



One People = One Planet

The Reality Is At Hand

by Jim Channon

Editor's Note:

We tend to get caught up in the moment, or in the present. Academy Fellow Jim Channon spends a great deal of time gazing into the future. As the proprietor of our Project Earthrise -- a 10-year effort to articulate a positive vision for the planet a century from now -- he provides a fascinating and even reassuring perspective. From such a vantage point, many of our global problems seem not to be extraordinary events, but only the latest manifestations of the the shadow side that has always accompanied human progress.

In this composition he makes the case that global unification is an ineluctable process, currently well underway. He believes most of our institutions are ill-prepared either to stop or abet it. People from every nation already have begun to take matters into their own hands.



Just how close are we to being one people?

One People = One Planet

This simple meme has been with us for some thirty-odd years. I express it in the title of this article only in a slightly modified way. With an equal sign in the middle it can now mean that when we are one people ... and realize that, then, we can be one planet. One begets the other.

So, the question is, just how close are we to being one people? Interestingly enough, if you had asked that question 30 years ago, I would have said the united global public awareness factor for ONE PEOPLE-mindedness was at least 100 years into the future. But, some very powerful things have occurred since then. They have been cultural, they have been topical, they have been technological, they have been commercial, and they have been, most importantly, connective. All of these factors have accelerated us into a global civilization at an explosively increasing rate.

Simply put:

1. There are only a handful of places you can now go where the artifacts of all major cultures are not present;
2. There are few places where the front page of the local papers is not carrying global news;
3. When you view a photograph of the planet at night from a satellite, you can see we are all using the same lighting and organizing ourselves in much the same way on the ground. The same phenomena hold true for all the many, and now congruent, transportation systems;
4. There is virtually no place on the planet where you do not have commonly understood ways to exchange goods and services;
5. There are a hundred billion communications a day that both smother and bind this planet in a new level of connectivity. Compared to even recent times, it would appear that an explosion was occurring. It's that big and that fast!

ATTENTION, ALL PASSENGERS ON SPACESHIP EARTH: AN OVERNIGHT EXPLOSIVE LEVEL OF CONNECTIVITY HAS OCCURRED. IT HAS INSURED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THIS PLANET WE HAVE REACHED AROUND THIS 24,000-MILE ORB AND SHAKEN OUR OWN HANDS AS ONE COMMON HUMANITY. THIS MAY BE THE BIGGEST NEWS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. AND VERY FEW OF US HAVE NOTICED. THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS WHEN YOU SAY "ONE PEOPLE". I THINK WE ARE THERE! ALL HANDS ARE ON DECK!

Yes, you could say that there is still fighting, and there are different languages, and there are also many different customary ways of behaving. That also is true in many marriages. But that doesn't mean for useful purposes the people them-



selves are not joined in spirit and common intention. You could say the war in the Middle East proves we are not yet one. I would say it is the normal trial between the oldest and youngest members of a family. You could also view this as a world-wide blossoming discussion. Such dilemmas unite PEOPLE in dialogue. There will always be common concerns and the conflict necessary to surface a better solution. These are the ways we bind ourselves together. It is not the end of the world ... but the beginning!

I imagine that when the first handful of mariners really knew the world was round that it then took hundreds of years before the rest of the planet GOT IT! For many it didn't sink in till we saw a picture of earth from outer space over 500 years later.

Recently, when Princess Di was killed, it was only hours till most of the globe knew it and only days till the rest knew. If Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie kiss in a secret hideaway and the paparazzi take a picture of it... the same effect can occur on a daily basis. The globe is functioning at the level of gossip! There are a hundred planetary characters that are now household words. And some of them are cartoon characters like Spiderman, Darth Vader, or Nemo. We are current on so many global affairs.

WHAT IS SHOCKING IS THAT THE REAL CONSEQUENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THIS NEW GLOBAL CONNECTION ARE NOT YET UNDERSTOOD!

It's like asking a fish about water ... the fish is of it, not about it!

Our integral awareness of the whole is strikingly numb!

Should you imagine there were other intelligent beings in the universe having a look our way, you would probably discover they have been saying for some 30 years that we have achieved the status of a planetary civilization. We just haven't gone to the dressing room and looked in the mirror. If all the ancestors of this current civilization were watching us now on TV ... they would be toasting the arrival of the global civilization and patting themselves on the back for their own part in this long and maybe billion-year adventure of global unification. It is a big enough idea to start the calendar back to year one of the Galactic Age: ANNO GALACTICA UNO.

I suppose it's a lot like someone telling you that you are "all grown up" one day. Hell, I don't feel any different, you say. I don't look that much different than yesterday, you say. ???? What are they talking about ???? It is a self-awareness paradox!!!! We have paradigm paralysis! We still think we are just a collection of nations. How categorically ignorant that is of the actual global reality! Nations take up our news space simply because they are our last and largest social invention. The movies are having orders of magnitude more influence on our thinking than governments. We have hardening of the categories.

If I sound slightly nuts about this subject, it may be because I have flown around this planet sixty-five times. I can look out the window of an airplane at 30,000 feet and feel the actual size of the planet beneath me. At that point I may even

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remember that I am on the bottom of the world and maybe upside down. It is a cumulative spatial awareness, I suppose.

A man named Gary Davis has been selling planetary passports for at least 30 years.

When I bought one I thought I was part of a small movement that would eventually create a global family. What I didn't imagine, though, even though I was on the Internet in 1978 in the Army, was that culture, travel, monetary exchange, technology, movies, and the especially the Internet would move things along much faster than our collective awareness could fathom. Tielhard de Chardin talked about the Noosphere half a century ago, and Buckminster Fuller spoke about Spaceship Earth with all humanity as crew. But, they did that without seeing the distributed communication tools we have at work today.

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WHAT! ?

OUR CONNECTIVITY, USING AN INTELLIGENT MEDIUM LIKE THE INTERNET, COULD SET US FREE FROM THE BURDENSOME GOVERNMENTS WE HAVE LONG ACCEPTED AS OUR REPRESENTATIVE MINDS? YOU MEAN ... THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE IS NATURALLY PURELY DEMOCRATIC? YOU MEAN WE CAN HAVE A POLYCENTRIC INTELLIGENCE THAT CARES FOR OUR WORLD

AS IT NEEDS,

WHERE IT NEEDS,

AND

WHEN IT NEEDS?

THAT IS THE NOOSPHERE!

IT ALSO MAY BE HERE NOW ...

BUT WE CAN'T SEE IT BECAUSE

WE ARE LOOKING THROUGH

OLD LENSES!

So, what do we do if that's true? Well, first, it is to recognize that the institutions we have created to represent us as persons ... like governments ... are now meant to serve our collective world interests. And, if they are not interested in that, we should slowly and kindly abandon them or repurpose them at the scale we desire. Did you know that national governments take no responsibility for the global commons (i.e., most of the world)?



Do you understand that the United Nations is still stuck in "national" interests by definition? It's in their name. Can you imagine national anything going out of their way to help us secure a common global family of humanity? Think about it! That would put them out of business! We must assume this global identity ourselves as a people and feel it deeply. Then if we act from that place, everything will shift. Believe that!

Will it take time for us to assume this identity? Maybe. The real answer to how long it will take has to do with our public awareness of the fact that it is already working ... now ... big time! Governments and similar divisions like counties and provinces are ... properly designed ... simply the loyal servants needed to maintain the land and needed social services. Let's put them back in their boxes.

OK! I am off my soap box now. I am going out to put my planetary flag up on the pole near my property entrance. And, I will leave you with a great big GOPlanet cheer! It is always a shift when you wake up to your next self. Oh, and break it to your friends ... we are one people and therefore one planet!

About the Author: Recognized worldwide as the original pioneer of the corporate visioning process, Academy Fellow Jim Channon has been a trusted strategic designer for ten of the world's hundred largest companies. He was the lead futurist and educational technologist for the U.S. Army. Jim has been described as a cross between Buckminster Fuller and Walt Disney. He created the advanced visual language AVL and the virtual reality exercise VRX. He has done cultural voyaging with tribal groups worldwide. Presently his social architecture looks toward a new Pacific renaissance. Jim recently produced a 30-hour theatrical outdoor adventure for 300 businesspeople in the great central desert in Western Australia. He is a lover of life, the fastest magic marker on the planet, and a spellbinding storyteller.

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