'Christopher Schaefer writes brilliantly with two hands, one for exposing the suffering caused by American militarism, racism, and the neo-conservative Republican economic agenda, and one for exhibiting the compassion, joy, and hope necessary in these difficult times.'

Professor Robert McDermott, California Institute of Integral Studies, President Emeritus.

'By facing the shadow side of our nation, and of himself, Christopher Schaefer makes it possible for us to do the same. *Re-imagining America: Looking for Hope in Difficult Times* is an acorn of hope. May it take root and grow into a mighty oak.'

Eric Utne, founder, Utne Reader.

'By connecting his own journey as an immigrant and a keen student of international politics and economics to the Long Emergency of American Society Christopher Schaefer has done us a real service. These essays bring clarity and hope, connecting our inner soul state to the challenge of creating a more sustainable and just world.'

Paul Mackay, Board chair, Weleda Inc.; former head of the Social Science Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum and until 2018 part of the Executive Board of the General Anthroposophical Society.

'How can we stay informed about world events without suffering from overload? How can we develop empathy for people and events far away? Chris Schaefer's book is a workbook for contemporary humanity. With honesty and wisdom, he shares his insights that will inspire and encourage those who want to make a difference.'

Tom Ravetz, author, *Free from Dogma*.

'In these twelve essays Christopher Schaefer describes the events leading up to the present crises of American democracy. With insight and hope he calls upon us to reflect deeply, reconnect to ourselves and our community and work toward a new tri-sectoral imagination of society which honors our freedom, deepens our democracy and creates a sustainable stake-holder economy.'

Gary Lamb, author, activist and co-director of the Center for Social Research, Hawthorne Valley Association.

'As a working mother of young children and an environmental advocate, I am deeply concerned about our common future. Christopher Schaefer's moving and insightful account of the systemic corruption of American society is telling, and his reflections on what can be done are practical, and ultimately, hopeful.'

Arizona Muse, mother, fashion model and advocate
for sustainability in the fashion industry.

'An astute witness to our nation's history, Christopher Schaefer offers a clear voice of higher conscience in the face of corrupt governance and unsustainable economic disparity. The need for personal and national spiritual insight is given along with sound progressive reforms – May we have the courage to go there. It's now or never.'

Nancy Jewel Poer, American Studies,
Rudolf Steiner College, Sacramento.

'In this exceptional series of essays Christopher Schaefer casts a deeply penetrating eye on the major political, social and economic phenomena of our time, offering compelling insights into these often catastrophic events. His observations are matched by a deep and loving sense of responsibility for humanity and the earth and the conviction that a healthier, more equitable and non-violent future is within our grasp. From this source he suggests inspiring practical examples for both inner and outer work to overcome our powerlessness and to become a catalyst for the good.'

Marjatta van Boeschoten, General Secretary of the
Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, Lawyer and
Organizational Development Consultant.

'We need books like this one. On the one hand there are the alarming world events, and the corruption and decline of America. On the other there are our own lives, real and intimate. Chris Schaefer's book, *Re-Imagining America,* connects them in a deeply personal and reflective way. It is an unusual and rewarding series of essays casting a hopeful light on our strange time.'

Jonathan Westphal, Visiting Fellow, Philosophy Dept.,
Yale University.

To Cyris and Talei, and to Noah and Lela, as well as to all the children of the world.

May the hope, courage and promise of the young help us all to build a society more worthy of the human being.

With Gratitude to

The many people who have read, or heard and commented on, different versions of these essays over the years, and also to those who took the time to read and digest the book, and provide endorsements.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Signe Eklund Schaefer whose encouragement, careful reading and many insightful comments have deepened my understanding of the issues discussed and greatly improved the presentation of this book.

While a bit unusual, I would also like to acknowledge the thinkers and authors who have had a significant impact on the development of my thinking in grappling with the perplexing times in which we live.

Hannah Arendt, for her profound insights into the nature of the totalitarian mind.

Alexander Bos, for his reflections on the connection between the human soul and the moral dilemmas of our modern world.

Bernard Lievegoed, for his mentorship and developmental perspectives on human life and the processes of social creation.

Joanna Macy for bringing a sense of agency and hope to thousands of groups and individuals.

Jacob Needleman, for his deep philosophical reflections on the American experience.

Parker Palmer, for his inner honesty and his wisdom in helping people discover the richness of their nature in dialogue with others and with poetry.

Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer for the Presencing work; encouraging people to connect body, soul and spirit in a future-oriented, dynamic process of social transformation.

Rebecca Solnit, for her extraordinary and enlightening essays on the struggle for social equity.

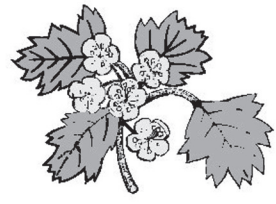
Rudolf Steiner, for his profound spiritual and social insights and for his admonishment to be a conscious witness of our times, which I have tried to take to heart.

And my deep gratitude and appreciation for the millions of people who seek to serve others first, doing the good every day.

RE-IMAGINING AMERICA

FINDING HOPE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Christopher Schaefer, Ph.D.



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Foreword

> The salvation of the human being is through love and in love.
>
> Viktor Frankl

When I started the *Utne Reader* in 1984, I believed America was on the threshold of a new age. I hoped, and I think we all hoped, that American society would extend human freedom, deepen democracy, and create an economy that served everyone and protected the earth. Instead, we now have a government run by and for the rich, an economy that plunders the earth, and a culture increasingly addicted to entertainment and the internet.

In this, his new book *Re-Imagining America: Finding Hope in Difficult Times*, Christopher Schaefer asks how we got here, and how we can find hope and direction for the future. His first answer is that we clearly witness the times we are living in, and connect key patterns of events. At another level he describes the thought framework lying behind these events, which he refers to as the pattern and ideology of oppression. Behind this ideology he identifies the ultimate causes of our distress. He then points to and describes the great work of re-connection – to nature and the earth, to each other and ourselves – and to the American spirit. He ends by outlining a new covenant between the American people and its government. It is a bracing and ultimately hopeful read.

The theme of war and peace, of conflict and healing, has been a leitmotif in Chris's life, starting with his first memory as a young child during a daylight air-raid in Germany during the Second World War. He studied international politics and practiced conflict resolution and social transformation throughout his professional life. He is a global citizen who has seen the world, studied its wisdom traditions and modern thought, and has experienced the challenges and contradictions of our times.

I've known Chris for some 30 years. We first met when he was helping our new City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis, Minnesota find its legs. Later we served together on the board of Sunbridge Institute, a Waldorf teacher-training college in Spring Valley, New York.

Not long after 9/11, Chris took me on a short drive from the college to High Tor, a hill overlooking the Hudson River. We hiked, climbing through brambles and over barbed wire, then up a steep promontory. From the top of the basalt cliff we could see Manhattan, including the place where the two towers of the World Trade Center had stood. Then Chris told me an old Hudson Valley folk story, the legend of the Ramapo Salamander, that he suggested pointed to the need for re-imagining the American Dream. The story describes a group of miners of European origin who relied on their religious and spiritual traditions as well as their mining experience to safely extract gold, iron ore and gems from the earth. But gradually they became overcome by their lust for wealth and power. Then a giant salamander, a great fire spirit, appeared in the mine, devouring the head miner's wife and son before destroying the mine. Ultimately, through the pure love of the miner's daughter, a symbol of the divine feminine, of Sophia, the fire spirit was restored to its true nature in serving the divine and the progress of humanity.

'Can we also cultivate the true forces of the feminine to help us transform the American Shadow and achieve a new and healthy society?', Chris asked. 'Can we again find the true spirit of America?' This is, indeed, the critical question of our time.

By facing the shadow side of our nation, and of himself, Chris makes it possible for us to do the same. And he does so while maintaining his indomitable sense of hope. In this, Chris reminds me of W.S. Merwin, the great American poet who wrote, 'On the last day of the world, I would want to plant a tree'. *Re-Imagining America: Finding Hope in Difficult Times* is an acorn. May it take root and grow into a mighty oak. It is also a great, good deed, for which I am abundantly grateful.

Eric Utne, founder, *Utne Reader*

Preface

The essays in this volume confirm the author's place as a leader in the still-emerging discipline of *social ecology*. This term was first used in the 1950s by Bernard Lievegoed, Chris Schaefer's inspiring colleague and mentor, as an alternative to 'social pedagogy', in which subject he held a professorial chair at the University of Rotterdam. Social ecology is both science and art: like natural ecology it requires rigorous, objective observation; but also emotional sensitivity and a commitment to action. Throughout his career as academic, researcher, consultant and social practitioner Chris has exemplified and deepened this approach, working with groups and organisations to develop innovative initiatives, bring vision into action and learn from the experience of implementing change.

Just as natural ecology integrates an understanding of the nature, development and behaviour of individual organisms with an appreciation of their systemic interdependence – with each other and their environmental context – so a valid social ecology must include both profound insight into the visceral and psychic realities of individual human beings, and the identification and characterisation of their interrelationships on micro-, meso- and macro-social levels. Without the former, we would lose ourselves in abstract socio-economic theory; without the latter, we would be trapped in the Thatcherite illusion that 'there is no such thing as society'.

Human beings create social forms in their own image. Because of this, human self-understanding is critical to social development, and a full, balanced picture of what it means to be human is essential to the health of organisations and societies. As Chris describes, social-ecological research starts with immersing oneself in perceptible *phenomena*, allowing them to work in us through contemplation and compassion, recognising also in ourselves the social and anti-social forces that give rise to justice and injustice, prejudice and acceptance, exclusion and inclusion in society.

Through this 'witnessing' of events, trends and turning points, we may move to a perception of the phenomena as *symptoms* of social sickness and health, of significant developments and challenges to which we can respond in ways which are more balanced and free than our often impulsive reactions.

Particularly striking about this book of essays, written over years of careful political and social observation, are the connections established between political, economic, psychological and foreign policy issues. The arguments linking 9/11, the 'War on Terror', the Economic Crisis and the election of Donald Trump as manifestations of an effort to undermine the American Spirit and corrupt the American Soul are particularly thought-provoking and morally challenging for a society prone to short memory and an easy acceptance of government-sanctioned versions of the truth.

Such heightened insight and deepened perception, however, is only the first step on the path towards social healing which all the chapters in this book invite us to follow. In multiple contexts, from many different perspectives, the author leads us from insight to empathy to intervention, opening our hearts as well as our minds and stimulating us to whatever transformative action our life-situation enables us to take. Along the way he introduces us to a community of fellow-travellers – thinkers, activists and artists who can be our companions, as they have been his, on this most important of journeys.

In the last three essays, Chris brings his diagnosis right up to the present Difficult Times, with penetrating analyses not only of the delusional thinking behind the current forces working in American society, but also how those forces, which oppose and distort healthy social relationships, can be found at work in our own souls. The final essay is an idealistic *tour de force*, in which he paints an inspiring, detailed and specific image of actions that could and should be taken to save the US from its own shadow.

For British readers there is much of relevance here; much to be learned not only about our most powerful 'ally' but also about the forces of fragmentation and discord which are also at work here. As the tragi-comic, slow-motion train crash of Brexit is in danger of driving a confused, divided UK into the ecocidal arms of Trump and the Saudi weapons buyers, we need to take note of the insights and healing impulses which this book offers.

Steve Briault, Director of Development,
Emerson College, Sussex

Introduction

> The task of the mind is to understand what happened and this understanding, according to Hegel, is man's way of reconciling himself with reality; its actual end is to be at peace with the world.
>
> Hannah Arendt

As a young person studying international politics and economics, I ran across a slim volume by Hannah Arendt called *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*, which I have carried with me for many years and through many moves.[1] What appealed to me in her work was the combination of philosophical reflection and historical insight. In her preface, Arendt articulates two longings which I share: the desire to understand the past sufficiently well that the main outlines of the future become visible; and secondly, to connect the realm of theory, of ideas, to the realm of praxis, of social action, in a tangible and authentic manner.

She cites De Tocqueville's lament, when, after having completed his justly celebrated *Democracy in America*, he noted, 'Since the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future the mind of man wanders in obscurity'.[2] Do we not share this lament when looking at the perplexities of the present moment in American history, and scratch our heads and wonder how we got here, with a deadlocked Congress and an unhinged President?

Certainly, the desire to understand the patterns of history, to see elements of the present and future encapsulated in events of the past, has been with me from the time of my undergraduate study of philosophy and history, and later graduate work in international politics and economics. The search for underlying structures of meaning, for having a lens through which to connect past and future, led me on a long and still ongoing search through critical theory, neo-Marxism, social phenomenology and the philosophy of social science. In this

search, the evolution of consciousness in human history, as articulated by writers and thinkers such as Edmund Husserl, Owen Barfield, Teilhard de Chardin, P.A. Sorokin, Rudolf Steiner and Richard Tarnas, spoke to me.[3] Within the flow of history and the evolution of cultures, I sensed a shift of human awareness from a greater embeddedness in nature and community and a reliance on tradition – what Barfield calls 'original participation' – to the more isolated, self-centred, materialistic and individualized consciousness of the modern era. This perspective informs many of the essays collected in this book, and has led me to follow issues over time, and to connect problems in American economic and social life to the type of consciousness underlying the social structures, processes and behaviors described.

My search for meaning in history as a young person was also linked to the search for meaning in my own life, and led me to explore questions of inner development, biographical themes and, ultimately, to considerations of reincarnation and karma as a way of understanding my life.

The relationship between the realm of theory, of ideas and the sense world of actions and practice is the second tension to which Arendt refers. This tension between the real and the ideal is acute for anyone genuinely concerned about questions of social justice and social reform because it touches on questions of personal authenticity, and of course on social-change strategy. In getting older I increasingly experience that unless I attempt to understand and practice the values I espouse, with all of the difficulties that this entails, I lack the moral foundation for promoting greater justice and equality in society. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks and Rigoberta Menchu are individuals whose social and political leadership rested on a strong personal moral foundation. Donald Trump, and many other politicians and world leaders today, make visible what happens when there is a decoupling of individual morality from the exercise of influence and power.

The essays in this volume also have their source in the repeated reminder of the profound human suffering caused by war, conflict, hatred and prejudice built into the experiences of my life. My first memory as a three-year old was a daylight air raid on Frankfurt in early 1945, the sky dark with planes and the ground trembling from their roar as they passed overhead. Then there was the experience of playing in bomb craters and destroyed tanks in the fields and forests surrounding my home, and witnessing the returning veterans of war, often maimed in body and soul.

Not much later, as a seven-year old immigrant, I remember standing on the deck of a US troop transport steaming into New York harbor with the

sun setting behind the Statue of Liberty, being excited about the prospect of a new life but full of apprehension about what we would meet. As it was 1950, it was not surprising to experience prejudice in our first days at school when signs of 'Nazi go home' appeared on my desk, and my siblings and I learned to defend ourselves against playground bullies. But this was a temporary set-back, vanishing as our English improved, and because we were white.

After my sophomore year in college, I spent six months in Berlin at the Free University, arriving a week after the Wall went up, in August of 1961. As I had an American passport and spoke German well, I was able to pass into the Russian sector of what was to become East Berlin. I remember being at Check Point Charlie and seeing American and British Forces, troops and tanks, lined up on one side of barbed wire barricades, and Russian tanks, artillery and troops on the other. As I became involved in smuggling my aunt and others out of East Germany, I also learned that what moved most people to leave their home was the prospect of better jobs, refrigerators and television sets, and less dreams about freedom and democracy, as I had believed in my youthful naïveté.

While visiting and talking to people in East Berlin I also met a deeply religious group of young people who decided to stay and witness what was happening to their society under Communism. For the most part they were members of the Confessing Church, a part of the Lutheran Church started by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and active in the resistance movement against Hitler and the Nazis. This group was later to play a significant role in the overthrow of Communism in 1989.

After returning to finish college I was shocked by the Kennedy assassination in 1963, as were most Americans. At the same time, I was majoring in European History with a focus on understanding Nazism and the German Resistance Movement. This study of Hitler and the Nazis had a profound impact on me. First, it awoke me to the dangers of official government accounts, and the press manipulating public opinion and often hiding true motives and the underlying truth. Secondly, it enabled me to appreciate the dangers of nationalism, of racism, and of the horrors of genocide against the Jews, and indeed against all minorities. It also made me aware of what a thin veneer civilization really is, how many Germans actively participated in the extreme cruelty, horror, and sadism of the concentration camps, and how such perversions of human decency can find a home within most human beings, given the right circumstances. Lastly, in studying the resistance to Hitler, including the White Rose Movement and the Kreisau Circle, I realized what great courage it took to witness

and combat evil, and how whole families, such as the Bonhoeffers, or the Scholl siblings, gave their lives in acts of resistance.

I was finishing my graduate work and was in Washington D.C. when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, and I experienced the race riots in downtown D.C. This was another awakening to issues of prejudice and injustice, followed by my growing involvement in the anti-Vietnam war movement. Having studied International Politics and American Foreign Policy, I knew that the Chinese and the Vietnamese had a long history of enmity and conflict, making a lie of the domino theory. So I demonstrated and spoke out against the war, as millions of others did. One of life's ironies was participating in demonstrations against my own department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where I had begun teaching international politics and American foreign policy in 1969, for its role in developing the strategic hamlet program in Vietnam.

Life, family and work as a consultant and advisor to communities and organizations, and as a teacher and adult educator, consumed most of my time and consciousness in the ensuing years. It was during these years of the 1980s and 1990s that I worked on questions of conflict and human development, discovering the difficulties of peace-building in communities, and in myself. It was during those years that I also discovered the importance of conversation, of meeting, of group work and of building a family and a marriage; learnings and insights which provided the basis for the essay on the work of re-connection toward the end of this book.

The next great awakening for me was 9/11, which shook me to my roots, and fully awoke me to the American Empire Project and its attendant tragedies: the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the global economic crisis, and what I increasingly think of as the time of the Long Emergency, with its portends of ecological disaster.

This description of my biographical journey in relation to the events of our time, while far from unique for someone coming of age in the 1960s, is the personal foundation for the essays in this book. The essays are my effort to understand the times we live in, with a particular focus on the corruption and decline of the United States as a once great nation. Or to put this another way, they are an anguished cry of disillusionment from an older, Ivy League-educated white male, who was socialized to be part of the system, and who only woke up fully to its internal contradictions and grave moral lapses after 9/11.

I think we write to make sense of our life and thoughts, and in so doing we hope that our questions and insights will be of interest to others. That

is certainly true of these essays, which are a record in time of my attempt to be a witness to our times, of trying to understand the often inexplicable nature of political and social events since 2001.

The essays cover the time period from 1989, the fall of the Soviet Union and of the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe, to the present day. They are reflections and commentaries on the times: either essays, talks or seminars, given or published between 2004 and the spring of 2019. Except for minor editing, and in a few instances, some updating, they were not changed from the time of publication or presentation. They are a sequential commentary on the times, and did not form an interconnected whole in my mind until the election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States. Then I could see that the betrayal of our core values through the pursuit of the American Empire Project, with its attendant undermining of our economic and political system, called forth this perfect symbol of the American shadow – of our unredeemed self – in a vain, narcissistic, racist, lying, power-hungry, insecure and misogynistic businessman.

We have come home and occupied ourselves, and are now living in what I consider to be the fourth great period of crisis and transition in American history. The first was during the time of our founding, the Revolutionary Period, 1770–86, the second during the Civil War, 1850–66, the third from the Great Depression through the end of World War II, 1928–46, and the fourth, from 2001 to the present day. It seems that about every 80 years, American society meets fundamental challenges which threaten its future as a democracy. We again face the question of what kind of a society we will be, and whether or not we will be able as a people to extend human freedom, democracy, and economic justice, and whether we will choose the ideology of oppression, of injustice, domination and therefore decline.

The essays cover diverse yet interconnected themes; what it means to be a conscious witness of our times, questions about 9/11, the second Bush administration and the American empire project, the global economic crisis, income inequalities, navigating chaos and the election of Donald Trump, as well as ideas about social reform and our common future. They are written in differing styles, some more reflective and personal, some more scholarly, and some expressing outrage, mirroring the different contexts in which they were offered.

When read in sequence, they offer one account of how American economic and political elites have undermined democracy and drastically weakened our nation, while causing untold suffering in the Middle East and around the world. They also point in the direction of what we can do,

individually and together to restore America as 'the fact, the symbol and the promise of a new beginning', and of how we may make a lasting difference in our communities and in our times.[4]

Christopher Schaefer
Great Barrington, Mass.
2 December 2018

Notes

1 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*, The World Publishing Company, New York, 1963. Quotation from page 8.
2 Quoted in Arendt, p. 7.
3 E. Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Collier Books, New York, 1962, pp. 100–133; Owen Barfield, *Saving the Appearances: A Study of Idolatry*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Conn., 1965 ; P.A Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age: The Social and Cultural Outlook*, E.P. Dutton and Co, New York, 1941; R. Steiner, 'Social and Anti-Social in the Human Being', 1918, Rudolf Steiner Archive, at www.rsarchive.com; R. Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, Harmony Books, New York, 1992.
4 Jacob Needleman, *The American Soul: Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Founders*, Tarcher/Putnam, New York, 2002, p. 5.

Part I:

Being a Witness of Our Times

Chapter 1

Witnessing the Long Emergency (*August 2017*)

> Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.
>
> James Baldwin

Each day we are bombarded with fear-producing events vying for our attention and our sympathy. The melting of glaciers and global sea rise, the plight of three million Syrian refugees in Turkish camps, the growing levels of starvation in Central Africa and the growth of xenophobia in the United States and many European countries assault us. I wish, and I think we all wish, for a return to a sense of normalcy; the flow and pattern of the seasons, the playing of children on the playground waiting for the ice cream truck on a warm summer afternoon, holidays and family events, and of course for leaders whom we can trust and institutions that embody a sense of morality. Instead, given the fragility of the environment and of society as well as the omnipresent global media, we are assured of being confronted with human suffering, perceived existential threats, and immoral and cruel acts by individuals and governments.

We are living in the age of what I call 'The Long Emergency', to borrow the title of James Kunstler's book, and need to become conscious, both about how we relate to the media and how we can develop an inner and outer practice of witnessing what is happening in the world and in ourselves.[1] Without such a practice I fear we lose our balance and become more anxious, fearful and easily manipulated individuals.

The Long Emergency

For me 9/11 was the beginning of what I think of as the Long Emergency, when the break-down of the post-Second World War order became visible, and when many of the taken-for-granted assumptions about private and public life no longer held true in the United States and in many parts of the world. Members of Al Qaeda, mostly Saudi citizens, were described as having flown two jet liners into the Twin Towers in New York and supposedly also one into the Pentagon. I spent days glued to the television asking is this really possible and wondering about the circumstances which allowed inexperienced pilots to fly sophisticated aircraft through densely patrolled airspace into downtown Manhattan without being intercepted.

What followed was the War on Terror, the Patriot Act and vastly increased domestic and international surveillance. The USA invaded Afghanistan and a few years later Iraq, despite no credible evidence of any linkage between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein or of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The war in Afghanistan is ongoing, now entering its 16th year, and we are still engaged in Iraq and in Syria, fighting a newly emerging form of Islamic terrorism, Islamic State or ISIL. Instability in the Middle East, Africa, Ukraine and Afghanistan continues with Western efforts at regime change adding to the flood of refugees seeking safety. Suicide bombers now threaten most countries of Europe, and North America as well as many parts of Asia, giving rise to new forms of nationalism and authoritarianism while undermining the postwar consensus on the value of the EU, the importance of the international political order, and the nature of freedom in democratic societies.

At the same time the global threat of climate change increases, with mass species extinctions, rising sea levels, dramatic weather shifts and unheard-of levels of pollution in China, India Pakistan and the urban areas of central and South America. Drought has wrought havoc in Africa and elsewhere with 40–60 million people facing food insecurity and starvation. Deeply moving pictures of starving people looking for food and water on a parched landscape proliferate while the United Nations is unable to fund its multiple requests for humanitarian aid.

The pattern of disturbing events continued with the global financial crisis of 2008–10 requiring a massive government bail-out in the United States while it wiped out 40 per cent of the collective wealth of ordinary Americans, many of them inner city residents. At the same time globalization and computerization hollowed out the industries of the Mid West and helped to generate the greatest wealth inequalities in the United States

since the Great Depression. The recent Brexit vote in Great Britain and the election of the manifestly unfit Donald Trump to the Presidency of the United States rounds off this brief summary of why we have entered uncharted waters in understanding the dynamics of the times we live in. We appear to be adrift, awaiting the inexplicable, and not knowing what to expect or do.

As I paint a largely negative and in many ways depressing picture of our present situation in the following essays I would like to note that my focus is largely on economic and political developments in the United States and that I fully recognize that in many respects there has been significant progress globally in regard to disease and infant mortality, education and literacy, and violence and war. The increase in world population is slowing down, some animal species have been saved from extinction and women's right are improving in many parts of the world. Poverty, crime and even drug use is also declining in the United States, despite the opioid epidemic. So I am not unaware of the real objective progress that has been achieved in the world over the last decades, in particular in Asia and Africa. I agree with Hans Rosling, the Swedish health statistician, that the right attitude to cultivate toward the state of the world is that it is both bad and better at the same time. And I add as Joshua Rothman noted: 'the spirit of progress is also the spirit of discontent'.[2]

Yet it is worth asking why my pessimistic assessment of the present and the future is shared by so many people in the United States and in many other countries.[3] Certainly, the global and visceral nature of the news promoting crises and fear plays a role. The visible corruption of our business and political elites in the United States and elsewhere is also a factor. Remember the Panama papers in 2016, and the Paradise papers in 2017, showing how global political and economic elites and corporations, including the Queen of England, some of Trump's cabinet, and companies such as Apple, Walmart, Facebook, Nike, and Siemens, have moved their assets overseas to avoid taxes while the majority of Americans have experienced flat wages, limited savings, and declining prospects.

When we cannot trust the institutions of society to do their job properly, and when politicians are bought and sold by unlimited amounts of dark money, with the average price of a Senate campaign estimated to be $19 million, it is easy to lose trust. If you add the visible and growing crisis of climate change to the realization that American society does not provide a real safety net, adequate healthcare or equitable access to affordable and quality higher education, never mind a secure retirement, we appear to be on our own. This is truly a daunting prospect for the 50 per

cent of Americans who have difficulty meeting an unexpected emergency bill of $500 or the 30 per cent of the elderly with no retirement savings except for Social Security.[4] The question of who stole the American Dream is therefore an important question, and the answer is not immigrants, Muslims, Mexicans or liberals but rather the ideas, values and behavior of the kleptocracy of political and economic elites so evident in the cabinet of the present Trump administration, in the halls of Congress and in the boardrooms of corporations.

To find a balance to the daily dose of depressing political and social news, we need to look for the many positives happening outside the formal structures of power, the free medical clinic staffed by dentists, doctors and nurses in my local community, or the peaceful Women's March following the Trump inauguration. Indeed, to see and experience the positive, caring and healing dimensions of public and private life becomes an essential part of a conscious practice of witnessing our times. To marvel at a young child's infectious smile, to be grateful for a deep conversation with a good friend, are small but important antidotes to the grimmer aspects of modern reality.

As I spend a good bit of time in my garden, I also want to point to the healing possibilities of nature, described so beautifully by Mary Oliver in her poem 'Late Spring':

> …Finally the world is beginning
> To change, its fevers mounting,
> Its leaves unfolding.
> And the mockingbirds find
> Ample reason and breath to fashion
> New songs. They do. You can
> Count on it….[5]

Given the bewildering state of the world and the manipulative, aggressive and sometimes false nature of the media, we also need to become conscious of what, when and with what frequency we attend to the news and to then monitor our reactions. When I do this, I notice a clear tension between engagement, between involvement, and withdrawal.

Withdrawal or Engagement?

One reaction to the threatening nature of our times is that of disengagement, of distancing, of not wanting to let an event or an aspect of human suffering into my consciousness. I might say I will think about the families threatened by deportation to Mexico later, or I cannot really deal with the frequent drownings of North Africans crossing the Mediterranean now. I avoid taking in the situation, largely because I feel powerless to do anything about it. So instead, I go out to garden, read a book or visit with friends. The process of withdrawal may go further still, with people deciding to protect themselves and their families from a corrupt and dangerous world by moving to a rural area or to New Zealand. Ultimately the tendency toward withdrawal leads to isolation, to depression and in some cases, to mental illness. The Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, is an extreme example of this, as he withdrew from society in moving to rural Montana in the 1980s, and then began mailing bombs to selected individuals over a 20-year period. In his case, withdrawal and violence were combined, bringing the contradictory reactions to an alienating world into a deeper connection.

A second basic response is engagement; we donate money, we petition, we join political and environmental groups. This is often helpful; volunteering for important work, giving of our time and our heart. Yet intense engagement can also have its dangers, leading to frenetic activity, burnout and to such deep emotional attachment that our life and consciousness become consumed. The response to the election of Trump and the active resistance that individuals engage in can become an obsession, as can opposition to the racism, fascism and misogyny still present in our society. It is not so surprising that deep emotional engagement can also lead to violence and terrorism.

I do find the psychic impact of war, of rape and of extreme violence or of genocide in Rwanda, Syria, Bosnia or Myanmar extremely difficult to contemplate and to allow into my soul. With such instances of our inhumanity toward each other I think that Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's description of responses to the knowledge of imminent death in her classic study *On Death and Dying* can be deeply illuminating. She lists five responses, beginning with *denial* – is this really happening or was it a dream?; moving to *anger*, an emotional response to powerlessness, betrayal or physical hurt, and then to *bargaining* – will the threat of serious illness, or public shaming or terrorism be lifted if I pray to God, become a more moral and generous person or choose some other act of sacrifice or transformation?

I can find these emotional reactions in myself and with my friends and colleagues when I remember our responses to Kennedy's assassination in 1963, to 9/11, and even to Trump's election, as well as to more private tragic events. The fourth response, that of *depression*, is also possible to locate in oneself when one considers how people react to trauma, followed over time by *acceptance* – the Brexit vote happened, and Trump is now the President of the United States.[6]

There are, of course, a great variety of responses to news and to world events, including that of a psychic fix, the jolt of Schadenfreude toward the suffering of others. What I think is important is that we learn to observe these reactions in ourselves and to monitor and, if need be, to modify our responses when they lead to obsession, to contemplating violence or to depression or other inner disturbances. In the end I believe that by attending to our inner responses to the events of our world we gain in both self-knowledge and world knowledge, and we become a witness of our age.

Why Be a Witness?

In observing the difficult times in which we live, it is tempting to say – 'Why bother? – why let the suffering of the other, of the displaced, the victims of war or terrorism or of the sick and the poor into our consciousness?'.

I describe some of my reasons for engaging with and witnessing our times and ask you to note your own reflections:

1 By being aware of what is happening in the world around me I begin the journey of overcoming my feelings of powerlessness and alienation. Observing, taking in, is often followed by a call to understanding and in many cases to activity. Kinder Morgan, an energy company, is building a pipeline through the Otis State Forest near my hometown which most studies show is not needed for local or regional energy consumption. By paying attention I become aware of this fact and can act by petition, vote or demonstration. The threat to deport illegal immigrants pronounced by the Trump administration affects the Latino population of Berkshire County where I live and people whom I know and care about. Recently in a town meeting we passed a resolution supporting immigrants, minorities and people of all faiths and orientations, in order to create a safer, more inclusive and caring community.

Without being aware of events I would have missed the meeting and not been able to vote my conscience.

2 Since we as human beings create the social world of conversations, relationships, towns, roads, governments and nations then surely I have an obligation to understand our society as best as I can and to be an active participant in its formation. Without interest, understanding and engagement in the social world by large numbers of people, a functioning democracy is not possible.

3 In a letter from a Birmingham, Alabama jail, Martin Luther King wrote to his fellow clergy about the scourge of racism:

> All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be, until you are what you ought to be and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.…[7]

Our mind and, indeed, modern consciousness may suggest that we are separate, autonomous beings, but any reflection about the nature of society and our relation to others leads to recognizing that racism and prejudice, or the fact that millions of children go to bed hungry around the world every night, also affects me, sometimes directly and, most often, indirectly.

One of the advantages of the modern media is that it can bring to our consciousness what slumbers in our sub-consciousness; the struggles and achievements of our brothers and sisters in other communities around the world. I have begun an inner and an outer picture gallery to remind me; a mother in Africa looking for water for her children at dawn, a family huddling for safety in Mosul, the scarred back of a day laborer in India or the joyful smile of a new mother in Detroit.

This gallery of images helps me to escape the narrow fetters of my own concerns and enhances my gratitude for life. I can never be who I am meant to be without developing more compassion and love, and you can never be who you ought to be if you are suffering discrimination, hunger, violence and fear, as Martin Luther King wrote so eloquently many years ago. It really is a question of trying to make the concerns of the other your own, as the second great commandment of the New Testament asks us to do, 'Love Your

Neighbor as Yourself'.[8] This moral injunction is expressed in all of the world's great religions; thus, Hillel, the great Jewish teacher, says to a student seeking his advice, 'That which is despicable to you, do not do unto others. This is the whole Torah and the rest is commentary.'

4 There is also a clear moral and ethical dimension to understanding and witnessing the world we are part of. I do not mean that in a narrow pre-defined religious sense. But if we recall the profound evil which Hitler, Mao and Stalin unleashed on their citizens and the world in the twentieth century through the imprisonment and killing of millions of people, and we think of the genocide in Germany, Bosnia and Rwanda and the rape, slavery, and wanton killings now used as weapons of war in Africa and the Middle East, we must shudder and acknowledge the faces and gestures of evil. Closer to home, what do we do with prejudice against immigrants, racism against Latinos and Africans, and misogyny against women, or with expressions of our own anger or cruelty toward a child, a partner or a friend?

I would define evil as actions, policies, goals and activities which suppress human freedom and equality, which limit diversity, and which create structures and patterns of exploitation in which the few dominate the many for their own interests. If I apply this perspective more broadly, then saddling students with mountains of debt for their college education or deporting parents of children because they are here illegally or closing down health clinics for women and the poor is evil and, in my view, profoundly un-Christian. I think that evil is strongly connected to egotism and fear, and in its institutional forms seeks to downgrade the human being, to make life a struggle for survival. It ultimately stems from isolation from others and the world, a separation from nature, from love, from community, and it seeks domination over all that is not self.

Goodness, on the other hand, rests on a felt sense of connection to the world, to the natural, human and divine community of which we are part. We have all experienced people, regardless of their station in life, who embrace life, diversity, human freedom and equality and seek 'beloved community' with others. After the killing of nine African Americans in a church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015, a black State Trooper, at a rally protesting the removal of the Confederate flag, was photographed gently guiding

an elderly white supremacist to a seat in the heat. The photo went viral and when Leroy Smith, the trooper, was asked about the reason for his act, he said, 'Love'.[9]

There are many, many people in our communities and around the world committed to giving, to selflessness and to love; they do the good every day. Make a list for yourself of the people in your town, community of friends or network of acquaintances who manifest these moral qualities. If you need inspiration look at Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's book, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, or Sarah van Gelder's *The Revolution where You Live*.[10]

By witnessing the ethical and moral struggle between the qualities of good and evil in the world, we awaken to that struggle in ourselves. The decisive recognition is that we are each capable of evil, that the struggle between the progressive forces of life, freedom, diversity and creativity and its opposites takes place in our soul every day as well as in the world. This recognition, when kept in consciousness, limits fundamentalism, enhances modesty and increases humility. It stops us from demonizing the other because we are willing to face the darkness in our own soul, and it encourages us to both engage with the world and to work on our own transformation.

In witnessing our times I believe it is essential to go on both an inner and an outer journey. The inner journey needs to contain those essential elements found in all true spiritual traditions, the practice of reverence and gratitude as a foundation for inner work, mindfulness exercises and meditation and prayer. It is only when we have some mastery over our soul, such as can be achieved through working on Rudolf Steiner's six exercises or in a very different way with the eightfold path of Buddha, that our thinking, feeling and willing is capable of becoming an instrument of perception. Then we become more able to witness and to transform what is happening in our time, through what I call a path of insight, a journey of compassion, and the practice of a healing will.

The Path of Insight

Through the schooling of our thinking life we develop the capacity to direct our attention to perceiving and understanding what is happening

around us in the world. This implies not only being aware of issues in the moment such as the recent withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Accords by the Trump administration, but also to developing an understanding of issue linkages, of how different events are connected over time. What, for example, is the connection between the Trump election and the wars in the Middle East – wars which were started by the administration of George W. Bush, and continued in a more muted fashion by Barack Obama? One very obvious one is that over $5 trillion has been spent on our military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is money that could have been spent on infrastructure, on education, and on re-imagining the economic basis of life in the industrial heartland of America. It could have been used to fund a single payer health system and to deal with the great inequality of wealth in America. 'No Middle Eastern wars, no Donald Trump' is a quick summary.

Our wars in the Middle East are also one of the main causes of ISIL, the Taliban and radical Islam in general, for in the eyes of many Muslims we are the New Crusaders, echoing the invasions of the Middle East by the European knights of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. And it is not just our armies that are perceived as a threat, but our secular, materialistic values and life style spread through the ubiquitous world wide web. It really is a case of Jihad vs. McWorld, which, while appearing to be opposites, are both threats to democracy, as Benjamin Barber argues.[11]

The path of understanding made possible by focusing our thinking on issues of concern involves not only developing interest and finding linkages between issues but also in looking behind phenomena for the underlying systems, values and ideas which created and animated this world we are seeking to understand and transform. I think that John Maynard Keynes, the famous British economist, was quite right when he suggested that it is economic and social ideas which determine the kind of society we create. He noted 'soon or late it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil'.[12]

By way of illustration, in April 2017 American Airlines agreed to a new contract with its pilots and other employees, raising wages. But the financial industry complained, with Jaime Baker of JPMorgan stating, 'We are troubled by AAL's wealth transfer of nearly 1 billion to its labor groups'.[13] Such a public statement is a deed, just as the new labor contract is. They take place in the context of a capitalistic system in the United States in which the power and size of the financial industry has dramatically increased in the last decades despite that industry's central role in causing the global economic crisis of 2007–9.

The values of this capitalist system include competition between companies, the virtues of markets in establishing price and in allocating resources intelligently (land, labor and capital), and limiting the power and size of government. They include promoting free trade and ensuring a legal system that protects the interests of capital and private ownership. Central as well to the values of this Neo-Liberal Economic Canon, embraced by the Republican party since the time of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, is the idea that management has a primary legal responsibility to shareholders, so that paying reasonable wages or taking responsibility for environmental damage caused by a company is not only misguided but also possibly illegal. These ideas promote a world of competition in which the community, workers and the less fortunate are ignored. It is cut-throat capitalism in which the struggle for survival is the dominant ideology.

Developing a deeper interest in the social, political and economic world and attempting to understand the issues which limit our freedom, creativity and responsibility is an ongoing task. I think of it as uncovering the signature of oppression, of deciphering the many ways in which individuals, groups and governments undermine the freedom, creativity and well-being of minority groups and individuals and indeed of us all. As Justice William Douglass of the US Supreme Court warned many years ago:

> As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we must all be most aware of change in the air – however slight – lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.[14]

Developing Empathy: The Journey of Compassion

Attempting to understand the social world requires us to pay attention and to manifest sustained interest in following issues over time. It also asks us to look behind the phenomena in order to understand the principles and formative ideas which lie behind the systems and behavior of the social world. While this path requires engagement and discipline it does allow us to keep events at a distance, at arm's length, avoiding the pain and the feelings of powerlessness which the world inflicts on so many people. However, this potential one-sidedness can be balanced by adding

another dimension to the task of witnessing our times, practicing the path of empathy, of deep compassion.

This, again, is best practiced in moments of inner quiet when I can, for example, take in the recent attacks at London Bridge, or the conflict in Mosul, or the prejudice experienced by a young African American student at our local High School. Of course, there are limits to the number of situations we can take in at any one time, but it is surprising to note that if we create moments of quiet each day and begin to listen deeply, situations will begin to speak to us. For me this often starts with pictures or images, which is why I mentioned earlier the inner and outer picture gallery which I create for myself. But once these images begin to move, to speak, then I begin to experience empathy, often for both the victim and the perpetrator.

Empathy does not mean sympathy or criticism. It means a taking in of the other's experience, best captured by the German word 'Mitleid', a co-suffering with the other. Last winter I was attempting to live into the experiences of a group of Syrian refugees blocked at the Hungarian border in a snow storm and also, some days later, that of a young ISIL fighter holed up in an apartment block in Mosul. In each of these situations I found that after some time the individuals and their feelings, their hopes and their despair began to come alive in me. I would revisit these situations a number of times in the following days and found a deep compassion arise, while also recognizing the unacceptable nature of these situations.

Christine Gruwez, in her essays on *Walking with Your Time*, describes this as a step of inwardness, of deep listening and of creating a resonating chamber in our heart. She adds:

> In other words, we let the events that are acted out on the world stage deeply within us, so deeply that it might be said that we make them part of our own being…. I no longer want to just study what has happened, to consider it and look into it – I aim to allow it to be and to absorb it into myself…[15]

Gruwez then describes a third step, that of accepting and receiving. She sees this as accepting the signature of evil in our time, of the egotism and the separation from others and the world. If we can do this, and it requires ongoing practice, then we experience a feeling of profound compassion and this in turn allows a force to come into our soul, a new ability to carry the burdens of our age. It is not a solution, nor a prescription of what must be done, but a willingness to carry, to witness. This, Gruwez suggests, then

becomes a fourth step, to work out of a new presence of mind and heart. I experience it as having a source which is not our ordinary consciousness but rather a new, wiser source of guidance. Now, in moments, we are able to be in touch with the healing power of the spirit of humanity.

We can have such an experience when out of deep listening to another person or group we are moved to say something or to act in a far wiser way than normal, and we have a feeling that the other's deep longing has spoken through us. We can also have such an experience in conversation with the world when we let world events resonate deeply within us and integrate them into our soul. For me the refugees in Hungary, the scared ISIL fighter and a young African American in Mississippi suffering from AIDS without adequate medical or counseling support are alive, they resonate in my being. And when I carry these people and their situations in myself a deep feeling of compassion arises that is met by a calm holding strength. It is as if my effort to open my heart is beheld, strengthened and supported by another spiritual force which meets me.

I experience doing such work as a kind of breathing, breathing in the world, breathing out compassion. It can also be practiced in a short form, which I attempt after having lived inwardly with a situation for 10–15 minutes, a practice called Tonglen by Buddhists. Breathe in the suffering and the struggle of the other in image form and breathe out compassion and love. Carrying out such a practice over time leads to sensing a force of healing, of positivity filling your soul and giving a blessing to life despite all of its hardships.[16]

Transformation: Practicing a Healing Will

There are many ways in which we engage with the world to bring healing and transformation. We join groups devoted to environmental preservation, social justice, women and minority rights; we demonstrate, petition and vote, and we support a myriad of important causes with donations and time. In being active we become part of the 'Blessed Unrest', the millions of people around the world seeking to create a better world for our children and grand-children. We are then part of civil society which seeks to balance and to block the often unhealthy alliance between big business and big government.

In addition, many of us, seeing a need, have started initiatives seeking a better way forward. Judy Wicks founded the White Dog Café in 1983, outside of Philadelphia, and developed a local food-based economy. She

then went on to co-found BALLE, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies. Or a friend, Bea Birch, who for years wanted to see an alternative to drug-based forms of treating the mentally ill, and unable to get hospitals interested, started Inner Fire, a new therapy center in Vermont. Another example is the young violin soloist in Boston who last year gave or arranged for 60 concerts of high quality to be held in homeless shelters in the Boston area. If we look around us and reflect on our own lives we will discover a myriad of initiatives, of new activities we and others are busy with, all attempting to create a more caring world.

By pointing to these individual acts of courage and initiative I do not want to minimize the great impact of the larger movements for social change which have transformed our lives for the better in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; the women's movement, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, the organic agriculture movement and many others. But these too were started by individuals who somehow captured the spirit of the times and moved others to join them; for example, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, or Rachel Carson and her book, *Silent Spring*, which gave rise to the environmental movement in the 1960s.

There is also an inner dimension to the path of will which a friend and colleague of mine described many years ago in a little book called *Nothing to Do with Me?*[17] In this book of essays Alexander Bos suggests that if we are upset or concerned about aspects of modern society we can ask where in my life can I find the same qualities that underlie the phenomena which trouble me? He looks at the excesses of a consumer society based on credit and debt, the impersonality of modern bureaucratic society and the monotony of modern housing developments, suggesting that we could find antidotes in our soul and act on this. We can, for example, not make significant purchases until we have the funds to do so, thereby undermining the debt-based credit card system; we can behold and make contact with the individuals serving us at the train station, the receptionist in an office, or the worker at the Department of Motor Vehicles, seeing and acknowledging them rather than treating them as objects of the bureaucratic machine. And we can examine the pattern of our lives, overcoming the monotony of routine, of uniformity by introducing more variety, and creativity, in how we live each day.

I have made it a practice, at times intermittent, to see and acknowledge the people who serve me and am surprised and delighted by the soul exchange which often happens through a genuine looking at, accompanied by a conscious thank-you. Being concerned about violence and war

I also try to not react when angry but to ponder the situation over time, working to understand the other's experience and viewpoint. I readily admit to sometimes not being able to stop my reactive self, especially with those closest to me.

I do feel that all of us have an ability to take on significant issues of our society by locating the inner quality in those issues and finding those same situations in our personal life to transform. Greed, selfishness, violence and prejudice live in us and at the same time in the world. We can practice the values of a new society in our own life, being environmentally responsible, buying food and other goods from stores whose values and policies we support, practicing non-violence in thought and deed at home and at work. We can learn to meet and value the other; our partner, our children, our colleagues and the stranger who moved in down the street. To do such work within ourselves and in our life is a powerful antidote to feelings of despair.

Some time ago a small group of friends and I began to work on issues which concerned us: racism, the election of Donald Trump, the nature of prejudice, the working of evil and climate change. We meet for four hours each month, eating a pot-luck supper together, and share the issues' impacts on our personal lives, and then explore the inner and outer dimensions of how we can work for positive change in ourselves, and in the world. This raises our awareness of the multiple dimensions of the issue, eases our sense of isolation and powerlessness and gives us courage for greater activity. It also creates a strong sense of community, as we have opened our hearts to each other. If you do not have such a group to work with on issues of common concern, I suggest you might create one.

Working for the Good

I do think we all have a greater ability to work for the good than we are normally aware of. But this requires the willingness to engage with the world, to becoming a conscious witness of our times and to overcoming two lies which the media and our society promote at every turn. The first is that you as an individual have no possibility to bring about change unless you are rich and powerful, or are part of well-organized and well-connected interest groups or organizations. The other is that your inner life, your thoughts and feelings, are irrelevant for the world. Both are manifestly untrue. It is only individuals, with the aid of others, that bring about change and progress in society. And out of our own experience we

know that prayer, meditation and healing thoughts do have an effect on others and the world.

The Long Emergency of the twenty-first century can be seen as a call to our consciousness to be a witness and an active participant in shaping our society and our world. In addition to working on our own development, we have three distinct and yet deeply connected paths to practice in healing ourselves and the world, the path of insight, the journey of compassion and the path of will and transformation. They can be practiced singly or in combination but when worked with together they add depth and balance to our striving. To pick up this inner and outer work is our responsibility, our birthright and I think the path to our salvation, freeing us from the narrow confines of our egotism and making possible a new culture of compassion.

Notes

1 James Kunstler, *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the 21st Century*, Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 2005. Kunstler's book is based on the notion of declining oil and energy resources and the resulting collapse of a consumer-based suburban society in the United States. He was clearly wrong about oil and yet his title and the premise of the long emergency still seem very relevant to me.

2 See Joshua Rothman, 'The Big Question: Is the world getting better or worse?', *The New Yorker*, 23 August 2018.

3 Pew Foundation Center, *World Attitudes: Is Life Better or Worse than Fifty Years Ago?*, December 2017.

4 CNN Money, 12 January 2017.

5 Mary Oliver, *Felicity*, Penguin Press, New York, 2016 – 'Late Spring', p. 69.

6 Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy…*, Routledge, New York, 1969. In this work Elizabeth Kubler-Ross elaborated the five stages of coming to terms with the prospect of death.

7 Martin Luther King, quoted from 'A Letter from Birmingham Jail', republished in *The Atlantic*, April 2013.

8 King James Bible, Mark 12, 28–34.

9 Quoted in Krista Tippett, Becoming Wise: *An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living*, Penguin Books, New York, 2017, p. 114.

10 Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, Vintage Books, New York, 2015; and Sarah van Gelder, *The Revolution where You Live: Stories from a 12,000 Mile Journey Through a New America*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, Calif., 2017.

11 Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy*, Time Books, New York, 1995. His argument that both terrorism and globalism are a challenge to democracy is contained in an earlier article in *The Atlantic*, March 1992.

12 John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Knopf, New York, 1944, Chapter 21, pp. 383–384.

13 David Brooks, 'The axis of selfishness', *New York Times*, Friday 2 June 2017.

14 Ibid.

15 Christine Gruwez, *Walking with your time: A Manichean Journey*, Lulu, Antwerp, 2011, pp. 74–75. I have found this short book very stimulating and most helpful, along with that of Alexander Bos, *Nothing to Do with Me?* (see note 17).
16 A practice first described to me in detail by my good friend Joseph Rubano.
17 Alexander Bos, *Nothing to Do with Me? The Individual and Community*, Floris Books, Edinburgh, 1983. When I first read this book in the late 1980s, I was deeply touched because of its emphasis on the complex connections between the inner soul world and the outer world of events and actions.