

# **Death and Rebirth: Explaining the Dynamics of 1999**

**by Robert Theobald**

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To paraphrase William Blake, we are caught between two worlds, one dying and one ready to be born. The patterns of the industrial era are dying around us. Fortunately a new world is being born at the same time. The turbulence of the transformation is challenging us all and causing extraordinary stress. Each of us, therefore, needs to deal with the resulting turbulence through our own forms of spiritual practice.

If we fail to face this stress, we freeze into fear. Fear closes down our creativity and our imagination. We concentrate on survival rather than how to perceive and manage the opportunities of our time.

The real challenge of this moment in history is to distinguish between what is dying and what is being born. So many exciting innovations are being proposed and put into practice now that we actually have enough pieces to begin to build the new world we want. We'd be wise to put less effort into creating additional innovations, and more effort into understanding and sharing the leading innovations that are already emerging among us. The chances are, if we can see something that needs to be changed, there is probably someone somewhere who has a really good approach for dealing with it. We just have to find them, spread the news, and start fitting the pieces together.

It goes without saying that the work we now need to do is difficult and challenging. Fortunately, it is also exciting and opens up potentials for new styles of relationship and fun. When asked why I have been engaged in fundamental change work for over forty years, I reply that I meet a more exciting group of people, I enjoy myself more and I have an insatiable curiosity to see how this all works out.

I am aware, however, that we are not only challenging the superficial aspects of the industrial era but that we are attacking the core assumption which has caused humanity's progress up to this time. When people learned how to cultivate plants and herd animals, we began to believe that we were not dependent on nature. We thought that we had the skills to make choices, which could free us to do anything that we wanted.

Our activities have brought us to a point where we now have effectively unlimited productive and destructive power. It is today fully obvious that unless we can change the ways we think and behave we shall destroy ourselves. We may do so by an unintended global, nuclear, chemical and biological war. Or we may so disturb ecological systems that

they will make life on this planet unsustainable. Growing evidence of increasingly dangerous weather patterns are a part of the evidence that mother nature is being dangerously stressed.

We need to make radical changes. The longer we delay the higher the costs will be. I shall talk today about some of the shifts that are required and how we could make them in time. There are hard choices to be made and they can only be achieved on the basis of radically different governance systems.

Fortunately, the changes are already taking place. As I have already said, one of the images increasingly being used is that we are living through the birthing process of a new culture. A birth is inevitable but the nature of the birth is far from certain. Just like a human fetus, the health of the baby will be determined by the care which is given to it during the period of pregnancy. At the moment, the anger and violence around us does not bode well for positive outcomes.

Some suggest that the new culture is already in the birth canal. They point to the need to let the process develop in healthy ways. They argue that fear causes greater pain and danger. They argue, as do I, for each of us to treat each other with care and grace. This is not a time to argue and threaten. It is a time to care for each other and to help people through the huge stress of our times.

I hear many people complaining their overloads and frustrations. But birth is always a time of danger as well as potential joy. This is true despite all we know of the process of human birth. How much more complex, and stressful, the process of birthing a new human culture must inevitably be. We need to accept this and live with the uncertainties and dangers, looking forward with faith.

### **The causes of stress**

Those of us who are serving as the midwives of the change process are experiencing the same patterns of overload that develops for those who assist human births. We keep strange hours. We have too much to do. We sometimes experience patterns which we do not understand. In addition, each of us experiences the rapids of change in different ways. But there is one extraordinarily common theme among those of us who live in the rich world and have achieved a reasonable standard of living. We are plagued by a lack of time. We feel rushed. We wonder how to make time for ourselves and our children. We feel overwhelmed by the amount of things we can buy and the places we can go. We no longer make the time to do nothing.

Doing nothing is seen by our culture to be wasted time. But we know that daydreaming is an essential part of creativity. And it is also part of a healthy lifestyle. Our total intolerance of truancy from schools is both an indicator of how ordered we want life to be and our demands for discipline in the young. We want an ordered universe with as little unpredictability as possible.

It is this reality which has made the debate on Y2K and the millennium bug so extraordinary. Reactions clearly have depended on the way one thinks about the world rather than on facts and data. The same picture is interpreted in dramatically different ways. And our patterns of

thought depend on very deep-seated images of reality. Some are deeply concerned, others argue that the issue is radically overblown.

Y2K has challenged the very heart of Western industrial-era philosophy. We are the inheritors of a tradition that claimed the ability to order the world as we wished. This world view has deep roots. It got stronger when Newton developed a mechanical set of images. Humanity came to see the world as a watch wound up by God. We lived within fixed conditions. Our actions were constrained by cause and effect relationships.

We have now developed this set of ideas to their ultimate level. We organize our lives as though nothing can or will go wrong. The most visible of these philosophies is seen in "just in time" strategies. These assume that all the goods and services one needs to produce a particular product can be scheduled so exactly that stocks can be kept to a minimum.

Government reactions to Y2K are based clearly and directly on current dominant thinking. It is argued that Y2K cannot possibly be a serious problem because it is not in the self-interest of firms or governments to allow disruption. This comfortable position assumes that governments and firms really understand what is changing in the world and they can therefore be in charge. My whole thesis denies this statement.

The thinking of those in charge of policy-making in our world is bounded by the ideas they accept. We were unable to deal with the great depression of the thirties because of the economic theories that were dominant at the time. We were unable to avoid World War II because of the patterns we built after World War I.

Today, we are equally unable to escape from the boundaries which are determined by our mind sets. We slipped into the Kosovo tangle because we used incorrect images and analogies. Even if we have brought Milosovic to his knees, there is no doubt in my mind that the Balkans are now more unstable rather than less. We brought on the worst of the Asian economic meltdown because we are using dangerous economic models, particularly at the International Monetary Fund.

Our failure to understand Y2K is only one example of a pervasive failure. We are living in a cultural trance. The good news is that people are far further along in breaking out of the trance than we realize. The bad news is that few of our governance systems are moving with the new understandings that have already developed. Y2K challenges the comfortable belief in humanity's control over the world. It suggests that the real need is to deal with issues as they arise rather than to have contingency plans for everything that could possibly happen. It places a premium on flexibility and human relationships rather than structure and order. It argues that mistakes are inevitable and that systems work well when they accept this reality rather than deny it.

### **The Specific Y2K issues**

Why are current governmental policies toward Y2K irresponsible? Here are the basic reasons. Firms in the United States, and elsewhere in the developed world, have spent billions of dollars on dealing with Y2K. It seems impossible to me that most of this money was wasted. I have to assume, and this is all I can do for I am not a technology expert, that

this was necessary.

But if it was necessary, then there are implications that cannot be ignored. We know, for certain, that certain States and counties have done far less work than others. It follows, then that those who live in these areas are at risk. A recent "60 Minutes" report looked at Washington DC, and the person in charge of the system gave a very bleak prognosis about the possibilities for early 2000.

We also know that many medium and small firms are not aware of, or alternatively not willing or able to spend money on, Y2K. While their systems will certainly have lesser problems than large companies, they are also typically far less able to withstand shocks. Statistics show that natural disasters lead to large number of bankruptcies among local firms: Y2K has the same disastrous potential.

And we also know, most seriously, that little work on Y2K has been done in many countries. While activity is now starting, it is too late to tackle many of the most critical systems. Once again, unless one is willing to assume that firms and governments in countries such as the Great Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia have been wasting huge amounts of money, it is clear that there will be considerable problems. In today's interconnected world, this means that there will inevitably be knock-on effects in the developed world.

I want you to note that I have so far only looked at issues that are undeniable. I am not getting into the issues where people can legitimately disagree with each other. For example:

- What do the percentages given out for completion of Y2K work really mean: do they provide real information or do they hide it?
- To what extent is there a process of inevitable distortion of realities as information moves from those doing the work to those who report it? There is always a tendency to hide the bad news: to what extent is this happening with Y2K?
- What is meant by mission-critical? Why are organizations engaged in non-mission critical work anyway? Have the right systems been defined as mission critical? What are the implications of the fact that during the Y2K process many tasks have moved from being defined as 'mission-critical' to 'non-mission-critical'?
- How interconnected are systems in today's world: will small failures cascade into major ones?
- Do any of us really understand the systems we have created around us well enough to predict?
- How should governments interact with citizens when there is inadequate and uncertain information?

Nor have I looked at the realities in which Y2K is currently embedded. Kosovo has made cooperation between nation states considerably more difficult. The United States, the most natural leader on the Y2K issue, is seen by many nations as a bully and a rogue state which

believes that might makes right. There is already a potential that the US will be blamed for anything that goes wrong as a result of Y2K: the risk is being dramatically increased by Kosovo strategies and the unwillingness of the United States to rethink its extreme free trade and free market policies. In addition, Y2K will hit at a time when the United States and world economies are peculiarly vulnerable. There is broad agreement that the global economic system is being held up by the strong dynamics in America. Unfortunately, more and more people also agree that current land, property and stock market evaluations are too high. When they break, as they eventually have to, then the unsustainable consumption levels that are keeping the boom moving forward will collapse. There will then, almost inevitably, be a global recession and perhaps even depression.

Y2K will interact with economic dynamics in some predictable and other unpredictable, ways. We know that people will stock up before the end of the year, as will companies. This will add to growth this year and decrease it next. More importantly, however, it is not clear how the stock markets are going to react to the high levels of Y2K uncertainty. It is quite possible that people will draw money out of stocks and cause a market decline or even collapse.

But it also possible that the United States will be seen as the safe haven in the world. Money would then flow to this country and out of others. The United States stock market would do well but those in other countries, particularly, the developing countries would do badly. This would still further increase the magnitude of the already threatening imbalance between the rich and the poor countries.

Behind all this are some other possibilities. One is the degree to which the 'crazies' will use, or be used by, the coming of the millennium. There is serious concern about terrorism at this time. Another is the fact that sunspot activity is likely to reach a massive peak at about the time of the New Year. Both of these factors could be non-trivial elements in the overall picture for the next eighteen months.

Before I move on I need to consider briefly one other contexting issue. The overall level of turbulence is going to increase and people know this. On my most recent trip to Australia, I frequently took a poll. I asked people whether the rapids of change were going to be stronger in the next months than in the immediate past period. Almost everybody expected more dramatic change than in the past.

Interestingly those who saw the certainty of increased turbulence did not normally have Y2K at the top of their minds. They saw the increase in the gap between the rich and the poor, economic insecurity, compounding technology, global warming, ecological uncertainties and market forces as shifting the world in dramatic and unpredictable ways.

### **The implications**

Even the most conservative interpretation of the Y2K date confirms that it will have significant impacts. My own reading suggests that there will be major trauma.

But it will not have the form and shape that has often been suggested. Most rhetoric talks about a short burst of trouble at the very beginning of the year and that things then settle

down. There may indeed be immediate problems as we move from 1999 to 2000 but this is not the real danger. The analogy is not with an ice storm or a hurricane. Stocking food and water for a 3 or seven-day period is a prudent precaution at any time. But it is not adequate to deal with Y2K challenges.

The real problems emerge from the fact that many of the systems on which we rely may become dysfunctional. Douglas Carmichael talks about increased viscosity in systems: in other words, all of the organizations on which we rely will work less well. It may not even appear that all the problems are Y2K related and indeed they may not be. It will be the overall speed of change and the total level of stress that will be critical in determining dynamics.

I am arguing that significant trouble is inevitable. But even if I am wrong about the inevitability, only a foolhardy soul would argue that it is impossible. If this is the case, then the precautionary principle should inevitably come into play. We assume, as individuals and as a culture, that events which have high costs associated with them should be taken seriously. This is true even if the risk is relatively low.

Thus we take out life insurance even though we are actually unlikely to die at any particular time. Similarly we buy fire insurance. We invest more in disaster relief procedures and resources than we need to deal with normal disasters because we are aware that we shall need high levels of skills and equipment from time to time.

Why then are governments underplaying the Y2K issue? They have allowed themselves to be caught in a double bind. They have correctly seen that panic, as a reaction to Y2K, is an extraordinary danger. But they have not recognized that their current patterns of behavior are increasing the risks rather than limiting them.

The danger with Y2K is that the intelligent actions of individuals could lead to socially dangerous consequences. Thus if people increase the amount of food, water and medicine they want to have in their houses faster than the supply chain can adjust to, then there will be panic. If people try to withdraw some money to deal with possibility of bank disruptions, this could cause the disruptions they fear. If people think the stock market will collapse, their actions could cause the collapse.

The question then becomes what is the way to prevent panics. Most governments are hoping to prevent panic by convincing people that Y2K is under control. By taking this route they run two risks. First, there is a profound danger that they are wrong: this will cause needless suffering. Second, the risks of panic increase if the lid cannot be held on the pot as we move into the last months of 1999.

It is already clear that there will continue to be mixed messages about levels of preparedness throughout the year. The break in the happy talk with the May "60 Minutes" show suggests that the relatively solid front of the media may also break. Given these realities, current government actions are increasing the danger of panic rather than decreasing it.

Our current patterns of thought have made many people very vulnerable to technological, climate and economic shocks. We do not stock enough supplies to be able to cope with

disasters. We have debt levels, which become overwhelming with only a short interruption in income flows. We are reliant on supply chains, which can break. Our culture has become brittle. We therefore needed time to rethink our patterns of behavior. If people had been warned at the beginning of 1999, or even better in 1998, that there were real dangers then there would have been opportunities for careful reflection. The shorter the gap between Y2K becoming real to people and the moment they feel they have to act, the more likely it is that they will indeed panic.

The real tragedy is that central and state governments have chosen not to trust people. Instead of an open and honest system, they have preferred to soothe. But as I stated above, the pattern they chose was almost inevitable given the patterns out of which they think. And it is now too late to expect much alteration, although we should move with whatever central support we can find.

## **Strategies**

What could make a difference?

Let's start from the most obvious steps. First, the city of Portland has a model ready to go which would inform people in their neighborhoods about how to be better prepared for any disaster, including Y2K. This is now bottled up in council. We could all provide support to the Mayor and other positive council members so that the political balance in the city would change. We could also make it clear to those who have blocked the proposed project that their stance is unacceptable. I believe that if one city committed to imaginative patterns around Y2K there is a real chance that others would follow. Please send messages to Mayor Katz at [mayorkatz@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:mayorkatz@ci.portland.or.us) and copy to [hofland@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:hofland@ci.portland.or.us) and [mdbowd@bigplanet.com](mailto:mdbowd@bigplanet.com)

A month after this speech was given the following article, "City steps up its efforts in handling Y2K", appeared in *The Oregonian* on July 8, 1999 which leads off with:

The City Council unanimously adopted a trimmed-down but still ambitious plan to prepare the city -- especially its elderly, sick and disabled residents -- for potential disruptions from the Y2K problem.

"This is a great opportunity to build community and be prepared not just for Y2K but for any potential disruption of service," Mayor Vera Katz said in introducing the plan.

The plan's author, the City of Portland Year 2000 Council, says it thinks the community's infrastructure -- its power supply, finances, health care, transportation, food and water -- is not likely to fail significantly, or for long, after the new year arrives. But the council also acknowledges that the actual impacts of the computer bug will remain largely unknown until Jan. 1, 2000, which some computers may mistake for 1900.

See <http://www.oregonlive.com/news/99/07/st070802.html> -ratitor

Second, we can take advantage of the fact that the best understanding of the Y2K issue is at the local level. Several Mayors in the Rogue Valley in Oregon have already signed a statement, which shows their commitment to action and work, which will make their communities more resilient. A major effort could be made across the country to increase the number of Mayors who sign the petition: this could both become newsworthy and help to move the overall stance of the debate. To learn about this effort contact: Liza K. Christian [windsong@grrtech.com](mailto:windsong@grrtech.com)

We could also publicize more effectively the work that has already been done over the past year to show how Y2K can be an opportunity rather than a problem. There are a number of critically important edited books, which have developed patterns of thought and action, which will make a difference. There are also specific ideas, like that of Wayne Schumacher from this community, for Community Triangles which would make it easier for communities to know where help was needed in an emergency. One way into the huge volume of material is through our website <http://www.resilientcommunities.org/>.

Finally, we can participate in the community conversations now being planned by the government and insist that they be realistically designed. We have been offered the opportunity to participate. Admittedly, the initial framework for these discussions has been biased by the claim that all serious problems have already been resolved. But the claim is so ludicrous, once one looks at the reality of our situation, that it can be effectively challenged.

### **The paradox**

Any effective challenge to current thinking, however, cannot only be in terms of Y2K. The real issue with which we must all grapple is the end of the world as we have known it. Those who want to see Y2K as a speed bump are failing to recognize that we live in a world that is dramatically different from the one for which our institutions were designed. Indeed, even at the level of analogy, the image is flawed. I once went over a speed-bump at 30 mph and almost lost the car and my teeth. What would happen at our current 80 mph?

We are in the middle of an incredible shift in overall realities. This provides us with an opportunity to think about the beginning of the world as we want it. Y2K is one symptom of these shifts. But our lives are also being changed by the loss of all the traditional barriers as the Internet and the web bring down barriers. We live in a densely populated world as compared to a century ago, with consequent threats to our supplies of food, water and clean air. Technology is also altering conditions so rapidly that our moral and political responses are lagging behind.

The world is evolving at an extraordinarily rapid pace. It is moving in directions that are literally unknowable. If we are to prevent local and global breakdown we can only do so by accepting that the models we have inherited from both our long run, and immediate, past have to be abandoned. Y2K is a wake-up call for us. It can be seen as a road-sign warning us of a sharp turn in the route ahead.

But it is also a symptom of a deeper danger. We need to move with the changes that are already taking place around us rather than ignoring them. And we have very little time to do so. More and more of the people who think seriously about the future agree that our current brittle systems will break in the next five to ten years. Preventing breakdown depends on making far larger changes, in a far shorter time, than our current decision-making systems make possible.

I want to end this speech therefore by setting out two sets of understandings which I have had confirmed by my extensive Australian travels over the last eighteen months. One of them defines the goals that I believe to be essential for the twenty-first century. The other



sets out the patterns which I believe to be essential if we are to bring people together in an effective coalition which challenges our current industrial system.

### **The goals of the twenty-first century**

The goal of the twentieth century has been maximum economic growth achieved through technological knowledge. This cannot be continued into the twenty-first century. It is all too clear that ten billion people cannot live at current rich-country standards of living let alone the standards that would be achieved if current commitments to economic growth continue.

It is also all too clear that society's willingness to use all technologies without thinking seriously about their side effects or their moral implications is creating a profoundly dangerous situation. The current world population cannot be supported without technology but unless it is used more intelligently it threatens to destroy the ecologies in which we live and to promote violence in ways that will create massive destruction. The disconnect between those who create technologies and those who affected by them is currently being shown by the gene-modification debate: the inadequacy of our current democratic mechanisms to cope with the implications is all too clear.

In the last two decades, a radical thesis has emerged and been adopted by a small, dominant elite. Free markets, it is argued, can produce not only growth but also social equity. According to this view, political decision-making gets in the way of the benefits of free markets. Margaret Thatcher went so far as to argue that there was no such thing as society.

As an economist by training, I can assure you that this belief is totally unsupported by any rational argument. Free markets are, indeed, the best way to decide *how* to do things. They are not the right way to determine *what* is worth doing. People making appropriate choices must determine this. Adam Smith, who is often cited as the authority to support current directions, was totally clear on this point. He assumed that society would determine goals: the market the means to reach them.

If then we abandon economic growth and uncontrolled technology as our Gods -- for they have indeed been Gods in the twentieth century -- what do we put in their place? Here are some basic, simple ideas:

- The core goal for the twenty-first century should be the quality of life. This would mean that people would have more time for themselves, their families and their communities. It would mean a far lower emphasis on the quantity of goods. It would include a recognition that we can get far more enjoyment with far less material goods. It would also recognize that current technological developments allow us to do more of what we want with a lesser impact on the ecologies of the world.

This goal cannot be achieved, however, without three other commitments being made:

- i. The first is to social cohesion. Peace cannot be secured if the gap between the rich and the poor is too wide, if there continue to be ethnic cleansings throughout the world, if past hurts and angers over-ride the need to live together. We need to move beyond opposition to each other to finding common ground.

- ii. The second requirement is for ecological integrity. We know, intellectually, the ecological dangers at the local, regional and global scale. But if we are to preserve the systems on which our lives depend, we shall have to make hard decisions. These will only be possible if we are prepared to think about more creative ways to compensate those who lose their livelihoods as ecological imperatives emerge.
- iii. The third requirement is for effective decision-making. There is no place in our current systems to deal with the sorts of issues I have described in this speech. Think-tanks and universities are not responsible for looking into the future in the required way. Nor are our political bodies. We have to either invent fundamentally new structures or we have to make far greater changes to our current political processes than are currently being publicly contemplated. For the beginnings of broader-scale ideas see:  
[http://www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol\\_Index.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol_Index.html)

I have personally reached the conclusion that it is impossible to deal with Today's issues unless we abandon adversarial thinking. We need to work with each other rather than try to achieve narrow party political advantage. It should be obvious that this can only happen when we change our most basic understandings of the world in which we live. Conflict is inevitable and desirable for it shows the way ahead. But we need to use it in creative, rather than destructive, ways. We are in the middle of a profound intellectual, system, philosophical and theological revolution. The birth, which is taking place, is based on a profoundly different set of images which describe how the world really works. This statement is widely accepted today. The problem is that there are a very large number of languages and styles used to express this belief and while they are all moving in the same direction, their very variety causes confusion.

### **How could we create a movement?**

I have been lucky enough to be able to create some dynamics in Australia which promise the serious consideration of these issues during the months of September through November of this year. I shall close my speech by mentioning two projects, which have emerged, and the lessons I have learned from this work. If you are located in Australia and you want more information, please send a message to [jwalker2@pophost.scu.edu.au](mailto:jwalker2@pophost.scu.edu.au) . If you are located anywhere else please contact [amandab@iea.com](mailto:amandab@iea.com)

The first of the two activities is called Australia Connects; A People's Vision. If this project works as well as we expect, we intend to extend it to the world in the year 2000. This set of activities will take place between Thursday October 14th and Sunday October 17th, 1999. It is designed to encourage large numbers of Australians to talk with each other about the future they want. There will be three major elements:

1. On the Thursday evening people will be encouraged to gather in town halls, or other places. They will work in small groups which encourage citizens to discuss with current decision-makers what they all want and the stresses which arise from lack of trust.

2. Between Friday and Sunday, small groups will be encouraged to gather in their workplaces and clubs; schools and colleges; churches, synagogues and mosque; in homes, cafes and pubs to talk about desirable futures. Small groups of friends will also gather in conversation. Each group will decide what they believe is most important to them. (If weekly meetings fall outside this period, as may be the case for service clubs, then anytime in this week will be appropriate.)
3. On the Sunday, gatherings will take place in parks across the country that will bring together those who have talked together and enable them to see how many people from all walks of life are interested in creating a better future.

The second activity is an invitational conference for about 300 people, being organized by the University of Canberra, to be held on September 26-28. It will bring together those who have the potential to take what they learn and to share it with others and thus bring about change in opinions and directions.

The conference will have a unique style, being organized in the corridors. We are assuming that all those who are coming will already have a great deal of information about current realities. Their need then is to talk to other competent people about what can be done rather than to get more input. Almost all the time will be spent in small groups.

The unique aspect of these two activities is that they are based on the assumption that fundamental change in directions is inevitable and that the longer it is delayed the greater the costs will be. It is also assumed that there will be very few win/win/win solutions. There will be no arguments about the viability of the current system: those who participate will be able to assume that the twenty-first century must necessarily be profoundly different than the twentieth.

What lessons are we learning as we move rapidly ahead with these projects:

- a. **People are Ready.** Our priority task is no longer to inform people about the need for change but rather to enable them to express their hopes. There is, fortunately, a rapidly growing awareness of the need to listen and work with those with whom one disagrees.
- b. **Dream no Small Dreams.** We shall only attract large-scale positive energy if we enable people to believe that their actions may make a real difference to their children and grandchildren.
- c. **See the Whole Picture but Act on a Part of it.** Big changes happen when a lot of people do a lot of things a little bit differently.
- d. **Less is More.** The threshold for involvement should be set as low as possible so people can start with small steps.
- e. **Resilience.** This is one word, of many, to express the core skill we need in the future. We must move away from brittle, over stressed systems to opportunities for people and ecologies to have time and space for good choices. This leads to co-intelligence rather than co-stupidity.

**f. Care for Others and Ourselves.** The transformation now occurring is immensely stressful. We need to use spiritual practices to keep ourselves centered. This challenge is particularly great for those who are committed to being in the 'empty center': connecting people and groups but not controlling their actions. We must, in particular, be aware how our patterns of thought, meetings and actions can exclude others: we must constantly respect the different processes that a respect for diversity requires.

About eighteen months ago I wrote a major speech called 'The Healing Century' and then later produced a set of audiotapes with the same title. My thesis was that survival required a move beyond the endemic violence of the twentieth century. In the eighteen months patterns have continued to get better and better and worse and worse faster and faster -- a statement I owe to Tom Atlee who's here with us today.

I am today much clearer about what must happen *now* to avoid what I believe to be major threats. I end therefore as I began. The first challenge is in our own lives. Then we can move out to families and communities. And then we can look at how to link the world in a web of shared values and respectful diversity. I wish all of you all the peace and tranquility we can jointly create as we enjoy the rapids of change.