Earth Restoration Corps (ERC), a training programme designed to shift underlying attitudes and values into alignment with Earth ethics, and prepare people to take immediate remedial action on behalf of the environment. Its quintessential contribution is that it instils ethical and spiritual integrity as a basis for cooperative human relations and environmentally responsible living.

Nature, the best teacher, stimulates the capacity to handle unforeseen circumstances and unpredictable events in alignment with intent and generosity of spirit, thereby sparking moments of transcendence and inspired creative action. The ERC is an intensive training in nature, providing the circumstances for such sparks to occur more often, and for more people. It makes use both of modern science and traditional wisdom, bridging the best of current sustainable technologies with the best of indigenous technologies, many of which have proven sustainable over thousands of years. This provides the conditions for individuals and groups to learn to care deeply and skillfully for the Earth and one another, in alignment with natural law, as a way of life.

### **Mobilizing awareness**

On a larger scale, the ERC is a catalyst for a revolution in consciousness and the mass mobilization of humanity to undertake the work of restoring and sustaining the Earth and the human spirit. Ultimately, millions of people will need to be organized. With current estimates of global unemployment surpassing the 1 billion mark over the next 10 years, opportunities for involvement in Earth restoration support

### **Direction and vigour**

The stakes have never been higher, nor the choice more compelling. Overwhelming evidence indicates that humanity's present direction leads to an irrevocable loss of the natural systems which support all life as we know it, a severely diminished existence, and an unknown but clearly compromised future. Our only option is to pursue alternatives with vigour, choose a direction which offers concrete steps toward healthier, sustainable and humane life for all who call Earth home. It is the duty of every human being to develop the highest aspect of being human. When we evolve our consciousness, and return to ways of living guided by natural law, our needs diminish and we willingly choose to live simply, so that others can simply live •

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