

After losing the election, the outgoing president continued to deny he lost - as he said he would. He even staged an attack on Congress to try to prevent the transition of power to his successor. Using lies to incite violence is a threat to democracy. The former president's lies and denial more than doubled the U.S. death rate from COVID compared to many other countries. He simply refused to listen to scientists, and encouraged his supporters not to wear masks, which spread the disease.

Last week Texas was crushed by a freezing weather disaster that was accurately forecast more than two weeks ahead. The power grid failed for the extraordinary reason that power producers in Texas, which has its own separate grid, are not required to winterize their equipment.

It is time to face fundamental truths that have been long buried. Much of our human world is driven by science and technology. Science is a good frame for understanding our technological world, and the complexity of the living natural world. However science is rarely the basis for social planning and it does not address moral choices.

In this void, choices are made implicitly by society's guiding capitalist economic frame. In Texas, short term profits won out over planning for future winter extremes. More generally, new things are invented and if they can be marketed profitably, they are introduced with little control. The goal of capitalism is to increase short-term profits within a consumer growth economy. Growth is driven by advertising and by exploiting the Earth's resources as well as people, and especially the poor.

Immense wealth has been created for some, and the human population has increased until our global impact exceeds the Earth's carrying capacity. Now climate and extinction catastrophes are rapidly approaching, simply because much of our economic system has not been designed to pay for future costs, especially the damaging consequences of our vast waste streams.

Consider instead the Blue River Declaration from October 2011.

"A truly adaptive civilization will align its ethics with the ways of the Earth. A civilization that ignores the deep constraints of its world will find itself in exactly the situation we face now, on the threshold of making the planet inhospitable to humankind and other species. The questions of our time are thus: What is our best current understanding of the nature of the world? What does that understanding tell us about how we might create a concordance between ecological and moral principles, and thus imagine an ethic that is of, rather than against, the Earth?"

In our time, science, religious traditions, Earth's many cultures, and artistic insights are all converging on a shared understanding of the nature of the world: The Earth is our home. It will always be our only source of shelter, sustenance, and inspiration. There is no other place for us to go. It follows that the world is worthy of reverence, awe, and care."

Clearly, ten years later, U.S. society has not made this transition to align its ethics with the ways of the Earth. The recent change in central government will not fix our poor social and economic understanding of the living natural world. I suggest readers view the sincere efforts to address climate change issues by the Biden administration through the clear lens of the **Blue River Declaration**.

This means facing a deeper issue. Even though we are embedded in the biosphere, very few understand this intellectually, let alone intuitively. Reconnecting deeply with the natural world means surrendering to it, so you feel part of it on an emotional and heart-felt level. Indigenous peoples and the founder of Christianity understood this. But the concept of surrender is horrifying to 'modern' humans, because of our devotion to human power and control, and our memories of many centuries of warfare.

We have two critical tasks in this coming decade. One is to slow climate change by reducing the global atmospheric carbon budget to net-zero, which means to stop burning the fossil fuels. This in turn means focusing on improving energy efficiency and implementing renewable energy resources on a global scale. The biggest obstacle, which has been with us for decades, is that the fossil fuel companies and their associates are heavily invested in deceiving the public and politicians. Their strategy is to avoid direct legislative mandates in order to protect their profits as long as possible, even if this means sacrificing the Earth.

The second difficult task is to see that the human destruction of so much of the natural world is driving many species to extinction, and replace destruction with reverence. Neither task is easy, so we all have to plan ahead. Spring will be here soon and if we look more deeply, the Earth can help.