

“... AND GULLIVER RETURNS”

--In Search of Utopia--



Book One
Touch Down
Return to Earth

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BOOK 1

TOUCH DOWN--RETURN TO EARTH

by

Lemuel Gulliver XVI as told to Jacqueline Slow

Art work by Susie Kleiner

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THE RETURN FROM SPACE



— “5-4-3-2-1-Touch down! . . . and Gulliver returns. The greatest adventure in human history! Commander Lemuel Gulliver the 16th has completed the first journey around the solar system. Today, May 17, 2025 is a day that will be forever engraved in the minds of humanity.

“This is Chet Rowland of World News on the California desert where we have just witnessed the final leg of the greatest human adventure in history, even greater than that of his illustrious ancestor, Lemuel Gulliver the First. After 25 years in space, Lemuel Gulliver the 16th returns from his odyssey of exploring most of the solar system in search of possible homes for the millions or billions of earthlings who have overflowed our planet. Let me try to grab him on his way to de-briefing.

“Commander, let me just ask a couple of questions that the waiting world wants to know.”



-- Sure, but I only have a minute”



—“Have you found suitable potential homes for the excess world population?



—“Not at all. There are a few places on Mars and Venus that might be suitable for underground cities. But there is no place in our solar system as ‘people friendly’ as our own Earth.”



—“What made you volunteer for the trip and were you ever sorry that you did? And were you lonely?”



—“Like my famous ancestor, the first Gulliver, I lusted for adventure. But the adventure into the unknown world by his sailing ship 300 years ago could not have been as exciting as the lure of other worlds beyond our world. The thrill of space travel and being the first person to set

foot on several planets gave me orgasmic thrills that will live with me every day of my life. And you ask was I lonely. Yes and no. I enjoy human companionship as the most soothing and stimulating salve to my soul. But I was not alone. I had with me Plato and Aristotle, Jesus and Mohammed, Lao Tzu and Confucius, Galileo and Copernicus, Freud and Bacon, Shakespeare and Milton. I was never alone. My 25 years in space gave me years of uninterrupted reading time to study the great books of our world. And that voyage into our intellectual cosmos was at least as exciting as my travel in space. It gave me both the hope of possible solutions to our planetary problems and a fear that human selfishness would continue to prevent them.

“Plato saw the selfishness of the family as preventing the best of societies. The Soviet Union’s failure to establish a Communist utopia hinged on a combination of human frailties—the economic selfishness of the masses, the power-mad leaders and the universal propensity to prepare for and recover from war. Plato’s city-state and Bacon’s island state were too small to be useful as models for today’s multi-billion population with space age communication, a global economy, and a myriad of religions and philosophies that divide our human brotherhood into millions of Cains and Abels. Still we should heed the advice of the king of New Atlantis and work to join humanity and policy together.

“Guided by the practice of the rulers of New Atlantis, voyagers would set out periodically to bring back the knowledge of other civilizations to make their own kingdom better. The arts and sciences, the inventions and manufactures, the books and instruments were shared—making every civilization richer. Because, after all, knowledge is power. Such a worldly endeavor appeals to me now. I think there is the possibility to save ourselves from ourselves.”



—“What are your immediate plans now that you’ve rejoined humanity?”



—“Some might think that I would want to take a month on Tahiti and soak up some rays, but remember, I have been alone for 25 years. I want to jump into the chaos of civilization and visit some countries that interest me. Some countries have made effective strides in solving our universal problems. I have only been able to hear about the movements, both forward and backward, that nations have taken to grapple with humankind’s greatest problem—overpopulation. I want to see for myself. We’re choking ourselves with our wastes in the air, in the ground and in the seas. We live in fear of criminals, terrorists and warlords—warlords who have gained power through ballots or bullets. Utopia is a realizable dream, but will we decide to pursue it?”



—“With that whole solar system out there, isn’t there some possibility of finding a place for utopian settlements to be developed?”



—“No, not with our present technology—the possibility just isn’t there. We have to solve our population problems here on earth. And we may already be too late!”



—“The world has been following your communiqués and there are many questions about your strong advocacy for licensing parents to have children as the only hope for humanity.”



—“When I left my beloved country on October 12, 1999 it was not significant that my voyage began on Columbus Day. What was significant was that it was the day that the six billionth baby was born on our planet. In Sarajevo, Bosnia. Kofi Anan, the Secretary General of the United Nations made the trip to the Balkans to celebrate, with trepidation. And the World Health Organization acknowledged it, with fear for the future. Planned Parenthood shuddered with anxiety and a renewed sense of panic. And the irreverently intelligent cried for the future of their children.

“The overpopulation of the earth with its attendant problems of insufficient clean air and water, of loss of soil and oxygen producing trees, the population induced weather changes, the skyrocketing costs of food and energy, and the rapid accumulation of waste made me eager to begin my voyage into the deepest regions of the solar system searching for a hospitable settlement site for those who wished to escape the ecological disaster which humankind has unthinkingly brought upon itself.

“Over half of the world’s population now live in cities. This has concentrated the poverty, the number of slums, and increased violence. (1) In five years, by 2030, five billion will live in the cities. Here in California our population will double to 60 million people in the first half of this century. Most of this growth occurs because of births in the cities, not because of migration. And few governments can provide clean water, sanitation and adequate housing, let alone education and health benefits for the poor.

“There are no easy solutions to the problems created by the continuous increases in the population. On the one hand some politicians and businessmen think that such increases are

necessary. Younger workers must pay for the older citizens who retire earlier and live longer—and with those longer retirements more workers are necessary to pay their way because lawmakers did not require workers to contribute enough of their salaries to pay for their own retirements. Business, of course, is always looking to increase its consumer base. The obvious solution for this problem is to increase the death rate. But those of us who are alive don't like that option. But you remember what the English philosopher Francis Bacon said, 'He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils, for time is the greatest innovator.'"



—“You mentioned business. It reminds us of what Confucius said, ‘The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell.’ But what solutions do you have in mind?”



—“There is no single solution to the problems released by Pandora's population box. To solve the problem of longer life spans and early retirements we just have to increase the length of the working life before we can allow one to retire. But there's a lot more to the problem than just providing old age benefits. If it isn't too late, we can follow the lead of those few countries that have licensed parents to have children. It seems that it is a major hope to bring the world back into ecological balance and guarantee that each child born will have every possibility to develop physically, mentally and emotionally and to achieve his or her greatest potential in a loving family. Only then can we reach the utopian goal that has been the dream of the philosophers and saints who have preceded us.

“But I want to see how religions that are often violently competitive live in peace when I visit Muchinju. I want to look at how the United Colonies seem to have perverted the concepts of justice and democracy which have led them away from any utopian goals. I want to examine some countries that seem to be moving towards a utopia and some countries that seem to be moving away from such a goal. Are we to wait until God solves the problem or should we assume that God wants us to solve our own problems with our minds—that many believe are the image of God. I don't think that God wants us to wait for another flood or another Sodom.

THE GOOD LIFE

“It's not just a question of reducing population, but of eliminating misery and increasing the 'the good life.' Some people ask why some should be so poor while others are so rich. Did you know that the thousand richest people have more money than the two and a half poorest people?

Some ask for a more equitable distribution of the wealth—as Karl Marx suggested. The problem is that there isn't as much money in the world as it appears. When I left, the world's population of 6 billion had a world gross product of 21 trillion dollars annually. If all of the wealth produced in a year were distributed equally it would have left about \$3500 for every person. That would be about the same as the average income in Poland or Venezuela but would have been considerably less than the poorest American state, Mississippi, with an average per capita income of \$18,000 or rich Connecticut with an average income of \$36,000. Of course countries such as Mozambique with its \$94 per year income or India with \$400 would have been much better off. But then by halfway through my trip the Indian economic miracle had increased by tenfold the Indian per capita income.

“Still there are more than a billion people living on less than \$300 per year. With over a billion people being chronically malnourished or dying from starvation, we have a long way to go to increase the standard of living for most of our human brothers and sisters. Then there are the problems of food costs that are emptying the rice bowls of the impoverished.

“There are a couple of problems however. In a democratic world would the people of Connecticut vote for reducing their incomes by 90%. Another factor is that if the money were taken out of the hands of the governments and industries there would be no money for development, unless the recipients of the \$3,500 either decided to give some money to the government for development or decided to invest in the stock market. And how many stock brokers will have the train fare to make their daily commute from Connecticut to New York while earning only \$3,500 a year?

“If our life values were in our heads and our hearts rather than in our wallets perhaps we wouldn't mind sharing everything. But having the rich nations adopt the collective generosity of the Salvation Army, Mother Theresa, Albert Schweitzer—or even Robin Hood—is a bit too much to expect when the media tell us that more is better, and keeping is better than giving.

“When I left for outer space many of the ‘haves’ lived in apparent luxury, while the ‘have-nots’ lived hungry, in filth and squalor. Today, to my amazement, some of the former prosperous nations are poorer while some of the former third world nations have gained great economic advantages. The keys to both paths have been the approaches each country has taken to control or foster their national birth rates. The most startling and yet enlightening changes have occurred through various methods of decreasing populations. Especially for those countries that are now licensing parenting.

“And what about health care. Socialized medicine sounded like a good idea. The British National Health Service has over a million people waiting for hospital admission. While its

stated objective is to have no one waiting more than 6 months for an operation nor more than 3 months for an outpatient surgery appointment, those dreams become more remote as the population increases—and ages. Even in rich Norway, a country with no national debt and a huge oil income, the main hospital of its capital city finds people bedded in the halls, set off from the passers-by by screens. And with the exception of the newer additions, few rooms have televisions to help patients while away the painful hours. Operations, if not emergencies, are often scheduled rather far in the future, but if the Norwegian surgeons don't get around to you, you will probably be sent to another country for the surgery.

THE NOT SO GOOD LIFE FOR TOO MANY CHILDREN

“But the major problems I see relate to a large part of the world's children. Perhaps I am a romantic, but when I hear of infants being raped in Africa, I cry. Whether it is the superstition that sex with a virgin will cure one's AIDS or whether it is merely a sexual attack by a deranged coward—it should not happen. South Africa has the highest AIDS rate in the world. By 2020 AIDS had killed over 40 million Africans. The number of children orphaned by HIV is an international tragedy.

“And what of the many thousands of children, both boys and girls, who are the unwilling participants in the child sex trade—pawns of the pedophiles in hotel rooms or in the available pornographic media. No mature adult could bring himself to think or do such unseemly acts. Yet there are many supposedly upright citizens who revel in this sickly game. Should any child be subjected to the cruelty of such sadistic mentally ill adults? Then there are numerous societies that allow slavery of one sort or another, such as the Haitian children whose parents farm them out on that anti-slavery island, or the African children who are sold outright as slaves.

“Just look at Cambodia as an example of how HIV/AIDS has cursed the population of children. While over 150,000 orphans of AIDS afflicted parents will test positive for the disease, another 100,000 AIDS orphaned children will not test positive. What kind of a life is it when the parents have died and there are no orphanages to take in these waifs? Even if this poor country could build and staff one orphanage a day it could not take care of the avalanche of parentless children.

“But it is not only the poor children who are endangered by overpopulation. As advanced countries expand their atomic power generating capabilities they build the nuclear targets for suicidal terrorist fanatics to attack. Rather than blowing up a 12 passenger bus or a high rise building, the nuclear fallout of a blown reactor can kill or maim millions—millions of young and old, good and bad, religious and non-religious. Look at the ‘crack’ and alcohol syndrome

children of addicted parents. Rich or poor, child abuse is a continual reminder of the plight of unwanted children.

“You may be familiar with the U.S. Center for Disease Control study in 2008. In studying 900,000 infants during their first year of life they found that one in 43 infants suffered serious abuse or neglect, a third of them during their first week of life. And one in 180 were killed. The physical abuse included beating, kicking, biting, burning and shaking; neglect included abandonment, maternal drug use or failing to meet basic needs like housing, food and clothing. The results were similar to a Canadian study.

“To avoid this cruelty should prospective parents be required to take a course in infant care in order to be licensed? Or do you think this cruelty to infants should be allowed to continue? Or possibly the drug addicted parents found in the study should not have been allowed to parent until they were clean? Should society do something to save that one in 180 who was born then killed? Children have been abused so much throughout history and throughout the present day world. I don't think it's right. I think something should be done about it. The only solution I can come up with is some kind of educational and licensing program.

“Then there are the centuries old traditions of marrying children. While it is often against the law, it is tradition. Mali and Bangladesh are among the worst offenders. The girls are deprived of an opportunity for education and the chance to make their own life choices.

OLDER NATURAL METHODS OF POPULATION CONTROL

“It all relates to too many people and to too few good parents. The older methods that have historically controlled population have been reduced. Wars are so horrible that countries now occasionally try to avoid them. Infanticide is becoming less and less common. Legal abortion, while much safer today than in the past and safer than childbirth, often has strong antagonists. Famines still come and go but don't kill enough people to make much of a difference to the exploding population. A million deaths here or there doesn't dent the billions who roam our overcrowded home. And the advances of medicine have increased life-spans by eliminating or reducing the microbial scourges of the past, such as smallpox. And while AIDS has eliminated a large number of the population, it still hasn't taken the comparable toll that the Black Death did in Europe centuries ago.

“Still, disease and famine have been only temporary respites in the damming of the timeless flow of the geometrical increases in people's progeny. Laws and customs have to be changed. We need more than natural disasters to cope with the calamity that is already here. But there aren't enough earthquakes and tsunamis so we need intelligent action and we need it now.

“Population control is not a novel approach in either the animal or the human kingdoms. Lemmings take their fatal leaps to oblivion. Humans have practiced contraception, abortion, infanticide and suicide for millennia. Whether it was the Spartans of ancient Greece exposing their babies on the hill letting the elements determine which were the strong and which should die, or the African tribes that take the newborn of every young father into the jungle to be eaten by the animals.

FROM THE PAST AND INTO THE FUTURE

”In the period starting a few years before I left and continuing during the twenty years of my voyage, many nations had intelligently come to grips with their major problem and had—through intimidation and reward, through law and ideal, and through education and science—began to slow the raging river of ever increasing births and to turn back the tide before humanity was wiped out by its own reproductive thoughtlessness. “It is not as if the creative handling of one’s population is new. In the voyage of Gulliver the First he encountered the Houynmnmms, those very intelligent equine-like creatures who limited every family to two children, one male and one female. They also had worked to select the breeding so that their nation could continue its high level of existence. They even traded children among families so that a better balance could be achieved for their race and their nation. And now there are some signs that such intelligence occasionally works on our planet.

“I hope that I will learn something on my planned visits around the world, then I’ll be able to actively advocate for the plans that seem to be essential for the intelligent and joyous survival of the human race.

THE OVERPOPULATION PROBLEM HAS NO POSITIVE SOLUTIONS

“It took over 50,000 years for the Earth’s population to reach one billion people. That was as recently as 1804. In 123 years, in 1927, it added its next billion. Then in only 33 years, in 1960, it reached 3 billion. In only 14 more years there was another billion. It reached five billion in 1987, just 13 years, then 12 more years to reach 6 billion. But then things started to slow a bit. It took a whopping 14 years to reach 7 billion. It looks like it will take 15 years for the next billion, and we will reach 9 billion before the century’s midpoint. The number of people added to the world from now until 2050 is about the same number that lived on the planet in 1950. I have heard academic projections of America having a billion people in 80 years and India reaching 2 billion in 60 years.(1a) I don’t believe it will be that bad, but there are warnings that the infrastructures of the countries must be upgraded beginning now. There seems to be no end to

the dire projections of world population. And nobody suggests limiting the population, only providing for it—and we can't provide for those we have now.

“Treating AIDS victims with anti-retroviral drugs has reduced the number of expected deaths by over 30 million. This keeps the victims reproducing longer. Conquering other diseases also extends life spans and enlarges reproductive windows. Poor countries like Afghanistan, Burundi, Congo, Liberia, Niger, East Timor and Uganda are projected to triple their populations by mid-century. Thank goodness for the nearly 50 countries that are reducing their native populations. Countries like Japan, Germany, Italy and South Korea would lose population if they didn't take in immigrants from poorer countries.

“In the 1990's it began to become evident to the more economically advanced countries of the western world that several factors were making it impossible to care for their citizens from cradle to grave. Earlier retirement in many countries opened jobs for younger workers—who paid the taxes necessary for the pensions of their elders. Longer life spans aided by advances in medical science and governmental or private health plans increased the need for more tax money to fund the health needs of those retirees. Jobs became more scarce as machines did the work of the unskilled and some of the skilled workers. Machines cut the wheat, picked the grapes, and built the cars and houses.

“Even skilled workers were needed less. Computers replaced accountants and many researchers. They calculated complicated medical operations while robots performed them. Were it not for the aging populations with their increased illnesses, many doctors and nurses would have been societally superfluous.

“Fewer people were needed to do the work of the advanced societies, but even though the birth rates per woman had fallen in most advanced countries, the longer lived citizenry more than made up for it in the burgeoning population.

“It seems that each modern decade has its special problems. The 40s required the surrender of the German and Japanese aggressors. The 50s were quiet, but the times pushed the productive citizens toward more monetary goals while the taxes rose to take care of the education of the war babies. The 60s saw an increase in the cold war between the East and the West as it ushered in the self-centered times of the hippies—and sex and drugs became major avenues towards reducing the psychic pain of the earlier decades. The 70s recognized the problems of pollutions and the rape of the environment. Since the 80s the upheavals of Communist governments in the East allowed the western people to rest a little easier but the violent fanaticism of religious zealots endangered many countries. Crime families disrupted the cities and youth gangs

terrorized neighborhoods. The 21st century began with violent selfishness, nurtured by Hollywood, bringing out the worst in human emotions and behaviors.

“It became more evident that the major cause of our greatest earthly problems was rooted in our excess of population. But more than just too many people, there were too many unloved people—people born without the expected parental legacies of tenderness and caring. The poorest children among us were starved for food, but so often the children of the rich were starved for love and humanity—in an unethical uncaring society. It was evident that we not only had to reduce the gross numbers of babies being born, but we had to do our best to make certain that those who were born had the opportunity to grow into functional, loving, humanitarian citizens of the world.

“But more, the modern level of technology requires a more intelligent citizen to provide for the needs of the world’s society. Shades of Hitler? No, because we have to recognize that intelligent and moral people come in every color and in every religious persuasion. Hitler was looking for perfection in only a small part of humanity—his Aryan ideal. So the ingredients in any eugenic approach to improving our collective lot would obviously come from every corner of our globe and every segment of humanity.

“In today’s society there is no longer a need for chambermaids. Hotel rooms, just as private houses, clean themselves electro-magnetically at the touch of a button. Robots prepare the meals that the few executive chefs plan and input into their computers. Modern society does not need the drones required in the Middle Ages to till the soil and construct the cathedrals. It needs only highly skilled architects to plan those cathedrals. It needs the truly creative artists, the master musicians, the computer engineering geniuses—and it needs thinkers to help put it all together. But the common women and men, the blue collar workers are extremely worried. They think the government should provide for them, to place them in jobs they can perform. But the jobs they could perform have gone the way of the village blacksmith and the firemen who shoveled coal into the bellies of the puffer bellied steam engines. Intelligent people with high level educations are needed as technology fuels economic globalization.

“If Nietzsche were alive today he might say “I told you so.” Plato might see his Republic unfolding with human intelligence as its soul. And Aristotle would marvel that a just society might really be possible.

“Well Chet, you know that the major purpose of my voyage was to find planets or moons that we could inhabit. I found none. Years ago it was suggested that the maximum number of people that the planet could support was about 2 billion. How do we handle the plethora of

people and how do we develop a universal good life with no poverty, no wars, no ecological problems.

“A few people are trying to educate the literate people about the problems. I have to join the fray. If people merely hope that the problems of overpopulation, global warming and unloved children will somehow just go away—it will never happen. Merely hoping or wishing that the problems will go away will guarantee that nothing will happen. Remember that Ben Franklin said that ‘He who lives on hope will die fasting’ because ‘You may delay but time will not.’

“You well know that the idea of controlling population is not new. My ancestor’s biographer, the Reverend Jonathan Swift, made “a modest proposal” in the early 1700s. His idea was to prevent the children of the poor people of Ireland from being a burden to their parents or their country. He suggested that eating the little rascals would be a double blessing—healthy protein for the adults and fewer waifs on the streets. It would keep their mothers from begging for food for them and allow the ladies to work at more appropriate jobs.”



—“But Commander, as you know Swift was a satirist and wrote his essay with his Irish tongue in cheek, not honestly advocating a baby’s thigh in teeth!”



—“Yes it was satire, but he was honestly concerned with the lack of care of the poor by the landowners and administrators. And don’t we have the same thing today? Starving and diseased babies in the Third World countries and so many unloved children in the rest of the world. I am firmly convinced that it is every child’s birthright to have food, safety, education and a loving family and society to give every child the physical and mental nutrients to make his or her life worthwhile. As Martin Luther King said ‘There is scarcely anything more tragic in human life than a child who is not wanted.’

“I plan to visit some of those countries that have licensed parents, and some that haven’t, and see what possibilities there are for reducing the total population and what can be done to guarantee life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to every baby born into our world. They deserve no less.

“I realize that to reduce population, and especially the idea of licensing parents, not only goes against the traditions of the human race but it is definitely a politically incorrect idea. This is especially true in countries that call themselves religious or democratic because either God told us to have a bunch of babies or because our ideas of liberty include the freedom to not only have as many babies as we want but also, in many countries, the idea that the government should

provide for them. Then we have the idea, especially in the U.S. that allowing for abortion is a politically incorrect action.

“But the ideas of what causes or actions are politically correct changes. The right, even the necessity, to own slaves was accepted when our Constitution was written, then less than a century later it was illegal and generally frowned upon. The idea of the God approved practice that women should be the homemakers and subject to their husbands has given way to having more women than men in college and the right for women to succeed in business and politics. The politically correct idea that Jews and Asians should be kept in lowly places has given way to the reality of Jews, Chinese and Japanese outperforming their Anglo-Christian counterparts particularly in the business and medical fields. So the ideas of the traditionalists and the idealists often change with time. But none of these threats has required a sudden reversal of tradition in order to save the race. Science affirms our common sense, that millions of people are dying from starvation and diseases, that people have caused our global warming, that people who shouldn't have been born are murdering and raping innocents, and that the world can be a better place.”



—“Thank you commander. I recently saw a British television program that looked at the ecological footprint that each person born there causes. I remember only a few examples. The average Brit drinks over 2400 gallons of milk in his lifetime. He eats four cows, 21 lambs, fifteen pigs, and 1200 chickens and over 13,000 eggs. Each of the animals eats grain that could feed many starving people and each is producing methane through their flatulent farting. The methane produced is the second biggest problem in global warming. But if we could capture the methane given off by one cow in one year it would provide the power of 50 gallons of gasoline. And of course some people have powered their cars with cow and chicken manure for years.

“But back to the needs of that one Brit. He will eat over 5,000 apples and over 10,000 carrots. The amount of plastic and paper used to package the food he eats will total 8 ½ tons of garbage. The newspapers he reads will add another two tons of waste. He will produce 2,400 tons of feces and will need over 4,000 rolls of toilet paper to wipe himself. How many trees will he use to produce the paper he uses? He will buy 8.5 cars and will use 135,000 liters of gasoline to power them. So that one little bouncing bundle of British joy is a disaster for the planet.

“The more facts that are registered by my overloads brain, the more I agree with your concerns. I certainly wish you luck. I'll help where I can. With problems like we have it is certainly a mistake to do nothing if I can do only a little. And if we can do more than a little, we must. Hope is useless without goal directed effort.”

A MORE IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE PROBLEMS

During the week that followed, Chet dutifully broadcast the weekly briefings sent by NASA. There were the somewhat detailed experiences of Commander Gulliver on each planet. There were the reports on the analyses of the soil, temperature and atmosphere. But there was nothing about the commander's concerns with overpopulation or parent licensing. And of course there were the self-congratulatory hosannas for the project and the government's funding of it. So Chet dutifully waited for the end of the debriefings so that he could get the real story—the story that would shock and excite his audience. Finally on Friday afternoon he got his chance. Commander Gulliver appeared at the concluding news conference. The commander fielded a number of questions from the media. Even Chet asked about Saturn's rings, but he didn't want to ask about the real story of what Gulliver saw the best solutions to the problem. Those were to be his scoop. As the press conference ended, Chet moved to the exit doorway to catch the hero as he made toward the door that opened into his new world, the world he had left behind twenty years earlier, a world more ensnared with problems than Loki could have dreamed. Chet had to wait several minutes for the Commander to move through the swarm of newsmen. As the entourage ebbed toward the exit he found his chance to make his connection.



—“Commander, now that your debriefing is finished and you have had a few days to relax, do you have some time for a more in-depth interview?”



—“Sure, but can we do it at my home in Malibou Lake? I want to enjoy the unencumbered feeling that I missed in my space capsule and the four walls of these offices that have confined me the last few days. I'd like to breathe some fresh air.”



—“How about Tuesday at 10.”



—“Great, come for breakfast. We can sit on the deck and visit for a couple of hours.”



—“I’ll be there.”

Lemuel spent the weekend relaxing, seeing old friends, swimming in the lake and even took a few swings on the long thick rope that hung from the giant oak on the island. Just like when he was young! Climb up a few feet to the first big branch, grab the rope, swing out over the water and do a one and a half into the lake. Being free of the space suit and the encumbering cabin made him feel like a kid again.

He swam over to McLaughlin’s dock and went for a sail with Dave Mac in his Malibou class tall masted sailboat. Dave invited him to race in the weekly three lap trip, down to the dam, back to the island then west around the buoy.

He was prepared for the weekly summer race on Sunday. It had been a long time since he’d raced and the light summer breeze barely coaxed the boats along. Thirteen boats were entered today. McLaughlin and Gulliver placed a mediocre seventh. Not like the old days when they usually won.

A neighborhood bar-b-que was held in his honor at the club. So many old friends and so little time to share with them. By 2 AM he had to head up the hill to the home his father had built in the 60s. What memories! He had lived there often during the summers while in high school and college, as well as during his early bachelor years. What a great retreat. After teaching and coaching during the school year and taking courses for his PhD in astrophysics at UCLA, then lifeguarding everywhere from Dockweiler to Zuma, he needed a place to unwind. With the tennis court next to the house, the Universal Gym downstairs and the lake a quarter mile away it had everything to keep his body sound to match his sound and active mind.

Nights were magic. Sitting on the expansive redwood deck he looked up at a heaven dotted with a million microscopic suns and the planets he had so recently visited. It was like being in the planetarium at the Griffith Observatory, his favorite place in LA.

Like his father before him, he was entranced by the sparkling quilt of lights that covered the sleeping city. On clear windy days he would cut his college classes and drive to Griffith Observatory, on the south slope of Mt. Hollywood, to admire his city. From downtown to Santa Monica, from Glendale to the harbor, out past Hollywood over Palos Verdes to Catalina Island, what a view! Being up high, even though seeing only a small patch of the globe, invigorated his mind. Then at night he would eagerly await the planetarium show.

The giant black insect-like machine, the Zeiss planetarium, was perched in the middle of the 75 foot diameter white plaster dome. Then the lights dimmed to the strains of Beethoven and the

blackened dome metamorphed into a crystal Sahara sky as the Zeiss shot the images of 9000 stars on the blackened dome. Then came the planets and the moon. The clear celestial fantasy, an unknown phenomenon to those who live in lighted smoggy cities, brought gasps of wonder from the viewers in the circular theater. Probably only the Bedouins and Eskimos find this natural source of ecstasy in their daily lives.

Then came a famous planetarium show—‘The Constellations’. ‘A Trip to Mars’, ‘The Star of Bethehem’ and probably a hundred more. Lemuel had used it as his favorite destination for dates. It was not only inexpensive, but it charged his imagination. It charged it enough to push him into the pursuit of a doctorate in astrophysics and astronaut training with NASA. And eventually to pursuing the passion of his dreams, the twenty year tour exploring the heavens.

Just like the carefree days before the voyage, he filled his days with friends, exercise, sleep and relaxation. Monday finally faded to Tuesday morning and there was Chet’s red Porsche pulling up outside his bedroom. He jumped into his blue UCLA shorts and hustled to the door.

Chet grabbed his recorder and notepad and walked to the steps. He looked a bit different, having doffed his newsman’s uniform of coat and tie for a sporty golfer’s outfit—a short sleeved autumn tan and light green striped shirt with matching green Sans-a-Belt slacks. He had the biceps of a gymnast, something hidden from his TV audience by his mandatory ‘6 o’clock News’ suit coat and tie. As all anchormen, he was handsome. Mid-fifties, full head of graying brown hair and a smile that put everyone at ease, no wonder his program had been ranked number one for years. Even if he just sat and smiled he’d have all the women in the nation gawking. But he consistently got the inside stories that escaped his competition. Nine Emmy’s in a row for the best news program.



—“Well Chet, you made it to my hideaway, eh?”



—“Yes commander, what a view!”



-- “Let me walk you around the deck and point out a few things. You know, this area was developed by some early film stars as a getaway in the 1920s. Clark Gable and C.B. deMille were among the original owners here. My dad almost bought Gable’s old hunting lodge. It’s on

the other side of that ridge. But he bought this mountain top and built the house himself. Can you see that road beyond the white bridge on the far end of the lake?”



—“Ya.”



—“Up to the right of that you can see the intersection with Mulholland Drive. Just to the right is Ronald Reagan’s old ranch. He used to jump his horses right there. But he sold it to Twentieth Century Fox as part of their movie ranch. The ranch extends about four miles east to Malibu Canyon Road. Twentieth sold it to the state so it is now the Malibu Creek State Park. Malibu Creek comes into the lake up there beyond that white bridge, then at the south end of the lake, that is below the house across the street, there is a dam that creates the lake. The overflow from the dam continues as Malibu Creek and it flows to the ocean south—in that direction.”



—“Wasn’t ‘Mash’ filmed around here?”



—“Yes. The TV version was filmed about a half mile south, in that direction. The movie was filmed about a mile east of here. Is ‘Mash’ still in re-runs?”



—“Oh ya! Probably will be forever. I think it was the best program ever on television.”



—“Me too. In the old days all the movie companies had lots here. See that mountain across the lake? That’s the original Paramount mountain. They haven’t used that figure for years but you still see it in old films. Just beyond it is a western town that has been used for years. ‘Dr. Quinn’ was shot there. Hundreds of films, television shows and commercials have been made in the area, on Kanan Road, on Mulholland, at the lake. They’ve even used my house on occasion.”



—“Do any film stars still live around here?”



—“I’ve been away so long that I don’t know. Charlie Sheen used to live in that house on the other mountain top. Kelsey Grammer lived down the way on Cornell. Bob Foxworth lived on

this side of the lake. My next door neighbor was Strother Martin. He was the Southern prison warden in “Cool Hand Luke” who said to Paul Newman “what we have he-ah is a fail-ya ta communicate.” That is one of the most famous lines ever uttered in a film.

“The most famous actor I ever met was James Cagney. His daughter Casey lived just down the street. One Christmas afternoon I was napping in bed, resting from a long night of assembling toys, when I heard footsteps on my redwood deck. I looked out the bedroom window and there were James Cagney and Ralph Bellamy, with Casey’s husband Jack. I jumped into my sweats and met them at the kitchen door. Cagney gave me an autographed copy of his autobiography, that Jack had helped him write.”



—“You must have hundreds of stories, having been born in LA and living here. But let’s get on with the interview. Let’s try to summarize your thinking from your twenty years in space.”



-- “Certainly Chet, shoot a question or three!!”

ABOUT SPACE



—“What was it like being in space? What did you think about? Didn’t it get boring?”



—“Probably the major feeling I had was how insignificant I am, and we are, when you realize what infinitesimal specks we are on our planet, in our galaxy, and in our universe. But then each of us thinks of ourselves as being all-important and having infinite worth. Some of us believe that we have been placed here by a divine creator and some of us believe that we are mere bits of cosmic dust, nearly 14 billion years removed from the Big Bang. Are we only remnants of billions of evolutionary processes who are still evolving. Or are we at the end of our evolution, rapidly becoming the victims of the suicide of our species?”

“Little did Edwin Hubble know, when he confirmed that the universe has been expanding since the Big Bang, that he would have a space telescope named for him and that the findings of that telescope guided me on a human’s farthest voyage into the universe. While I wasn’t able to even reach the outermost planet of our solar system, and certainly could not approach a planet

outside of our system, the work of Hubble and his namesake telescope have been incredibly important in making this voyage possible.

“The telescope can measure the distances to 18 galaxies, some as far as 65 million light years away. Since light travels at 186,000 miles per second a light year is about 6 trillion miles. That’s a long way! It’s incomprehensible. It must be halfway to infinity! We are getting more information and proof of dark matter and dark energy so we are getting a better picture of the dynamics of the universe and of its beginning.”



—“Commander do you know that the U.S. national debt is over 15 trillion dollars. That’s a lot of money. Even more incomprehensible than the expanse of the galaxies. Fifteen trillion dollar bills, that if laid end to end, could reach Mars and return to Earth about 1300 times.”



—“But that’s another problem, Chet. Let’s get back to the universe. Measuring the expansion of the universe it is now possible to see that the universe is almost 14 billion years old. 13.7 to be exact. We have seen 1,500 galaxies in various stages of development. Some as old as 10 billion years. And it all started from a small bit of matter, probably smaller than a teaspoonful. In about a trillionth of a second the Big Bang exploded into the seeds of our expanding universe. At least that’s the thinking now!

“Since the Big Bang, millions of species have evolved and died out, usually from things beyond their control. Our species also seems to be heading to oblivion, and it’s our own fault. We have used a great many of our irreplaceable natural resources and we have polluted our water, our air and even our stratosphere.

MAKING A BETTER LIFE

“Do we have even a faint hope of saving ourselves from extinction? If so can we make a better life for our species. There were a few glimmers of hope, like when I found that there was water on Enceladus, one of Saturn’s moons, but to get the necessary heat to support human life would have required us to dig deeply into its crust. That, and the fact that it is only a few miles wide and takes seven years to get there, rules it out for a future home for our excess population. Maybe some day a time machine or an astral travel mechanism can be invented that would make emigration there a possibility. But that won’t solve today’s emergency. The fact is that the human race is approaching extinction because we are raping our Mother Earth.”



—“That seems rather pessimistic commander. Your voyage began with such great hope. Have you given up?”



—“Not at all. I sincerely believe that we have a real hope for our future, but it can't be realized unless people can see the problems, understand their consequences and solutions, and are willing to cooperate immediately to save us from ourselves. But the solutions would require that the richer people of the world give up some advantages that they have traditionally enjoyed. They certainly must think of working more years before retiring. They need to adopt a toned down appetite for the accoutrements that many people equate with the good life—like housing opulence, when a smaller dwelling would do. And probably most important, a state mandated reproductive control. This would probably only have to last for a couple of generations until the world's population came under control and people would finally recognize the increasing scarcity of Mother Nature's blessings and work to conserve what we have left. It goes without saying that we must severely reduce the negative excesses with which our so-called advanced societies have polluted the planet. As the historian Arnolds Toynbee said, 'The human race's prospects of survival were considerably better when we were defenseless against tigers than they are today when we have become defenseless against ourselves.'”

“When people are too blind to see or their vision is too narrow to focus, we have real problems in getting things done. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see. The intellectually blind stonewall any real progress because they cannot see alternatives. Their minds are made up before the issue is even stated. Getting the ignorant to think is like leading an army or rocks. There won't be any movement.

“In spite of the fact that human history is largely a chronicle of tragedy, with wars and natural disasters killing millions upon millions, people keep thinking that things ill get better even though the evidence is stacked against it in an impenetrable wall. Every scientific and historical fact shows that we cannot survive with this many people, even if we significantly reduce our opulent way of living. We can dream the impossible dream with Don Quixote, the man of La Mancha, but the dream that we can support the present world population in the style of the average Californian is not only ephemeral, its reality can never be. We may be embalmed by a hope for our future, but death is sure if we don't skid to a stop in our population growth. Then we must quickly get it into reverse if we are to survive. It is my mission to get the people to understand the reality of impending doom if we don't change course quickly. Too many

people are like the queen in Alice in Wonderland who said that sometime she believe in six impossible thing before breakfast. We have to make people believe in the possible and make the necessary changes in their national objectives and in their personal lives. We have got to do it— not just dream or talk.”



—“As I remember Toynbee also said, in his best psychological insight, ‘A life which does not go into action is a failure.’ Sounds to me like you are ready to go into action.”



—“Ya, that was one of his observations that got me charged up to do something. But it’s not enough to just save our species. Nearly all human lives can be happier and more productive. Ashley Montague, my favorite social thinker, and Sigmund Freud, not one of my favorites, agree that for our mental health we need the ability to love and to work. Mental health is certainly a key to happiness, but there is so much more.”



—“People have been warning against robbing and trashing our planet for decades and little has been done. How would you expect to make a difference Commander?”



—“I would hope that my relatively high profile will get me an audience. The U2 singer Bono got a worldwide audience because he was a famous musician. Bill and Melinda Gates had notoriety because of their vast wealth and philanthropy, and the way Microsoft had changed the world. Mother Theresa gained unwanted fame through her quiet charity. I don’t have the rabid following of a famous rock singer, or the reputation of a genius or a saint. I don’t have the riches to make a rapid change in a society’s economy or health. But I have been on the international stage through the news media daily for a number of years. And I do have the passion to help humanity if I can.”



—“How would you start your crusade?”



—“Well, it’s about the three Es—ethics, economics and education. Certainly voluntary population control has come to many countries that have a high standard of living because of the

people's education and economic means. Their ethics, relative to having children, have often been based on a self-centered system of morals.”



—“Are you saying that recognizing our selfishness is imperative to limiting the population?”



—“No, but it is important. Women who want careers may not want children. The joys of professional success may be more meaningful for some than the potential joy of having children. Most sociological and psychological studies show that childless marriages are generally happier than those with children. Of course many marriages are greatly enriched by children. “Another disadvantage of having children, for some people, is the cost of having and raising a child. For a middle class family in the United States the cost is calculated to be 150 to 450 thousand dollars plus college costs. British studies estimate child raising costs to be 60 to 250 thousand pounds to age 17. These costs obviously include food, clothing and medical care, but they probably also include pre-school expenses, a bigger home, more electricity, summer camps, a car when the child gets to high school, increased insurance costs, and a number of other expenses. These expenses hit hard at the poor, but they also impact the middle class families who are aspiring to be upwardly mobile—keeping up with the Joneses.”



—“So economics is a major factor in reducing family size?”



—“Yes, that and the realization of the costs of children—in time and in money. If you are a middle class couple, having a child will probably preclude your taking that trip around the world, enjoying some operas in Verona or Milan, spending a week at Club Med, or relaxing after work with a good book. Many people realize that what they want out of life is more likely to be realized without children—or without a partner. Tradition is deeply ingrained in most of us. To break that tradition by being unmarried or childless will likely make us the objects of scorn by those wedded to society's traditions.”



—“So you are saying that selfishness is not necessarily bad?”



—“No, Chet. If it makes for happier people, that is good. If it helps reduce the population, that is good. If it stops people who would not be loving parents from having children, that is positive. Having every child born being given every advantage possible is an even more important goal of mine than reducing population. We must have parents who will provide for the physical and mental needs of their offspring.”



—“This is where you are getting into ethics and values. What other ideas do you have in these areas?”



—“I’ve been studying the areas of ethics, morals and values for a long time but I don’t have the answers to these enduring questions of living intelligently. I have been invited to visit Kino by Professor Wang. I expect to learn more about how our value systems can be made more user friendly. Obviously today not everyone looks to religion for their values. Religions can give us a certainty that we all would like, but history is replete with religiously unethical behavior by the proponents of every belief. Catholics fought Protestants. Protestants fought each other. The Muslims fought them both and each other. History seems to be nothing more than religions and wars, and religions were the instigators in many of those wars.”



—“What about economics? Do you propose a leveling of wealth?”



—“No. I’m definitely not a Marxist—farthest thing from it! But through education and opportunity we can give everyone a shot at intellectual and economic wealth. Education, as I see it, is the process of teaching people to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education. I know you have been to Royce Hall at UCLA and seen Josiah Royce’s words that ‘Education is learning to use the tools that the race has found to be indispensable.’

“If we use the right tools economic wealth in the world can be increased. But there still isn’t enough to go around and give everyone the equivalent income of today’s average American or Brit. The other day I mentioned the wealth of the world when I left. It was about \$3500 per person. Now I’ve had a chance to update it to today in 2025. If we were to divide the total wealth

of the world, estimated at 55 trillion dollars, by the approximate population of the world, somewhere around 7 billion people, if each person got an equal share it would amount to about \$8,000. I would guess that several people with more than eight thousand dollars would not be willing to let go of what they have that is in excess of \$8,000. If you own a house worth \$250,000 you will need to share it with about 30 other people. If your only possession is your \$8,000 five year old Mercedes, you can keep it all for yourself, but you couldn't keep your clothes or your furniture.

“While it doesn't make any sense to play a communist Robin Hood, robbing the rich and giving to the poor, the world can do a few things to keep the money where it benefits the citizens. Just look at the uncommonly corrupt leaders in Africa who have feathered their economic nests with the wealth stolen from their nations' foreign aid gifts by the 'do good' countries. If they don't steal it outright, they own the companies that service the firms founded on foreign money—the cleaning services, the copy machine maintenance companies, the various suppliers—fear not, much of the financial fodder finds its way to the stallion in the chief's stall.

“If we equalize incomes for all the people in the world the average person from Luxemburg would have to give up about \$55,000 per year. The average Norwegian and American would have to give up about \$35,000 a year. Would they stand still for losing their houses because they couldn't pay the mortgages? Would they be willing to give up their sun and snow vacations? Their cars? On the other hand the people of Gaza, Somalia, Liberia and Ethiopia would increase their incomes by over 1000% if they were given \$8,000 a year.

UNHAPPINESS

“No child deserves to be born to a life of drinking contaminated water, without sanitation, and with no educational opportunities. No child deserves to be born poor, to a birthright of AIDs, or should I say a 'birth-wrong'? And no child should be imprisoned to a life without opportunity.

“Politicians make us happier by reducing our taxes while spending more. They campaign on the need for more money for education, then after the election it's business as usual slopping the pork barrels.

“Religious leaders promise 'pie in the sky bye and bye.' They say God's angry with us when things go wrong, then they praise God when blessings come—whether it is good weather or a victory in a war or on the football field.

“Whether it is retirement pay increases, state run medical programs or the promise of a heavenly salvation after our retirements end—count on our leaders to give us hope today. But are

they doing anything significant for our future? In the U.S. when gasoline prices go up a bit the president promises to look into alternate energy sources. Didn't anyone think fifty years ago that there might not be an infinite supply of oil? In Europe they were paying two to three times the price in the U.S. and didn't cry nearly as much! Of course driving alone in one's Cadillac, when one might take rapid transit, is a basic right of Americans—possibly more prized than the right to free speech.

“Maybe God will provide. After all, gasoline is free once you pass through those Pearly Gates. Will God provide more forests to eat up the carbon dioxide and stop the global warming? Will God provide water to raise the rapidly falling water tables worldwide. What is God providing for the HIV orphans? Will God provide storms to sink the fishing vessels that are denuding our seas of fish? Or has God made us in His image and expects us to use our reasoning to do something about the mess that we have created for ourselves on our planet? Is He testing our intelligence and resolve to see if we can find a way out of our predicament? Is He seeing how far we can go in terms of omnipotence—actually using our power to do what is necessary?

“Are we dealing with the vengeful Being of the Old Testament times or with the forgiving Being of the more recent scriptures? Shall we be punished for what we have done to our present day Eden or are we being given the chance to make things right? Can we eliminate famine, disease, crime, wars and pollutions? I believe we can. But it will be nearly impossible—and it seems to run counter to the human nature we have developed as we have stumbled selfishly through our history.”

POVERTY AND FAMINE



—“Commander, do you see any real hope for *homo sapiens*?”



—“I see lots of hope, if we can develop a real resolve. In China 100 million people have been lifted from poverty during the last 10 years. This is due in large part to their one child policy.”



—“But that was only the result of a totalitarian regime's usurping the traditional freedoms of the people.”



—“That’s true Chet. It’s unfortunate that people seldom want to do voluntarily what is best for their society. Sometimes they will, sometimes they won’t. Just look at the military draft. It is a totalitarian solution to what the national leaders see as essential for the society. Your choices are to serve in the army or to emigrate.

“Forcing people who want to drive to pass a licensing examination is totalitarian. Of course it is not objectionable if you don’t want to drive. But even if you don’t drive, if you want to walk and cross the street you will want drivers who know they should stop for you. So driver licensing is a bit of a safety advantage for the drivers and the pedestrians.

“Korea went from a third world country to a first world country in 40 years. It took some money and some discipline to do it. It also took centralized planning and action.

“On the other hand more people live in poverty in the world than was true 10 years ago. One in seven of the world’s population is going hungry (1aa) Not so much because of a lack of food as the lack of political will to get the food where it is needed.

“It was recently believed that globalization, freeing international trade, reducing tariffs and governmental subsidies and outsourcing work would reduce poverty. But population gains propel the curse of poverty faster than anyone could have projected. (2) As global warming reduces the rainfall in food exporting nations and as the population continues to increase food shortages develop and more people die of starvation. The price of food keeps rising, even in recessions. People living on a dollar or two a day can’t buy food, even if it is available. One in six people in the world is either hungry or starving. Food grants from richer countries don’t buy as much food as they once did. And the grants get smaller every time a country enters a recession.

“The World Bank projected that from 1990 to 2015 320 million would be lifted above the \$2 a day poverty level. They had to change their projection to about 75 million lifted from poverty in that ten year period. But in those years the population of the world increased by about 2 billion people, many in those extremely poor countries. The fact is that poverty increases as population increases. We can’t thrust a hundred million babies a year into our world without negative consequences. In fact, to keep today’s average person’s \$8,000 share of the wealth of the world constant we would have to add \$800 billion dollars a year to the wealth of the world. Then we would have to assume that some of that wealth would trickle down from Wall Street and Fleet Street to the streets of Ethiopia and Gaza. But that’s not how an amoral free enterprise system works.

“Additionally, because more than half of the world’s population lives in cities. More crime now occurs, in part because of a lack of jobs, in part because of the violence born of frustration and anger, in part to fund the appetite for drugs whetted by the overwhelming need for emotional escape. Crimes against people generally increase because of anger, crimes against property, such as burglary and robbery, generally increase because of financial need.

“I was impressed with the warnings of Paul Ehrlich, the Stanford biologist, when he warned of overpopulation. He wrote that the maximum population of the world was between 1.5 and 2 billion people. That’s the maximum! We reached that over a hundred years ago! We are now close to 8 billion. It’s a problem that humans have created and it must be solved by humans.”



—“Commander, I’ve read of maximal earth population being as high as 50 billion people.”



—“There have been a couple of estimates made by physicists in which they calculated the amount of heat people’s bodies would put out and how that 150 watts per day per body would impact the earth. Using only this measure they concluded that the Earth could handle 40 to 60 billion people. But these projections did not include global warming from human industry, food needs, industrial needs for 50 billion people, the lack of fresh water, or all of the other factors.

“It is impossible to calculate how many people the Earth can handle without first determining at what level of comfort the people should have. If people want to live at the comfort level of Western Europe or the U.S. the calculations will be quite different than if everyone is to live at the comfort level of the average person in Bangladesh. Thirty average Indians use fewer resources than one American. So what is called ‘the carrying capacity’ of the world or the ‘ecological footprint’ of an individual are essential in estimating the number of people the world can support. Would you be content being a starving woman in Darfur dodging the rapists and the murderers who will conquer you and your country? Would you change places with a mother of ten living in a tin shack in a South African township? Would you choose to live in a favela in Sao Paulo with drug gangs in control of your slum neighborhood? Or would you prefer to live in a rambling ranch style home in Carmel, an ocean view luxury apartment in Monaco, or a seaside mansion on Chios?

“Just look at the roads needed. Americans complain about their crowded roads and freeways now. To keep an equivalent number of roads for a world population of 50 billion, if the

sparsely populated U.S. kept an equivalent percentage of people it would have nearly 3 billion. Keeping the same number miles of roads per person, it would need about 36 million miles of roads. If the roads were made of asphalt we would need more oil because asphalt is a petroleum product.

“It’s a matter of ecological economics. At what level of consumption shall the world’s population live? If we want to live at the level of Bangladesh perhaps we could support 14 or 15 billion people. If we want to live at the consumer level of a middle class American it would be closer to a billion people. But there are other considerations to determining a maximal population. We must consider how much of the society’s consumption is in renewable resources, like fresh water and food. Then how much is in non-renewable sources, like petroleum and copper. Then what are the lingering negative effects of the technology, such as the disposal of nuclear and non-nuclear waste, the production of carbon dioxide and methane, and the effects of other pollutants on the air and water.

“The ecological footprint may be said to indicate how many acres or hectares it takes to support a person. A hectare is ten thousand square meters or almost two and a half acres. The Earth has about eleven billion hectares, or 27 billion acres of biologically useful area. The biologically useful area is 22% water, 14% crop land, a third forests, a little less than a third of grazing land. About 2% of the land has been built on for cities and other building. (2a) The average hectare use is about two hectares, or five acres, per person.

“Perhaps the earth could handle 15 billion people if we regressed 3000 years in terms of housing, transportation and food. We would have to keep the farming capacity that we have today with our present yield per acre. But today’s farming requires huge fields which would be largely occupied by those 15 billion people. Of course we can build vertical farms that use hydroponics. Today’s farms require large machines powered by oil. They require great amounts of water, which would have to be produced expensively by desalinization. We would need many more times the amount of pesticides and fertilizers than we use today. No one could drive a car because of the lack of oil and the air pollution. We couldn’t all burn wood fires for cooking and heating, because there wouldn’t be enough wood and the fires of 15 billion people would pollute the air and increase the carbon dioxide levels. And then, common sense tells you that the advanced living standards of many counties today cannot be voluntarily ended.

DEATH AND DISEASE

“Ten million children are dying each year from disease and starvation. Children are born to AIDS infected parents in Africa, India, China and in most other parts of the world. Is this what you want for your grandchildren? The deaths may help to curb the population explosion but is it

worth the sadness for the children? As great as the disease problem may be, with influenzas, AIDS, malaria, cholera, drug resistant tuberculosis and all the other afflictions of humans, it's not enough to stop the planet's strangulation death by the human python.

“Do you remember the study done in the late 1960s by John Calhoun? (3) In 1968 he put four pair of mice in a 10 foot by 10 foot enclosure. He provided them with a perfect air conditioned environment with plenty of food and water. By the time the population reached 150 all the good places to live and the major social roles were taken. Shortly after this population mark had been reached, mothers began chasing their babies from their nests—before trust could be established. Dominant males got tired of protecting their territories and quit. Females became more aggressive and took over the dominant roles. The males crowded together. Homosexuality increased. By the time the population reached 2200, in 1970, mating stopped and by January of 1973 the last mouse died. He did similar studies with rats. Might our human population do this? Or might we, like the lemmings, follow each other off a cliff? Is the ultimate control of population in our mammalian genes?”

NATURAL DISASTERS



—“Commander, even if we don't make any adjustments, nature will control population through famine, disease, war and terrorist uprisings, major volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and so forth.”



—“But it would take a heck of a natural disaster to significantly reduce the human race. The famous eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD only buried a few thousand people under the lava at Herculeneum and the ash at Pompeii. Krakatau's eruption in Indonesia in 1883, an eruption that had worldwide effects in terms of released ash and ocean disruptions, only killed about 30 or 40 thousand people. The tsunami of December 2004 killed about 240,000 people and the Myanmar cyclone of 2008 killed over 120,000.. But the world adds 200,000 people per day, with about 350,000 births and 150,000 deaths. The earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 killed 80,000 people. But it only took eight hours to restock the earth's population. The earthquake in China in 2008 killed about the same number of people that are born in China in a day. So the most devastating natural disasters in memory just slowed the population explosion by less than a day and a half. It's hard to count on natural disasters to slow our destruction of ourselves.

“Of the ten worst storms in history, six have hit Bangladesh killing over a million people, still Bangladesh is the most densely populated large country in the world with over 1000 people per square kilometer.

“Maybe a real disaster could help slow the rape of the planet. The last eruption of the currently active volcano at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming might make a dent. Its last eruption, two million years ago, released enough ash to cover the state of California under 6 meters of ash. We are entering a geologic era where Yellowstone should erupt again. Then there is that big quake that is overdue in California. Or maybe God will send us another great flood and let us start over with a dozen or so people!”



—“Commander, I’ve heard that the Earth’s magnetic field seems to again be shifting. This can have the effect of allowing harmful cosmic rays into our atmosphere. These rays can destroy our DNA and kill us all.”



—“Chet we’ll never last that long. It would take many thousands of years for that to happen. We also can’t count on volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis to do what we should do if we are really *homo sapiens*—thinking people.”

WARS, MASSACRES AND FAMINES



—“What about the human inflicted catastrophes, commander? In the past we could count on wars and massacres to help control the population. Napoleon certainly did his part, being responsible for as many as 6 million dead—half from opposing armies, a quarter from his own and the rest civilians.

“Shaka, the Zulu chief claimed one to two million in his wars. About 3 million died in the Islamic slave trade and almost as many in the slave trade in the western hemisphere. Look at the human cost of Central and South American wars with over a million killed. And the American Civil War killed 600,000. Even the little old Crimean War took a half million lives. Over four million were killed in the Congo in the wars that began in 1998, but that was only about 6% of their population so it only put a small dent in their population growth rate.

“And how about the famines? Famines in India in the late 19th century took 15 to 30 million lives, the ‘potato famine’ of Ireland 750,000.”



—“Ya Chet, but without that potato famine I wouldn’t be here. My grandparents immigrated here so they wouldn’t starve. Heck, if it weren’t for the famine I’d probably be a priest in Galway!”



—“You bring up religion, what about the religious wars and massacres: In the mid-1800s the Taiping Rebellion in China took 20 to 30 million lives as people fought for a one God theocracy—and lost. The Thuggee sect of the goddess Kali sacrificed a half million in India. Muslim rebellions in China killed another 300,000.”



—“Chet, let’s not forget ethnic and religious cleansing. Between 100,000 and a million American Indians were killed by the good Christian invaders. In Australia 300,000 Australian aborigines were eliminated in their own land by the white settlers. And of course 6 million Jews, gypsies and other religiously or ethnically objectionable people were gassed by the Nazis.

“Just looking at the 19th century, the large and small wars, famines and uprisings killed about 54 million during the century. We could assume that these killings and starvings reduced the population at the end of that century by about 3% from what it might have been. The 20th century inhumanities also accounted for about another 3% drop in the 6 billion population. Of course because there were more people, there were more total deaths.

“Thanks to better weapons, the psychotic warlords of the last century were incredibly effective murderers. In the 20th century we’re talking about 200 million or so war deaths, with Mao leading the pack at 30 to 60 million, Hitler and the Axis powers accounted for 55 million and Stalin was responsible for another 20 million.”



—“Didn’t realize it was so many, commander. So obviously wars, revolutions, massacres and famines are not doing the job of effectively controlling our population. We need about a 70% drop in population, not a piddling 3%. So do we need bigger bombs, larger scale wars, greater levels of genocide?”



—“Perhaps it’s time to try a peaceful and intelligent method of doing it. But then that would hurt the economy if the world’s weapons dealers had no one to sell to!”



—“Commander, are you sure that with global warming and the eventual lack of water we won’t have some really effective famines? Maybe they will supplement the natural disasters enough to reduce our population to manageable levels. Maybe these are more likely than doing it voluntarily.”

MENTAL ILLNESS AND CRIMINALITY



—“Chet, it is more than just reducing population. It’s about making the population mentally and physically healthier. Just look at the number of people in prisons and mental institutions. Some of their propensities are probably genetic. To the degree that genes are responsible perhaps we can either weed the poor risks out of the reproductive population or manipulate the genes once they are born. But for the greater number of people whose poor upbringings did not develop in them sufficient self respect and the capacity to love—we should be able to reduce their percentage. In my mind it is our greatest human tragedy to have children born who are not loved and cared for, who do not have the advantages of an outstanding education. It is an international disgrace to have so much crime committed and to spend so much money on police, the judicial systems and the penal systems. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to put that money into higher education and more extensive recreation facilities?”



—“I think everybody would agree with you on reducing the prison populations. A few years ago I did a TV series on crime and prisons in different parts of the world. Some, like in Malawi are hideous. With 160 crowded into a single cell, one meal a day, polluted water, foul toilets and not knowing how many months or years before they would see a judge, it was dismal. On the other hand in Norway a prisoner might have his own TV and computer and three meals a day. I thought about doing jail time in Norway for a vacation. Of course in the States we have the highest number of inmates per capita.

“And look at the types of crimes committed. As bad as we may think America is for murders, it is way down the list when compared to Columbia and South Africa. Interpol told me that the per capita murder rate there is ten times more than in the States.”



—“That’s my point Chet, I sure would like to find other ways than murder, war and genocide to keep the population controlled.”

“There’s certainly more to the crime problem than murder. You have heavily funded organized crime worldwide. South Africa has 700 well financed crime syndicates. Columbia is worse. And we certainly know a bit about the Italian and Sicilian mafias from the movies. Even the welfare paradise Norway has its Yugoslav mafia. Hollywood has its Mexican mafia. Sometimes I think that the criminals run the world and if they don’t run it, they sure have a big piece of the pie!”

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

“But back to our major problem. Martin Luther King said it best when he warned that ‘Unlike plagues of the dark ages or contemporary diseases we do not understand, the modern plague of overpopulation is soluble by means we have discovered and with resources we possess. What is lacking is not sufficient knowledge of the solution but universal consciousness of the gravity of the problem and education of the billions who are its victims.’ He was a practical dreamer—an idealist with his feet on the ground. Too bad he’s not still around, he could certainly do a better job of making people listen than I can. Because he was a man of color he could neutralize the cries of racial genocide that I will undoubtedly encounter. In fact I see it as ‘geno-genesis’ a rebirth of the human race, with people more likely to put the human values of love and compassion ahead of power and acquisition.”



—“But commander, as a liberal Protestant Dr. King would still face the ire of the protestant evangelicals, the Catholics, the Mormons and the Muslims. No matter how important an idea, there will be people opposed to it.”



—“But I believe that I must stand up for what is right, even if I stand alone. However I’m sure there will be lots of people who will join me. After all, what thinking person can be against saving the planet, making the future better for all, and working to give every child a loving start?”



-- “People opposed the ideas of Socrates, of Jesus, of Abraham, of Muhammad, of Buddha, of Jefferson, of Einstein.”



-- “Was anybody opposed to Thomas Edison’s inventions, Chet?”
—“I don’t think so. People only resist when their minds are shaken up, not when somebody



produces things that ease their lives or entertain them. They don’t want to hear about new gods, new types of government or about anything that relates to misery—their own or others.”



—“Before my space odyssey I did a bit of traveling. I’ve seen the misery of old Calcutta when the trucks picked up the thousands of bodies from the streets every morning, bodies that had been alive the day before. I’ve walked through parts of Soweto in fear, knowing that if it were not for my friend Winston, who was known and respected, I might be the next victim of robbery or murder. I’ve seen the hopeless faces of those in the cities and farms of Bangladesh. I’ve heard the gunfire in Beirut and the plastique bombs in Paris. I’ve lived in South Central LA amid the gang warfare.

“I long ago concluded that things can be better. Why the suffering of starvation deaths in Ethiopia? Why the beating of children in Beverly Hills? Why the white slave trade from Eastern Europe to the West? Why are so many thousands of Latin Americans risking death to cross the Rio Grande for a life in the U.S.?”

“Chet, can you fathom the depth and width of the problem? It’s beyond our comprehension.
--12 million children die before reaching their fifth birthday;
--100 million homeless children wander the streets and alleys of the world.
--250,000 children die every week from diseases and malnutrition. -2 million children are objects of sexual abuse, child pornography and the demand for child prostitutes is astronomical—and growing,
--20 million children are refugees of war and familial deaths,
--10 million children are child slaves—or work in slave-like work situations
--Millions of girls are ‘missing’ as a result of infanticide and neglect.

“In the USA a married couple was arrested for keeping 11 children in cages with very little food. Their adult daughter testified against them in court saying she had also been mistreated physically, emotionally and sexually.

“Doesn’t it just tear your heart out? What would you be willing to do if one of those children were yours, or your children’s children or a neighbor’s child?

“For so many people it is often ‘out of sight out of mind.’ It’s a sad fact that for the great majority of us we are more concerned about a splinter in our finger than with the millions who are dying painful deaths in Africa. We are more concerned with pleasuring ourselves with what’s on TV or buying a new car than we are aware with the brutal suffering of so many in our human family. While it may be true that few of us will be remembered in the pages of human history, there is no need for the great suffering that abounds in this world among us common people.”



-- “I have to confess, commander, that I fall into that category. I’m thinking about seeing my grandson’s soccer game, painting the kitchen, taking my wife out to dinner and a show. I just sort of assume that that’s the way it is. You’re making me ashamed of myself.”



—“Maybe with your writing and reporting you can help to bring some understanding, but if you are not really convinced it’ll just be empty prose. There has to be a burning commitment.”



—“Well Lemuel, can I call you Lemuel?”



—“Well we’re getting along pretty well, guess we are on a first name basis. But I’ve never gone by my first name. Actually when I was about twelve my buddies started calling me Wreck, for shipwreck. It wasn’t a bad name when I played football. I was a linebacker and part time fullback so the name fit. But a lot of girls didn’t want to go out with a ‘wreck.’ But don’t use ‘Wreck’ in your story, OK?”



—“Fine. I was just thinking about how much money would be needed to reduce the Third World suffering and where we Americans spend our money. Americans spend more on their pets than on toys for their kids. The pet industry is said to be a 38 billion dollar industry in

the U.S. Japan is almost as bad. What could that 38 billion do for our impoverished human brothers. Is it moral to spend serious money on massages, acupuncture or clothes for your dog? I know people who spend a lot of money burying or cremating their dogs and cats. Some even have them frozen. It's not enough to have yourself sealed in a cryonic crypt, hoping that someone in the future will find a cure for your fatal problem. But to take your poodle with you seems to be the height of neurotic insecurity. They argue that it's their money and they can spend it anyway they see fit. And I would agree with that, but what kind of morality are we talking about when we can freeze Tabby or feed an African village for ten years with the same amount of money. Are all species equal? Is one individual of a lower species, like a cat, more important than a group in the higher human species? It reminds me of when a neighbor kid would feed mice to his snake. Why feed a higher level mammal to a lower level reptile?"

"These are some of the same incongruencies I keep wresting with. Are some people more important than others? I certainly put my family first. And if I put them first I have to be concerned with how the problems of overpopulation are going to affect my children and theirs. And it's not like the problems are down the road, they are right here affecting us today.

"I had a couple of friends die of skin cancer. One was the legendary surfer Tommy Zahn, who my father used to lifeguard with. Too much sun and not enough protection from the ozone layer. Had they taken precautions early in their lives they would still be around today. We talk about an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure, but to reverse our excessive population while making parents more effective will take megatons of education and work. And it has to be done while dragging those megatons of solutions up the steep mountain of tradition and selfishness. The odds are certainly against my crusade for human survival!"



—"I agree. But here's another thought. Just look at real estate prices. Do you think you'd have to pay 10 million for a house on Malibu Beach if there were only a thousand people in the world? We keep making more people but we're not making more land."



—"Right Chet. My dad bought the land here for ten thousand dollars, it's now worth millions. But let's get back to the supposed topic of this interview. It's about the children of the world. There are too many people for the planet to support, too many people for their nation to support and too few parents with the ability and desire to raise physically and mentally healthy, happy, and educated children. We have to give all the children a chance at a real life. We must

develop children with a purpose and children with a loving drive to make the world a better place.

“I’m driven by that ancient Native American reminder that ‘We have not inherited this world from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children.’ It’s about the future children of the world. Are the politicians concerned? No! For most of them their concern is the immediate interests of their constituencies. Are business leaders concerned? No! More people in the short term is better for business. Are religious leaders concerned? No! The world needs more souls now. Only a few scientists and other academics seem to realize the catastrophe that is already here.”



-- “Wow commander, you sound like Plato, Santa Claus and Mother Theresa rolled into one. But I doubt that you are alone in your hopes. I would certainly agree with you. But the questions are: how to do it, and can it be done? I think that the selfish nature of the great majority of people wouldn’t be willing to make it happen.”



—“Well I’ll be that small pebble that when tossed in the pond makes small ripples that reach every inch of the shore. Hopefully my ripple will join with others and we can make a wave.

“If the world could only honestly strive to follow what the UN Secretary General said when the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. He said ‘We have no higher priority, no prouder achievement, than our work for the rights of children!’ If that is not just empty rhetoric let’s get on with the most practical solutions we can find to make a better world.

“Insuring that children have a fair shot at a productive and happy life finds support in this UN Convention. Article 24, Section 2, requires that parents be informed of the ‘basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, hygiene and accident prevention.’ It also requires preventative health care and guidance for parents. And it mandates that parents ‘shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.’ The convention doesn’t say that this should be done after the children are raised! It is implicit that these knowledges be learned by parents before the child is old enough to be negatively affected. Article 3, Section 2, notes the duties of parents.

“Articles 3, 18 and 21 all require that it is the ‘best interests of the child’ that are primary. Here we find repeated the requirement in most state laws that the child’s interests, not the whims

or wishes of a parent, are primary. Article 24 recognizes the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable potentials. And what's more—Article 4 mandates that 'States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention.' This seems to me to sanction some types of requirements for parents if they choose to have children. I would call this licensing. Maybe you wouldn't, but the U.N. clearly calls for certain knowledges and behaviors of parents as duties and responsibilities for parenthood. I think that all countries have signed the UN Convntion on the Rights of the Child. It was disappointing to me that my country was one of the last to sign on, and that was in 2002.

“Then Article 28 requires the various countries to provide for compulsory primary education, for various forms of secondary education, and for university education for those capable of handling it. Chet, maybe we ought to withdraw UN membership and economic cooperation with countries that don't take care of their children!”



--“You are really into protecting the children. I would agree that no country does what it should to protect children or to educate parents. But just because the boys and girls at the UN come up with ideals for human rights or child rights doesn't mean that any country is going to follow those ideals. The world is still controlled from the top down and children are at the bottom. A few countries have done a pretty good job in providing educational opportunities, but I'm not aware of any trying to weed out bad parents before they conceive. But as I remember, George Bernard Shaw said almost a hundred years ago that 'Parantage is a very important profession, but no test of fitness for it is ever imposed in the interest of the children.'” (3a)
”



--“We must find the seeds for the beginning of a better world. And I emphasize MUST, it's too late for 'should.' That's why I'm planning to visit with some wise people around the world and try to gain more knowledge about how to go about it. Certainly what needs to be done to limit our population and improve our world will ruffle a lot of religious feathers and trample the ingrained traditions that motivate most people.”



—“So Wreck, how are you going to try to educate those who have the power to sway people's opinion? As I see it science looks at how the universe works, religion and

philosophy look at why. When a scientist tells you how to behave he is outside of his realm. When a priest tells you how the universe works he is outside of his realm—unless he is also a physicist or an astronomer. The religiously or philosophically adept people deal with the purpose of life. Those are the people who need convincing. The scientists already know the enormity of the problem. I don't think you can look to the politicians for salvation. In democracies politicians follow—they don't lead. If they don't follow the trends they don't get re-elected and that's the main concern for most of them.”



-- “Chet, I think you are rapidly becoming a convert.”



-- “You'd have to be an illiterate idiot to not know about global warming, oil scarcity, air pollution, the accumulation of wastes, the scarcity of fresh water, and such, but with the exception of higher gasoline prices and higher utility bills my life hasn't changed that much. Maybe Einstein was right when he said ‘Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former.’ As long as our own lives are going well we think there is no need to be concerned about the future.”



—“I was amazed when I got on the freeway yesterday. Wall to wall cars at about every hour of the day and night. That was one thing I appreciated about space travel—no congestion. Do people realize that all those cars are being driven by somebody else's babies?

“My grandfather used to tell me about the LA of the 30s, 40s and 50s. Few cars, a freeway or two, only a few houses from La Brea to the beach. No congestion around Mines Field, LA's only airfield, just Sepulveda Boulevard bordering its west side. Now it's LAX with freeways all around it and houses and industry from Malibu to San Diego.

“My dad used to tell me how his buddies would decide to go to Yosemite to camp on July third. They'd celebrate the Fourth in Yosemite Valley with just a few people. Now you have to get reservations a year ahead. That's just an example of how the good life of the past has been hampered. Certainly some things are better—frozen foods, fat free ice cream, more football on television,— but lots of things are worse—drugs, violence, traffic, politicians!

“But this is the U.S. Just think about the underdeveloped countries, where everything is worse. They have less water, less food, more devastating genocidal wars, more rapes and murders. Overpopulation has occurred more in the underdeveloped areas of the world so they

suffer more. Just look at how China has begun to prosper as its one child policy begins to take effect. And as the years roll on its positive effects will be magnified.

“In just five years, in 2025, there will be 8 billion people on earth. The increase will all be in the undeveloped countries.”



—“Well commander, or should I say ‘Wreck’, I’ve taken too much of your time, I’d better be going.”



—“Stick around a few minutes, I see my buddies coming up the hill. They just turned up Crest Drive and will be here at Flathead Trail in a minute or two. They are my oldest and dearest friends. Funny, in high school we were like peas in a pod. We thought alike. We acted alike. We played the same sports and were in the same club at LA High, the Saints. The name wasn’t exactly appropriate but I guess girls’ mothers felt safer knowing their daughters were out with saints.”



—“OK, love to meet a part of your past.”

REACTIONARY AND LIBERAL



—“We’re going to have a huge several month long reunion because they are going to travel the world with me on a combination fact-finding tour and vacation. I’ve been invited to several countries to meet with their leaders.

“I’ve been thinking of writing a book or working on a TV series on my voyage. I need my friends to help me understand what I will experience. Since playing high school football together in Los Angeles we have been best friends. It’s funny that while at one time we were so much alike, time has etched some rather huge crevices between our world views today. We now span the political spectrum from left to right. The most left leaning is Lee. He is one of the few honest lawyers I know. Chet, is the term ‘honest lawyer’ an oxymoron? He’s the one with the rather long California surfer’s style and the surfer’s tan. His gift of gab has probably swayed more than a few juries.

“The one just behind him, the one with the blond hair is Frank Concannon who is our conservative. But he has always been known as Con. He was our quarterback. Always the

smartest of us, Con became a multi-millionaire with some pluck and some luck. The pluck, because he was always the hardest worker of our gang, the luck because he got into the wireless communication business and sold out to a Scandinavian conglomerate. He looks fit enough to don the helmet and shoulder pads and chuck a few 60 yard passes.

“The good looking guy closing the door is Ray was our All City end. He got a college football scholarship to Notre Dame. They not only knocked the wildness out of him, a wildness that had so often led us astray as youths, but they put a purpose in him. This led him to become a priest, a rather reactionary priest. I guess the new term for reactionary is neo-conservative. Doesn’t sound as uncivilized as “reactionary.” I would never have expected Ray to duplicate the Medieval approach to religion that the Polish and German popes have been advocating. If anything, I would have expected him to follow Pope John XXIII’s liberal approach. Of course I would never have expected him to become a man of the cloth. It wouldn’t have surprised me to find him starring in films, coaching football, or becoming a gigolo for some rich European princess—but a priest? “Of course my life couldn’t have been predicted either. You know I started as a teacher and football coach. Before I was accepted into astronaut training I was the football coach at Hollywood High School. Anyway here they are.

“Guys I’d like you to meet Chet Roland from World News. Lee and Con, you’ve probably seen him on the nightly news. Ray, you were probably praying.”



—“Praying? I only pray 23 hours a day, I always take time out to watch Chet and Bugs Bunny in the 6 o’clock hour.”



—“With your reactionary approach to thinking I thought you only watched Robin Hood and The Flintstones!”



—“Get off my back Lee or I’ll start telling lawyer jokes. Or worse, I’ll start rubbing it in on how bad Notre Dame beat Stanford. If you are going to go to college there is no sense going to a school without a top ten football team. When you played there did you ever score?”



—“We scored a lot. We just couldn’t stop anybody. When Con was the quarterback at UCLA he must have thrown 20 touchdowns against us in his career. But seriously, graduating

from Stanford gave me my pick of law schools. When you got out of Notre Dame did you have your pick of seminaries?”



—“Sure did. And like Thomas Aquinas, I chose the Dominicans.”



—“Ray, what is it that has made so many powerful people look to the past for the truth?”



—“Well Lee, for some reason there has been a movement towards conservatism, and often a movement to the right of conservatism to a reactionary or neo-conservative position. Rather than conserving the values that have been commonly held, some political and religious leaders are looking to values of the past which they find superior. This seems to be especially true in religious belief. Many of us think that we have left God’s word behind us and have looked for the easier self-centered life. Pope John Paul the Second, Pope Benedict the Sixteenth, George W. Bush in the United States and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran, not to mention Osama bin Ladin, have championed earlier visions of their religions as the salvation of the world.

“Several elected African presidents have moved backward toward absolute monarchy. Drug lords, and some major companies, have cast ethics aside in an amoral laissez faire approach to making fortunes. All these are movements are back to earlier religious beliefs or back to primitive human selfishness. Many of us feel that seeking pleasure now is the big problem with society. That seems to be the reason that so many people are moving into more fundamental religions, into Islam, ‘born again’ evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics like me.

“Of course you can’t put religious leaders in the same camp with drug lords and unethical business or political leaders. We are going back to truth and seeking a higher level of living through God’s inspiration. They are going back to the primitive aspect of savage human nature. As religious leaders we want to rise above that base level of human nature. What Con?”



—“But Ray, look at your reactionary religious leaders. Bin Ladin attacked both Moslem and non-Moslem regimes that he thought were antagonistic to his beliefs. Bush attacked an Islamic country, ostensibly to rid them of a sadistic dictator and to spread democracy. But he probably actually had the economic and political goals of controlling more oil and obtaining military bases in the Mid-East. Ahmadinejad ran for president of Iran as an

idealist, but once elected he quickly moved to put Iran on a path toward allegiance to the Shiite messiah, Mahdi. Some think that he believes himself to be a representative of the Mahdi and is preparing for the second coming of the 12th imam. He clearly hoped to establish a more rigid Islamic regime. Along this line he fired a number of experienced diplomats and bank directors. He wanted all the power of a Medieval religious king. While he was elected democratically, democracy was not one of his goals for his country. Chet, you seem to be bursting with a comment or question.”



—“Right Con. Fellas, I get the point that you are a political galaxy. But I’d like to get a better feeling of where you guys are coming from. Ray, since you have been designated as the group’s resident reactionary, why do you feel that Wreck gave you that label?”



—“Don’t know Chet, I think I’m the most progressive of the group. What could be more progressive than trying to know God and helping people to get to heaven? But I suppose that for the last 2000 years the Christians have had this goal. Of course the Jews had that vision 3,000 years ago and the Muslims have had it for 1500 years. So by today’s standards in some parts of the world I am reacting back to where we had been.”



—“I see Ray. I guess we all think we’re progressive since we all think we are right! What about you Concannon. What makes you a conservative?”



—“Well as I see it, liberty is the most important right that a government can grant. Without real freedom good things don’t happen. Religions can’t flourish, science can’t reach its potentials for providing us knowledge, and business can’t expand to bring more goods and services to more people. This means that taxes should be as low as possible while providing the means by which society can progress. And the progress of society is based on an equality of educational opportunity. Why is your face so screwed up Lee. Don’t you like the idea of equality of educational opportunity?”



—“Con, you are assuming that educational opportunity is a conservative idea. It’s a cornerstone of our liberal agenda. I see “equality” as basic to my liberal views.”



—“I agree, Lee. I think that particularly in domestic issues we conservatives lean to liberty while you liberals lean towards equality. But we both agree that equal educational opportunity is essential. The difference is that we conservatives are more likely to allow people the freedom to achieve after they have experienced as much education as they like, while you liberals want to keep equalizing them. Liberty will result in longer term inequalities based on people’s educations, work ethics, goals, occupations, et cetera. You are for a graduated income tax to pull back the high wage earners toward the bottom. We conservatives are more likely to want a sales tax or a value added tax, and perhaps luxury taxes on buying expensive items like furs and Ferraris.”



—“I see your point but I disagree with your goals. As liberals we do want more equalitarian treatment for all people. A gang member shot in a street war is just as much entitled to emergency care treatment and hospitalization as a school teacher who has had a heart attack. This means that we need higher taxes to provide more extensive medical services than you conservatives would want.”



—“Possibly. We disagree on a lot of things but we agree on a lot too. For example we both want effective Social Security. You liberals want it all to be handled by the government. We conservatives think that people would be more able to end up with a better retirement if they handled the same pension contributions themselves. And some people avoid the issue and just say ‘have more babies’ so that someone will take care of society’s financial needs.

“What has happened, of course, is that the existing system, the liberal system, is supposed to give a guaranteed amount to everyone based on their years of contributions and their salaries. But tax laws have allowed a more conservative approach in which you can contribute, tax free, to your own retirement plan. So in terms of pensions we have both the conservative and the liberal ideas at work. The realities are that there are good ideas on both the left and the right and most people are a little bit liberal and a little bit conservative. Lee, you just have more of your ideas on the left side of the middle and I have more of mine on the right.”



—“But Con don’t you think religion is a factor in how we believe?”



—“I’m not particularly religious but most conservatives are, because religion like liberty, is a value that most want to conserve. But many religious ideas are quite liberal, so a majority of liberals in this country are also religious. It just happens that some people on the left, like Karl Marx, are atheists. But you have atheists on the conservative side too! You also have saints both sides of the aisle. I think we could put Joan of Arc on the right and Mother Theresa on the left. And when they make Pope John Paul a saint we’ll have a reactionary saint!”



—“Well guys, I hope this trip gives us a chance for some heavy discussions. And I think we’ll meet some people who will shake us up intellectually. As you know I am deeply concerned with population reduction and making a better life for all children. So that will be a major concern of mine as we travel.”



—“I’m with you Wreck. But how about filling us in on what you see as the background of the problem. We should start with some basic information.”

POPULATION CONTROL AND REDUCTION



—“Well Con, as I had mentioned to Chet, look at the way world population has increased. In all of human history it took us until 1800 to reach a billion people. Now we have 7 billion. And we are expecting it to be 9 to 10 billion in 2050. If the population continues at its current rate, by the year 2855 it has been estimated that there will be about 20 people per square foot of land and sea on this planet. Of course our species would self destruct long before we got to that number!”



—“With that many people where would you go on vacation? “



—“Because of the one child per family rule in China, its trial in Singapore and the drop in the fertility rate in much of Europe the rate of growth in the world is slowing, but it is not yet reversing. It’s still growing at almost 1½% a year. But there are some bright spots. By 2050 the

UN predicts that 25 European nations will have populations below what they are now. Russia will lose 31 million, Italy over 7 million, Poland almost 7 million, and Germany almost 4 million. It is predicted that if the current low fertility rate in Japan continues there would be no Japanese left by the middle of the fourth millennium.”



—“Ya, Japan is really in for some major changes. I did a report on my news program a few months ago. Because of its low birthrate its population has decreased by a couple of million in the last few years. Now in 2020 it’s down to 126 million, but 30% of its citizens are over 65. Its median age is 50 years which is 20 years higher than the world average. And in the next thirty years it will lose a quarter of its population. They could bring in foreign workers but the traditional culture of Japan has not been particularly open to people from other cultures and the Japanese written and spoken language is difficult to learn. Unless robotics start doing the work of people the second strongest economy in the world may drop a few notches. But then Japan leads the world in robotics, so they may not need more workers.”



—“But if we are to be concerned with the future of the planet, Japan is showing the way.

“We should have seen this problem coming. The agricultural surplus allowed more people to leave the farm since fewer were needed to produce the food needed to sustain a technological society, fewer and fewer people were needed to supply all of our physical needs. Factory built housing, advanced construction tools, mass produced autos, clothes and appliances, all reduced the need for hand labor and increased the efficiency of every worker. Children became economic drains on their families. While in earlier days children produced more than they consumed, today they cost a middle class family hundreds of thousands of dollars—in food, clothing, education, and housing. For this reason more couples opt to use their money on themselves rather than on financially draining offspring. Japan and Western Europe are cases in point. In the short term, the next 50 to 100 years, countries’ economies will be pinched to deliver pension and health benefits for the increasingly elderly population. Either the fewer workers must pay higher taxes to provide for their elders or the elders must be required to work more years before retiring. General Motors is already there with one worker for every three retirees.”



—“Those of us in interesting jobs often don’t want to retire. I love my job of researching, interviewing and reporting. But brilliant legislators often force us into an unwanted retirement to make room for the younger workers. So experience is sacrificed for inexperience—hardly a blueprint for efficiency.”



—“I’ve enjoyed my life too, Chet. But short sighted people call for more babies to take up the slack. This merely compounds the problem in the long run. Population reduction will obviously have some economic effects. General Motors will sell fewer cars and trucks. Telephone companies will bill for fewer calls. Airlines will probably fly fewer passengers and oil companies will sell less gasoline. But since the world will have fewer people the standard of living will go up. So there would be economic problems for a few generations while the population stabilizes.

“The longer we continue in this population explosion, the more economically difficult the adjustment will be when we reverse it. But without that major adjustment it will soon be ‘sayonara’ for our species.

“People that I admire for their ability to think and their concern for the future agree that the world has major problems Like my old buddy Arnold Toynbee said ‘We have been God-like in our planned breeding of our domesticated plants and animals, but we have been rabbit-like in our unplanned breeding of ourselves.’ Any growth is bad for the planet but the greatest growth is in the poorer countries. So we have more babies starving to death and fewer children in school. This keeps the poor down and reduces any chance of reducing their poverty. It also fuels their anger and increases civil wars and religious hatreds.”



—“Wreck, why do you think it fuels religious hate?”



—“Well Con, the lack of education limits people’s views of options for conflict resolution. If they see the ultimate truth of their lives only in the very limited view of their own tradition; if they understand as truth only what a local religious leader says; if they are not aware that a government based on the laws enacted by the elected representatives of the people may be a better way to go—we will have uneducated prejudices and hatreds. But if they realize that there are highly probable theories in economics and the social sciences that may make them capable of

developing economically satisfying lives—then they have a much better chance of seeing the big picture.

“My old professor, Dr. Woellner, said that ‘God and one man is a majority.’ Certainly truth is not determined by a democratic vote or a Supreme Court decision. De Tocqueville warned us over 150 years ago about the possible tyranny of the majority in America. (4) And ‘certainty’ is not determined by a single person at the head of a state or a religion. Look at how popes, along with the huge majority of the human race, believed that the earth was flat and that the sun went around the earth. Now the popes, and all educated people, believe just the opposite.

“While Copernicus was admittedly not the first to propose a heliocentric theory of the movement of the sun and Earth, he probably incurred more wrath from his religion than did Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, the thirteenth century Persian Shi’ite when he proposed his theory of planetary motion. Of course at that time Islam was more accepting of science, which is why they were so far ahead of the Christians. And when the Greek Philolaus proposed his heliocentric theory in the fourth century BC he might have drawn a few snickers of disbelief, but the Olympian gods didn’t strike him down.

“So how do we approach the religious and state leaders, how do we approach the common people, how do we convince the world’s population of the severity of the situation? How do we reduce population while increasing the opportunities for every baby born? Certainly if every young person can have the opportunity to learn about the mysteries of science, the flow of history, the enduring questions of ethics—we have a better shot at developing a utopian world where we can live effective and enjoyable lives in a peaceful world.”



—“You’re right Wreck. We don’t know how many potential Albert Einsteins, Bill Gateses, Thomas Edisons, Nelson Mandelas, Thomas Jeffersons and Colin Powells are living in huts in Columbia, India, Africa or Bangladesh. The world is really severely handicapping itself when its whole population is not being given the chance to be as well educated as their capabilities will allow. And with globalization and urbanization becoming the rule, working with your hands on a farm or in a factory is less and less likely to be an adequate pursuit for financial success or self fulfillment.

“When I hear of Islamic radicals, like the Taliban, burning down schools in Afghanistan where 70% of the people are illiterate and where millions are still not attending school (5), I cringe with pity for the deprived students and for their state that is trying to enter the modern world. I understand the need of some leaders to keep people ignorant of their world, and even of

their religion so that they can be more easily manipulated. How can an illiterate read the Koran? And you certainly don't want girls in school. The next thing you know they would find out that Muhammad actually liked women and held them in high esteem.



—“I have always had the belief that the truly religious people are all climbing the same mountain. They are just climbing from different sides. But those ignorant of the message of the founders of their religions are all fighting at the bottom of the hill. They dig trenches and moats that bring them farther from the top. And their psychotic need to control others and to be right takes them farther from the humility that is needed for sainthood, for union with the Brahman—for Paradise. Just look at the inhumane deeds that have been done in the name of religion—the Crusades, fanatical terrorism, the Inquisition, suicide bombings. The mercy espoused by most great religious teachers is replaced by the most vile human motivation for power and vengeance—a vengeance for either real or imagined wrongs.



—“Exactly Con, but we are caught in a Catch 22. The poor people are too uneducated to realize that their procreative profundity is pulling them further and further behind. In Europe we have more people realizing that their own lives will be better without spending their time and money on children. And they have the means of contraception and abortion readily available, so fewer children are being born. If their religious leaders protest, they ignore them.

“On the other hand, the poor are bound up in the tradition of having children and don't have the means to prevent them if they wanted to. They can't see a hope for a better future. But in Europe, Singapore and China—all countries that either have arrived at or are rushing to the gates of plenty, fertility rates are dropping. There is generally a freedom from want in these countries. And there is certainly a good deal of hope, a hope with a good chance of fruition.”

“I know that it takes 2.1 children per woman to keep the population stable and I recently read that over 60 countries are now below that level, how high are the rates in the undeveloped parts of the world?”



—“They go to almost 6 children per woman in some countries, Lee. Zambia's rate is 5.6. India is 3.1, but that should drop significantly as farming becomes more mechanized and the country becomes more industrialized. Rwanda has a fertility rate of 6 children per woman. The government is now considering recommending only three children per family. The more

00developed countries average about 1.6 children per woman. The less developed countries average over 3. China, with its one child policy, is still at 1.8 children per woman. And if the internal pressure forces the rulers to relax the one child policy its rate will go back up. But in Europe, Spain is way down, just 1.15, with Italy not far behind at 1.18. It just goes to show that even in these supposedly Roman Catholic countries, family needs outweigh the commands of religion. By European standards Catholic Ireland has a high fertility rate of 1.9, but that is still a bit below the 2.1 repopulation rate. This naturally increases the percentage of elderly in the population. Europe and Japan are the only regions where the number of people aged 60 and over outnumber the children. Parts of Latin America and Asia are approaching that level. It will necessarily cause an economic hardship for some.”



—“As a conservative I am concerned with the strong religious beliefs among those few religions that espouse high fertility. They can skew the numbers upward. For example while the fertility rates in Europe are coming down dramatically, Muslims who have come to Europe as workers or refugees are expected to have fertility rates of 3.4. (6) Population projections are that in the century from 1950 to 2050 the world Muslim population percentage will have doubled, from 14 to 27%, and their actual population will have increased from 360 million to 2.5 billion. Catholics will be about half that number and Protestants will equal Catholics. So Christians and Muslims will be about equal, but the Muslims are gaining at a faster rate. Non-hispanic whites, who were the majority of Christians earlier, will be only about 20% of the 3 billion Christians because the increases will be primarily in Africa, South America, and Asia—the areas of lower education levels and greater poverty.

“Hindus have lost some ground, especially to the Muslims. This worries some. Politicians in Calcutta, concerned that Hindus are losing population, condemned birth control and proposed instituting rewards for women who had at least 10 children. (7)

“This illustrates a basic view of some religious leaders that their religion must be the largest and take over the world. It also is a tactic of some national leaders who take the short sighted view that more people are needed in their country to pay for their social welfare programs, to make up their armies or to provide consumers for their businesses that want to expand.”



—“As the years flow by we find that the more educated people are finding problems either in believing in a creator, or in religions’ paths to salvation. Morality is no longer necessarily a religious domain as it had become under the monotheistic religions of Judaism,

Christianity and Islam. The social democratic concept of respect for the person has become more pervading.

“Since religions tend to enrich themselves, rather than their followers, many wonder if it is not more difficult for the religious leaders to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle said Matthew in Chapter 19, verse 24. Mosques, temples and churches hold so much gold while the faithful adherents to the religion are starving in the back pews and outside the holy walls. How much food and medicine would the golden domes, the art collections, the real estate holdings and the gilded idols bring if they were sold on the open market?

“Europe has become far more secular over the years. The U.S. has a 95% population of believers, and many are churchgoers, but the American Catholics are nearly identical in their daily lives to the Protestants. They use contraceptives just as often. They have just as many abortions. They don’t follow the same political party lines in elections. They act as if they are secular—except for a few hours on Sunday. So unless the more secular states want their grandchildren to be ruled by Christian or Islamic regimes, such as in the Middle Ages, they must give some thought to preserving the progress made from the Period of Enlightenment and the rise of secular democracies.

“The lack of education and the unwillingness to study and understand divergent views is a major problem with fundamentalists. You remember back in 2006 when an Afghan, who had renounced Islam for Christianity fifteen years earlier was brought to court because the new Afghan Constitution required that nothing could go against the Koran. And the Koran prescribes death for one who renounces Islam. By contrast in the West, Islam is accepted as a legitimate religion. Religious beliefs, but not all religious practices, are tolerated.

“Of course with European educations, the Muslims may follow the patterns of the Christians by reducing their family size, particularly if state welfare payments are insufficient to support them. Unlimited social welfare for all is an idea that is, by necessity, evolving into a limited social welfare for the needy. The European post-World War II social welfare states, that came into being when the populations were young, are being re-evaluated and diminished as the populations age. This also forces a re-direction of their once vibrant economies. Even oil-rich Norway, a social welfare model, is not handling all of its cradle to grave promises. Now in many countries financial pressure is often being exerted on parents, both married and unmarried, who cannot support their broods. These are nearly always people with low levels of education.

“It seems that fundamentalists in all religions are seldom well educated. They may know their holy books and have an interpretation of certain passages, often at odds with the interpretations

of others in their religion, but they don't have a broad knowledge of history or science or a comprehensive understanding of philosophy or theology. Their thinking seems to be simply that their Supreme Being exists, He gave them their holy scripture, and He agrees 100% with them no matter what their interpretations of His scriptures are.

“With them all thinking somewhat differently, whether in the same religion or different religions, you'd think that some might wonder about God's omniscience, letting so many thousands of holy people each think they have the inspired word, when their views are so different. This is a bit different from Las Vegas where a gambler “knows” he has a “sure thing” but still recognizes there is a chance that he won't win.

“Maybe we should send all these holy men to the ‘Sin City’ with a hundred dollars and tell them just to bet on the sure things when God tips them. Just think of all the gold they can win to gild their churches and mosques! And if God doesn't give them all the right cards, maybe it will make them realize that perhaps they have occasionally misinterpreted the Almighty's message. What do you want to say Ray?”



—“As your resident reactionary, and I don't like that epithet!, I have to point out some problems with reducing the population. There is the Biblical command to “Be fruitful and multiply.” There is also the sin of Onan cited in Genesis 38 verses 9 and 10 in which “he spilled his seed on the ground” to avoid procreating—and God slew him. Whether his sin was masturbation or *coitus interruptus* or just not fulfilling the law of marrying his brother's wife—Onan committed a pretty dastardly sin. As a Catholic I follow the teachings of St. Augustine and the popes in believing that his sin was related to contraception. Because, as you know, contraception while actively participating in sexual intercourse is a sin. Consequently the only method available to Catholics is abstinence. This therefore allows only the so called ‘rhythm method’ for Catholic married couples.

“But there are social concerns also. How are you going to pay the pensions of the graying populations with fewer younger workers? The realities of pension funding, for example, is a huge dent in the national budget. In Italy 12% of the country's gross national product goes to pensions—and it will be going higher. You must have young workers to pay for the pensions of the old.

“I have heard that the earth can handle 16 billion people. If so, we are a long way from hitting that mark. So when you talk about the religious leaders who advocate more children don't you think that they are also thinking? Looks like you disagree Wreck.

“And the Pope is certainly concerned about the plight of children. I think it was in about 2008 at his Christmas Mass that he sent out an appeal to help those children who are forced to live in the streets, those who are forced into armies and those who are otherwise abused. He asked the faithful to help those children who are denied parental love and the millions who are exploited in so many ways. He was emphatic that we must help those suffering children.”



—“No offense Ray, but while he was recognizing the problem, he didn’t suggest any solutions and his vehement stands against contraception and abortion are the major impediments to alleviating the suffering. It is easy to recognize many of the problems that plague our planet, but suggesting workable solutions, then implementing them, are the requirements for progress in problem solving. I believe many religious leaders think that they are thinking freely, but they are so bound up by their basic assumptions from the literature of the past that they cannot be concerned with the future of our world as science is predicting it. We will, no doubt, have this discussion again. Let’s pick it up after we have our discussions with Dr. Wang in Kino.

“But certainly not all religions oppose population control. For example, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church reaffirmed their existing policies on population and, in view of the compelling need now for fewer births they called for ‘encouragement and support, respect and honor’ to be accorded to couples who choose not to conceive children as well as to those who choose to conceive. Other religious groups have called for the same concern for overpopulation.”



—“It’s clear that, just as so many individual and national decisions are made for economic reasons, limiting family size is largely an economic decision. And I’ve certainly seen it out in the business world. So many women are excited about their careers in business, medicine, law and sales that staying home with children is generally not that appealing.”



—“I guess that’s true Con. I’ve been away from the business world so long that I’m not really in tune. But I see my daughter who is totally devoted to her two children. She’s very successful in pharmaceutical sales, which she loves—but then can’t wait to get home to her husband and kids. She loves her job and loves her family. She feels doubly blessed.”



0—“Oh, I know a number of women who are in that category. But they can’t do everything that they would like. There’s little time for housecleaning, so they hire a cleaning service. They don’t have as much time for R & R with their husbands. They can’t leave the kids every weekend for skiing, surfing, general vacationing—but those are not their priorities. We have to realize that we are not all cut out of the same cloth.”



—“We are going to get a chance to discuss these psychological differences when we get to Singaling. Dr. Chan is one of the foremost experts in the world in this area. After we pick Dr. Wang’s brain about value systems and how we each vary in our values then learn about our needs and drives from Dr. Chan we should have a clearer insight into why we do what we do, and perhaps how we can fashion more satisfying lives for ourselves by understanding us better. I believe that our beliefs and actions are based either on our unconscious motivations or on our values. And commonly we act psychologically but believe that our actions are really value based—which they are not. ”



—“Wreck, I’m really excited about discussing life with these people. Who else do you have lined up to help us open our minds?”



0—“There are a bunch of things I would like to delve more deeply into. How do you get things to happen is one concern. If we were to seriously pursue licensing parents what methods would be available? Con?”



—“We would be looking at politics there! Politics is the ‘science of the possible’ is what my old UCLA professor taught me. Dr. Titus was THE expert on how people can and should be treated, depending on the desired ends. Remember him Wreck? Juniors sat in the last rows, seniors ahead of them, then the masters students then the PhD students in the front. Titus said that since it was a class in “the science of the possible” any way that you could get a grade was OK. I remember you knew one teaching assistant from when she was a high school student coming to your lifeguard tower, then you started dating the other TA. And you got an A.”



—“I remember it well. Probably the only smart thing I did in college! But Con, I think we will find that what works politically, that is how we get people to do things, goes back to the original motivational ideas of values, needs and drives. But the effective politicians are able to show us why we should follow their leadership—often without thinking.”



—“This sounds enlightening. Anything else planned?”



—“Of course, we’re going to solve all the world’s problems! We are going to Mojinju, that experimental religious country where people of the several major religions are getting along quite well. I want to see how peace and population control have worked in our modern world.

“But then there are the United Colonies where I think that freedom has gotten out of control. They are making some highly controversial changes in their system to try to curb the urban excesses that seem to accompany the materially induced selfishness of our modern global economic and social monster. They have had to try to reconcile the ideals of liberty and equality--which are actually antithetical. They have a total aversion to both population control and to licensing parents.

“The last sto0p I plan would be in Northland. Their approach to population control and to parent licensing is really far out. They are doing human cloning and artificial insemination to ‘improve the human breed’ so to speak.”



—“You mean eugenics?”



—“Yes. Eugenics in ways that Hitler or Churchill never dreamed of!”



—“Well Wreck, I don’t know which adventures look forward to more—traveling the physical or the intellectual world.

“Wreck, as the resident liberal of the group, I share your concerns about population control. The genocide in Africa is appalling. Estimates are that nearly 4 million people were killed in Congo in the war of 1998. A half million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by

rampaging Hutus in a hundred days. Millions more have become internally displaced or have sought asylum in neighboring countries. My cousin is in an African aid group. She says nobody outside of the country seems to care. She's told me about seeing five year olds with their hands cut off by the invading army. Ten year old girls raped and tortured. Villages burned down.

“Sub-Saharan Africa has one crisis after another. Then we have the Philippines, Palestine, Iraq—country after country engaged in generally meaningless attempts to kill off their neighbors. Columbia has a perpetual civil war.

“Obviously the planet is not the home of universal happiness. And for the good life we passed the maximum population some time ago, if two billion people is the maximum load the earth can endure. Fewer would obviously be better. By 2050 the population may stabilize at 9 billion people. With ¼ child less per woman we would reach 2 billion in 2300. But can we survive 200 more years with the scarcities of water and power and with polluted air and water? We need to do it faster.”



—“Nature will handle the situation if we don't. And nature can be more brutal than we are. Diseases will take their toll. Untreatable tuberculosis kills a few million a year. When I left the planet there were 40 million with AIDS and over 20 million had died from it. Was this a blessing or a curse? The life expectancy in Zimbabwe had fallen from 60 to 30. But they can still produce a number of children before they are 30 and most of the children will be HIV positive.

“Nature seems to be trying to limit populations Along with HIV we have ebola, malaria, famines, influenzas, tidal waves, wars, uprisings, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes and earthquakes. And if those don't control the total world population then we have homosexual partnerships, assuming they don't have children. The power drive of political madmen from Ghegis Khan, Alexander and Caesar to Hitler, Pol Pot and Hussein have worked to kill off both soldiers and civilians. Weapons of mass destruction, now available to most power hungry leaders and fanatics, can control populations more effectively and sadistically today than at any time in the past. Poison the water supply of a city, let loose deadly pathogens in the air, use nuclear weapons against major cities like New York, London, Tokyo, Beijing or Paris.

“Or maybe we'll follow the pattern of Dr. Calhoun's mice. Maybe it will be done through a worldwide atomic war. But wouldn't it be 'lovely' if we would solve it with our intelligence? And restricting births is the most obvious solution. But further, allowing children to be born to the best possible parents certainly is an altruistic goal.

“Would it be better to reduce the population voluntarily, with its rather minor adjustment problems or should we wait for the devastation that Mother Nature and her psychotic warrior sons will undoubtedly wreak? Which approach will result in the least amount of human suffering?”



—“Tell me about it, Wreck! Human history is little more than recanting the wars of conquerors and religious liberators advancing their causes while eliminating the heretics.. As a utopian, I can’t help but hope that we can end wars, increase education and toleration, and save our planet. But the realities of human nature, as shown from our history, tell me that it is improbable. Still I hope for the best. I hope that reason will overcome our selfishness—and that our logical potentials will win out over our psychological propensities.”



—“Well Lee, I would like to think that we could live in a stress free utopian world, but the classical utopian ideals can’t be reached today. At least I don’t think so. Every utopia requires that people give up some freedoms and desires. It may be the family, private property, some controls on freedom of speech or of the press. The task is to keep as many freedoms as possible while controlling population increases through education, rewards and punishments. The rewards might be financial, educational, vocational or recreational. The punishments might also be financial, educational and vocational and might also include imprisonment.

“H.G. Wells in *Modern Utopia* rightly said that the utopian plans of the past postulated a content citizenry, but no society can exist without friction, conflicts and wastes. In my search for utopia, I am really just looking for a better way for today and the dawn of tomorrow. Obviously if Plato or More were writing today they would have quite different plans for their societies. Economics change. Political realities change. No one would plan a utopia based on a small state like Plato did with Sparta. Today a globalized utopia would be the goal. But the prejudices of the people, the roles of religions and the call of a democratic freedom push and pull the possibilities for order. The best we can hope for is that we can agree on stopping the population explosion, reducing the violence, stopping the global warming, and installing workable democracies that allow for freedom and universal education. We can’t eliminate poverty until these are accomplished. We can’t eliminate diseases until we can control our environment. We can’t eliminate our self imposed inhumanity to our human neighbors until we make the pragmatic changes that need to be made. But just what changes can be made and should be prioritized? That’s what I want to concentrate on.

LICENSING PARENTS

“Well guys let me talk about my other concern, licensing parents. In the early 1900s maybe a few people dreamed of space travel. But did any even conceive of television, computers, the internet, artificial hearts, atomic power? There were probably no such dreams, and certainly no concrete plans to achieve any dreams that might have existed. But to reduce population is not just a dream but a very real need—probably the greatest need that we humans have ever encountered. And there is a plan. It is already being done in some countries. And that plan is aimed at fulfilling the hope that every child born into the diminishing population is loved and cared for, is educated, and is given every opportunity to live a satisfying and socially worthwhile life. Effective parenting licensing is the answer to both problems.”



—“Wreck, would you still advocate licenses if the birthrate were being reduced in most countries?”



—“Yes Ray. We still need to protect children until all are guaranteed an effective childhood, where every child is loved, cared for and effectively educated. If you know any teachers or social workers you can find out about the number of parents in every walk of life, that abuse their children. Children should be wanted and parents should be taught what their children need in order to grow up effectively. They need to know about their physical, emotional and mental needs. And potential parents should be screened to make certain that their own emotional maturity levels are mature enough to be able to raise a child. I think it’s a shame that a half million children in the U.S. are being raised in foster homes. Research shows that more children being raised by grandparents than parents. Then look at the number being raised by TV and video games. Seems to me that there aren’t as many children who are really wanted as most people would like to believe. Making the baby is obviously more fun than making the child for the great majority.

“When the state of South Dakota passed its anti-abortion law, excepting only to save the life of the mother, even rape victims could not have an abortion. And South Dakota has an extremely high rape level. I assume that every child of a rape will have a mother who is as financially and emotionally secure and loving as the average child born to a happily married couple. We can certainly assume that any raped mother will desperately want the child that was conceived in

violence, fear, desperation and hate. And if the rapist doesn't marry her he will certainly send his monthly support checks.

"You probably read the best selling book Freakonomics (8) in it it is theorized that the major reason that crime has dropped is that the Supreme Court allowed abortion in Roe v. Wade twenty years earlier. Poorer women, whose children would most likely find their way into gangs and crime, procured abortions and thus reduced the number of potential criminals.

"Is it really more important to just have a baby born or is it more important to have a baby born who will be wanted and loved and will have the opportunity for a healthy and satisfying life? Wouldn't you support abortion in that case Ray?"



—"Never! The Church's position is that the soul is infused into the fertilized ovum at the instant of conception. That should be perfectly clear to any thinking person. Aren't you a thinking person, Wreck?"



—"Well I don't know enough to argue about that issue right now, but I know it's something I will ask Dr. Wang about when we get to Kino."



—"Even without the religious concerns, in the more primitive societies children are often economic assets. They are the necessary hands for tilling the fields and they are the essential old age security for their parents."



—"That's true Ray, so if we reduce a population something would have to be done to set up government care for the elderly who don't have children. But you would have to agree that in the non-agricultural and developed economies children cost money. Some families are happier with children, most are not. Children are no longer economically useful because there are fewer small farms and the labor is machine-generated, not human-generated.

"I've thought about this most of the time I was in space. Our biggest problem right now is how to convince the people, the politicians and all the religious leaders that population must be controlled. Is it the will of Allah to see the human race in misery? Is it the will of God to see His world heading for oblivion. Did the Supreme Being give humans intelligence to control their instincts and change their traditions?"

“I think that voluntary population control with the increased possibility of loving parents will make the world safer for all. And it should reduce the number of warrior leaders and terrorists in the world because more children will be shown the path to loving rather than loathing, helping rather than hating.

“Think about it. What is more important for society, dogs on a leash or concerned and loving parents, driving a car or increasing the chances that humankind can live peacefully and in a friendly environment without famine and pollutions?”



—“But Wreck, licensing parents would be genocide because the poor and uneducated would most likely not be given licenses. Poor Indians and sub-Saharan blacks would obviously be targeted.”

Chet had sat quietly but felt compelled to enter the free-for-all.



—“Ray wouldn’t you call what the Africans are doing to each other genocide? When I covered Africa for World News I was appalled by the cruelty and killing. They didn’t seem to see it as genocide, at least not as racial genocide. It’s not a racial thing to license parents. It is a human thing. But you are certainly going to run into incredible opposition would make it politically impossible to accomplish. The Christians, particularly the Catholics and Mormons, the Muslims, and the national rulers who don’t want their constituencies reduced, business people who want to expand the consumer base, and certainly the tradition of having children—will be huge obstacles.”



—“What if we make it voluntary Chet,—money or free education for voluntary sterilization or having small families—money direct to the people—bypassing the leaders. Today billions are given to eradicate disease in Africa. Even if diseases are controlled, the poor will be even poorer and more miserable if they continue to produce large numbers of children. There have to be financial incentives for today and for the future to motivate them effectively.

“Don’t you think that we have a duty to make every child’s life worthwhile. With death by hunger, genocide and disease rampant in Third World countries and with mental illness, abuse and the lack of optimal opportunities throughout the world in all societies, protection of children

is an essential. If they are to be born, society owes them the best chance at a healthy, happy and useful life.”



—“Don’t you all agree that children should be properly parented? But most people want the right to have children—as many as they want. They may call it a human right. But others call for children’s human rights to have the best parents possible. Sometimes these human rights, those of the potential parents and those of the children, are in conflict.

“Do you think that the 13 year old father and the 15 year old mother who had a child in the UK in 2008 can properly parent their child? Alfie Patton, who sired the child when he was 12 and whose voice had not yet changed, told a reporter that ‘I thought it would be good to have a baby. I didn’t think about how we would afford it. I don’t really get pocket money. My dad sometimes gives me £10. . . . We wanted to have the baby but were worried about how people would react. I didn’t know what it would be like to be a dad. I will be good, though, and care for it.’(8a)

What about that unmarried unemployed Los Angeles women who had octuplets after already mothering six children under eight. And with three of those children handicapped! And all living with her mother in a three bedroom house! Seems to me that these children won’t have an optimal start in life.

“To protect children we have laws requiring car seats and laws to require that parents not lock them in cars when they go shopping. We require that they go to school or have adequate home schooling. Schools may require vaccinations to protect the child from a diseased child. Government has introduced child labor laws, required financial child support, and now often holds the parents responsible for the crimes of their children. Government increasingly has moved to protect children from the possible abuse by parents or others. No thinking informed person would say that there are not some parents in the world who are incompetent or abusive.

“I remember a story in the Los Angeles Times many years ago in which it was reported that criminally abusive parents, after being released from prison, were given their young children back. Within three days the three year old girl was dead from exhaustion because her father forced her to continue running around the house while periodically beating her. I cried, and still do when remembering the story. My daughter was three at the time. To think of her being similarly abused sickened me beyond belief.

“A friend told me about witnessing the boyfriend of a neighbor standing a little girl on a table then punching her hard enough to knock her to the floor, then standing her up and repeating

the process. My neighbor called the police who took the hateful Satan to jail. But that didn't remove the physical or psychological scars from the little girl. These abuses are not confined just to little girls, although girls seem to be the major objects of abuse. When professional football player Laveranues Coles told his team, then the world, that he had been sexually abused by his stepfather for years, at gunpoint, it shocked the nation.

“How many abusing or murdering parents should society tolerate? 1%, 10%? How many children should be allowed to be sexually abused by parents or others? How many should be allowed to be psychologically abused? How many should we allow to be born with AIDS? How many should be allowed to be born into abject poverty? How many should suffer through childhood continually malnourished? The ideal would be none! We probably can't get to that level, but we can certainly reduce the number.”

Lee couldn't restrain himself any longer.



—“I was talking to an industrial psychologist at my office the other day. He said that how a child is going to be treated may already be predetermined before the baby is conceived. If a mother wants to have the family she never had in her lifetime, then the child is going to have to make her feel that she has a warm, loving family. Later, when the child wants to do things on his own the mother may see it as a threat to her preconceived need for a close family. She is using the child to fulfill her needs, rather than being an effective parent and helping the child to satisfy its own needs and developing its potentials.

“Young pregnant unmarried girls I have talked to almost universally want a baby so they will have someone to love them. Obviously this is the reverse of what is needed for a baby. Babies need someone who can love them and help them to grow mentally and emotionally. In fact it takes maturity to be able to love, and no child has such maturity. It is the job of the parent to develop the self respect in the child that is fundamental to being able to love. Another reason young girls may want children is because it proves that they are adults. So adulthood is thought of as strictly biological, not involving mental or emotional maturity, not involving any ability to financially take care of oneself, not involving any socially useful purpose.

“I've heard young men say that the reason they wanted a child is to carry on the family name. This is another disservice to the child. Children should be conceived so that they can become physically and emotionally healthy people, not so that their parents can indulge some adolescent need or feeling. This just continues the train of insecure needy people who don't have the emotional requirements for raising an emotionally healthy child. And what about babies born to

crack addicted mothers, mothers with AIDS, alcoholic mothers who risk inflicting their babies with fetal alcohol syndrome?”



—“Lee, I should probably do a TV show on this subject. If children have any rights how can they be protected? Actually they don’t have any rights if society doesn’t spell them out and enforce them. Many elements in society are doing a great deal to protect what they call the rights of the unborn. Some even murder living adults, particularly doctors who perform abortions, but there is no such zeal to protect a child once it is born. Is that logical? Shouldn’t all children have the right to develop their potentials fully?”



—“That would be a good idea, Chet. I know a couple of attorneys in my firm who would help you put it together. But Wreck, I see several potential problems when suggesting that parents be licensed. One is that when you suggest something that flies in the face of a tradition, especially a tradition that began as a cultural imperative—you are going to have problems. But back to your licensing proposal, you must admit that there are a few stumbling blocks to licensing parents to have children.”



—“More than a few! Some would say that to have children is a command by God to ‘be fruitful and multiply.’ We find it in both Genesis 1 and 9. Some would say that it is a right, like the rights to freedom of speech and religion, even though it is not spelled out in the Constitution. However legal limits have been placed on freedom of speech. And freedom of religion limits human sacrifice and usually does not allow handling poisonous snakes or drinking poison. (9) Even refusing medical treatment on religious grounds is not always allowed. Legal decisions exist that both allow and disallow the state to preempt the refusal of medical treatment for children because of religious beliefs.”



—“You’re talking law now, so let me add my two cents worth. Many modern societies grant the right of free speech, but it is not without limits. In fact in the United States the right to say just about anything seems to be possible. While the oft quoted remark of Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes (10) that “you don’t have the right to yell ‘fire’ in a crowded theater” may have once been the standard of the law, the right to free speech has been significantly loosened. For example the Supreme Court of the U.S. found it to be a legal use of

free speech when it allowed a Ku Klux Klan member to advocate the killing of Jews and ‘niggers.’(11)

“The free speech of Socrates was muted in ancient Athens, when his gadfly bite forced those who were able—to think. So he drank the hemlock and society was again at peace—the peace that comes with the certainty of tradition and the bliss of ignorance.

“Following the subway bombings in London, Muslim cleric Hamza al-Masri was sentenced to seven years in prison for inciting the killing of non-believers—particularly through joining al-Qaeda. His rhetoric was certainly fiery. But at about the same time there were no arrests made of Muslims demonstrating against the notorious Danish cartoons, even though the demonstrators called for the extermination of those who mocked Islam. And in England, two far right wing agitators, who were arrested for attempting to rile up the crowd to attack the wicked religion of Islam, were acquitted in court.

“Freedom of religion is also not absolute. It must always be seen in terms of compelling state interests. (12) The U.S. has found that a military uniform can not include a religious article of clothing such as a yarmulke (13) On the other hand when a religious group used, for religious purposes, a tea that contained an hallucinogenic drug that is banned in the U.S. and throughout most of the world, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the government had not proven that banning the drug in this case had demonstrated a compelling state interest. (14) Another way to refute a religious liberty is to prove that ‘a clear and present danger’ to the state exists. Such a danger is often hard to prove.”



—“So you’re saying that to allow parent licensing in the U.S. judges would have to be convinced that it was a ‘compelling state interest’ or that not licensing would present a ‘clear and present danger’ to the state of the nation? Or maybe that certain potential parents would probably provide a ‘clear and present danger’ to their planned child.”



—“Those are possibilities. ‘Difficult cases make bad law’ is in old law school saying. When a severe case, such as one that threatens society, is dealt with severely, how can the society deal less harshly with a similar case that tends to back up the present prejudices of the society?”



—“We don’t allow unlimited freedom. People who may be a danger to themselves or others may be removed from society and placed in mental institutions or prisons. In other cases we require licensing or a specified level of education before allowing certain activities, such as doctoring or filling prescriptions. Look at how many types of activities have been licensed—car drivers, truck drivers, teachers, child care centers, dentists, contractors, real estate sales people, psychologists, the list goes on and on. And which of these activities is more important than parenting?”

“We are so often prisoners of our times. A woman who wanted an abortion in 1850 was imprisoned more often than she would be today. Today if she lives in an area where it is illegal, there is often a nearby area where it is permitted so a few hours by plane or train and she is in a different, more permissive, time and place.”



—“As in many important cases we have one person’s perceived rights versus another person’s perceived rights. Few ‘rights’ are universal—maybe none are. “Don’t murder someone in your own society” is a generally recognized “right” and duty, but it is certainly not universally adhered to. Street gangs regularly murder others. Secret state organizations like the CIA of the USA, FSB as the successor of the KGB in Russia, or the Israeli Mossad regularly kill others in their societies. Genocides in Africa have people in the same state and same tribe killing each other.

“And what society are we talking about? The world society as seen by the United Nations? Our nation? Then what about civil wars? If I am a gang member is my society only my street gang?”

“Treason is a universal no-no whether it is to the general society or to the gang. But sometimes the traitors become heroes—patriots. Look at the instigators of the American and French Revolutions.

“Talking about rights, in today’s world few people have the legal right to terminate their own lives, even if they are suffering horribly. Only a few countries grant this right. You may not even have the right to refuse medical treatment. So these highly personal desires are seldom ‘rights’ in the societies in which we live.

“Also, your rights may shift depending on who is in authority. The right to an abortion may be rescinded by a new legislature or a new court. Your Constitutional “right” to practice your religion as you see fit can be affirmed by one court even if you are breaking serious laws, such as

using potentially dangerous psychoactive drugs or are handling poisonous snakes and drinking strychnine. An absolute monarch, of course, has the power to control your actions, but even a democratic government, based on laws can take away what one thinks is a 'right.' And often what one thinks is a "right" is nothing more than a selfish desire. It does not have the legal governmental sanctions to make it a 'right.'

"Some parents have been sterilized to prevent them from having children. There was a eugenics movement in the United States and northern Europe during the first half of the 20th Century. It allowed sterilization of some potential parents, usually due to mental incompetence. These laws have generally been rescinded, but a U.S. Supreme court case (15) allowed a state institutionalized imbecile, who was both the child and the mother of other imbeciles, to be sterilized. However in a later case a man who was merely a criminal was not required to have a state sterilization because he had not been granted due process. But the way was still clear for sterilizations in other instances. (16)

"Legally the state is *in loco parentis*, 'in place of the parents'. And while the state does not want to get into the business of raising children, it often must take over where the parents have proven unable or incompetent."



—"Gosh Lee, I didn't realize that we had such court decisions. You lawyers and judges have sure screwed up our country!"



—"Point taken, but now Wreck, what requirements would you propose for a license if it were legal?"



—"I have some ideas but I want to visit some of the countries that have enacted licensing and see what they propose and how their programs are proceeding. It does bother me that some religions advocate large families but expect that their own or other societies will pay for them. I wonder how this is being handled in countries that require licenses."



—"Who are you suggesting should determine the qualifications for parenthood Wreck?"



—“Psychologists, family counselors, teachers, even the electorate could be involved. But one reason we’re going to take this trip is to observe what some nations have done. So let’s hold off on this one for a while. And remember the idea is not necessarily to only license potential ideal parents but rather to eliminate those who have little or no competence at the time they apply for the license. Those who are likely to mistreat their children would be eliminated. We would certainly want to make certain that there was financial ability. We would want to assess the emotional maturity to be unselfish relative to the child’s needs.”



—“Psychologists? I hear that generally people study psychology to throw suspicion off themselves! But let’s say you come up with a decent test. How would you know that your elite parent candidates won’t someday abuse their children. How are you going to weed out the sexual predators? We certainly had that problem among some priests and look at the screening and education we have all had to go through.”



--“At this stage of our knowledge of emotional development we can’t be absolutely certain. Just like we are not certain that a doctor who passes the medical boards will be able to diagnose without error or to operate perfectly every time. Science is about probabilities not certainties. If even the lowest 1% of the worst possible parents were eliminated we would have accomplished something positive for the children of our nation and our world. But there have been tests developed which have been proven to be quite accurate, although not infallible.”

“But on with our discussion. I suppose that getting a license would be no real problem to responsible people, but might create great anger and frustration among those who were denied a license.”

Ray was furious, or at least as angry as a man of God might be.”



—“There is certainly the possibility of prejudicial factors affecting licensing. What if the licensing board didn’t like us Catholics. What if the examiners were anti-black or anti-white or anti-poor or anti-Semitic? If Hitler’s Germany were licensing do you think any Jews or gypsies would have been given licenses? If bin Laden were the examiner would Christian Germans get licenses? But Hitler might have given a license to any blond beast, no matter how

abusive he might become and bin Laden would happily give licenses to any potential terrorist. So I think there are more objections to licensing parents than just going against the Scriptures.”



—“I’m not sure that the Scriptures would prevent reducing population or making certain that parents were fit to have children. In fact a number of Protestant denominations have come out for population reduction. Some Muslim groups too. But go on, Ray.”



—“There’s nothing more personal than having a family. I’d say it is more of a basic right than is freedom of speech. People who want children are going to do their best for them. It just amazes me that my old buddy has taken the same kind of path that Hitler might have taken—and in fact did in some cases.”



—“Wait a minute padre. I know you’ve studied more philosophy than I have, but you know that bringing in Hitler is a logical fallacy. You have to stick to arguing the issues, not bringing in some extraneous issue. You know that logical fallacies have been postulated and explained since the time of Aristotle. And saying that an idea is bad because a bad person also holds that idea is one of the logical fallacies we must avoid.

“Hitler did some good things and some bad things according to historians. Pope John Paul did some good things and some bad things according to some. So stick to the issues. What if Hitler ate fish and apples. Those are both good nutritional habits. Would you stop eating apples because Hitler ate them? You know as well as I do that logical fallacies have been used to convince people to follow certain courses of action even though any truly rational thinker can see through the holes in the logic.”



—“Well Wreck, you’re right about that. I’m going to have to watch my inductive and deductive reasoning and not let them get in the way of my passion. So what if a person didn’t pass the licensing test?”



—“I would assume that in most cases any deficiencies could be made up. If it were that they were too young, they would grow up. If it were financial they could earn more money. If it were a lack of knowledge, they could take courses to make it up. If it were demonstrated abusive

behavior, there might be anger management therapy. If it were drug abuse, they could get treatment. I would think that most deficiencies could be made up by people honestly desiring to be parents.

“In democratic countries we would assume that an enlightened approach to parenting would be possible. Certainly there would be appeals to higher levels of the licensing departments and eventually to the courts.”



—“How would you enforce such procedures? What if a couple had an unlicensed child?”



—“We’re going to look at how others have handled the problem in our travels. Maybe we don’t need to reinvent the wheel. Or maybe we’ll get our own ideas on how to handle it. I’m sure glad you’re going Ray. You’ll certainly keep me on my toes.

“Guys, let’s try to keep our eyes on the big picture. Whose rights are to be protected? The rights of parents, whether competent or incompetent? The rights of a child—the certainty of love, of feeling safe and of belonging. The needs of a society? The needs of the human race? The desires of a religion to have more members? Remember that studies show that in our country half of all children born are unwanted. (16a) What are the chances that an unwanted child will be treated as well as a child who was desired? It seems that social and legal thinking is moving more toward the rights of the child and the rights of the state and away from many parental “rights.” In fact parental duties to the child, for the sake of the child and that of the state, is becoming more important.”



—“As a priest I still think that it is a totalitarian idea and it seems to smack of a eugenics approach to having children. You may not like it when I bring up Hitler, but those were two major factors in his Nazi philosophy.”



—“We’ve already discussed eugenics. Yes it was tried in Nazi Germany but it was also attempted in the United States and in other non-totalitarian states. And it is still allowed in certain cases. But let’s look at your concern with totalitarianism. Totalitarianism, as the word suggests, is the full control of the totality, or of the major facets of the lives of those subject to it. What Lee?”



—“‘Totalitarian’ is a negatively charged word. It means that the governing body exerts absolute or nearly absolute control, on the members of the subordinated group. Strong rulers are often either completely or partially totalitarian. Stalin’s USSR was such a government. It was totalitarian in its control of the economy and in its state atheism. But it allowed people to pursue educations, for which they were qualified, and it provided recreational opportunities without much interference. The Catholic Church is totalitarian. Just look at its requirements for only male priests, for an unmarried clergy, for its opposition to mechanical, hormonal and chemical contraception and to abortion. When the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* he gives his commands to all of his followers. As with the Soviet regime, he allows free education and recreation—as long as that recreation doesn’t include pre-marital sex. Hitler had a totalitarian control. Generals nearly always exert such control—the orders come down from the top and the underlings must execute them or be guilty of insubordination, which might result in imprisonment or execution.

“Certainly a totalitarian regime is more efficient. It just will not be as desirable for many. Of course if the general wins the war we accept his totalitarian leadership. If the Chinese one child policy allows for a more economically satisfying life for the Chinese we may accept it. If the Pope blesses us for following his commands, we are relieved—and joyous.

“As people who believe in the idea of democracy, we don’t like the idea of totalitarian governance. We want to be able to decide on our personal lives.”



—“That’s true Lee, but sometimes, especially in emergency situations, we are required to follow such a totalitarian type of regime because it is more efficient. It may or may not be a good idea but it will happen more quickly and completely when totally controlled from the top. When the totalitarian Chinese communists initiated the one child per family policy it generated a great deal of resistance from people who wanted more children, but it certainly is easing population growth in China and therefore in the world. It is probably, at least partially, responsible for the Chinese economic miracle. On the other hand the eventual problems of the increase of older people relative to younger and the increased number of males to females will also cause some social problems.

“But what were the alternatives? More people, more pollution, a lower standard of living, and a benefit to the rest of the human race because of this. It took a totalitarian approach to do this in a less developed country like China. As it becomes more developed and richer, child limitation

may become voluntary, as in Europe and Japan. Ray, do you think the Catholic Church would function as well if it were democratically run than it is now with an all-powerful totalitarian leader?"



—"I think that we all recognize that strong central leadership is swifter than consensus. Because of its potential speed it is often more effective and than a parliamentary body. And of course we believe that the Pope has a pretty direct line to God, so he is less likely to make a mistake. Lee, one of the people in my parish did some legal research on the rights of parents. I brought some notes on a couple of cases. In *Pierce v School Sisters* (17) the state of Oregon was not allowed to require that all children be forced to take their first eight years of education in public schools. This seems to give parents some rights. What rights do parents actually have?"



—"Ray, that was a 1925 case. It resulted in the rise of private school offerings, both religious schools and non-religious schools. That right certainly is generally accepted now."



—"My parishioner also found the case of *Wisconsin v Yoder* (18) that ruled that parents did not have to have their children in school."



—"Well that's not exactly the ruling, Ray. It was a case of Amish parents not wanting their children to have to continue in the state's school system after the eight grade. The children still went to public school for their first eight years."



—"He also cited a California case (19) in which the judge said 'The family is the basic unit of our society, the center of personal affections that ennoble and enrich human life. It channels biological drives that might otherwise become socially destructive; it ensures the care and education of children in a stable environment; it establishes continuity from one generation to another; it nurtures and develops the individual initiative that distinguishes a free people.' I think that statement shows the importance of the family, at least in California."



—"Ray, what the judge said is what we all want to believe. However he was ruling on a divorce, which under California law at that time, was difficult to grant because severe

wrongdoing had to be proven. The idea at that time was to preserve the marriage, no matter what. A few years later California law was changed to the “no fault” principle. So while the judge’s words are well taken, they have nothing to do with California law today. As you well know, laws can be changed and judicial interpretations of laws can change. Even the Supreme Court reverses itself or qualifies earlier decisions.

“There is no legal right or obligation to have children in the United States. Legally a state might require licensing parents but it would probably have to show a “compelling state interest” to overcome guaranteed freedoms, such as religion. Since the Declaration of Independence is not a law you couldn’t use “the pursuit of happiness” as a legal reason for having children. And the Constitutional guaranty in the Fifth Amendment of protecting “life, liberty and property” wouldn’t cover parenthood today. In older times when children, and wives, were “property” it might have applied. Probably states could enact parent licensing laws under the Constitutional requirement ‘to promote the general welfare’ of the country. That would seem to be the best legal reason.”



—“That’s informative Lee. Now Wreck, do you really think this can be accomplished? And if so, how long would it take?”



—“Chet, we don’t have any time, and admittedly great things always take time. Shakespeare didn’t scribble off Hamlet in an afternoon. Michelangelo took a few years to paint the Sistine Chapel. And how long did it take Homer to formulate his great epics. We need the speed and expertise of Mozart to accomplish the sublime —and the seemingly impossible. The one thing I know is that if I don’t do all I can to save our world, my life hasn’t been worth living. I remember what Martin Luther King believed, that ‘The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.’ He did it for the challenges of his time, and I must do it for the challenges of my time.

“Realistically I’m pessimistic. Most people think only of their miniscule nooks and don’t want to acknowledge the reality of overpopulation and how it is already affecting them. Politicians in democracies are overwhelmingly concerned with the next election. Businessmen want profits today.

“I must join that small snowball that is already rolling down the hill. We all must become

part of that avalanche of realistic fear, cascading down the mountain of inertia--whose rumbles awake the sleeping giants of ignorance and myth. We must be awakened to the reality of the crushing of our earthly home. To escape that avalanche people must move now! You can't wait until your television program is finished, or wait until tomorrow, to run. People must be awakened from their dreams--that all will be well tomorrow. As comforting as that dream is, thinking minds and the evidence of science clearly show that our planet is in peril—and the fate of our progeny is in our hands, and ours alone.

“The great majority of the people are concerned with their immediate selfish interests. They seem to think that tomorrow will be like yesterday. But today is yesterday's tomorrow and the effects of yesterday's actions are the causes of today's plight and tomorrow's panic. Can we few voices crying in the wilderness wake up the people, their politicians, their priests, and their prophets. I am hopeful. I know that I have to try! It may be an impossible mission, but it must be done. If there ever was a life or death issue, this is it!”

NOTES

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