Excerpt from
"Convergence of Critical Challenges Alert to Peacebuilders, Chaplains--from cpcsi.org"
(from p. 2, and 4-7 of 8 page document)

[Alert was issued in February, 2017 by Stefan Pasti, the founder and resource coordinator
of The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS Initiative]

[Introductory Note: The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (www.cpcsi.org)
provides research and analysis for critical challenge alerts, and research and support for collaborative problem
solving and community education initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation, and accelerate solution-
oriented activity.]

(beginning of excerpt)

The cultural transformation necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate global warming
is, by itself, enough to justify the highest level of warning since:

a) there is uncertainty about how negative feedback loops are triggered
b) there is a quickly closing window of opportunity for staying below +2°C (+3.6^{o}F)
c) investment in the energy sector requires long-range planning
d) although there is much very credible information available--about what causes global warming and
climate change, how widespread the negative impacts are already, how catastrophic negative impacts
could be in the future, and what we can do to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and minimize negative
impacts--we live in very complex cultural landscapes, and there are many different kinds of moral
compasses attempting to navigate such landscapes….

….Unfortunately, what we have now is a convergence of critical challenges (here is a two page
description of the ten most critical challenges identified by this writer).

Even with such unprecedented collaboration efforts being made…

*During the three to eight decades of unprecedented cultural transformation needed to achieve--and
adjust to--carbon neutral economies, this writer believes many serious blind spots will be discovered--
issues which are far from being fully appreciated now, and issues which are serious enough to cripple our
best efforts, if not remedied.*

One such blind spot, which this writer has identified (and rated #2 in his list of the ten most critical challenges of our times), is "A Marginalization of the Treasured Wisdom of Religious, Spiritual, and Moral Traditions".

Consider the three observations below, all of which have many serious negative implications--

a) "The satisfaction of one's physical needs must come at a certain point to a dead stop before it degenerates into physical decadence."
b) "Taken together, the bottom half of the global population own less than 1 percent of total wealth. In sharp contrast, the richest 10 percent hold 86 percent of the world's wealth, and the top 1 percent alone account for 46 percent of global assets."
c) "The global drugs trade and the global arms trade are integral to violence in both developing and industrialized countries. Even modest progress on either front will contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people. To date, however--and despite their high profile in the world arena—no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems."

It should be clear to most readers that the virtuous conduct (the discipline, restraint, wisdom, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, etc) necessary--to transform the negative outcomes associated with the three observations above into examples of the treasured wisdom of our human heritage being more fully appreciated, and applied in the everyday circumstances of community life--would inspire "waves" of additional goodwill.

And yet… if readers carefully explore thirteen of the most representative and most well-known critical challenge assessments and solution guides from the past 50 years (see p. 25 of the CPCS Initiative Summary Paper for the list)(link provided in "Key CPCS Initiative Documents" section below)--

--they will find that these critical challenge assessments and solution guides *do not give serious attention to variations in human morality as a significant factor affecting the nature of the challenges of our times.*

"Way Beyond" Uncharted Territory: the need to make unprecedented progress towards resolving timeless shortcomings of human nature

This writer believes that the challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions.

Unfortunately, much of the real treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions now seems to be hidden--and thus in need of being re-discovered. These "hidden" resources include teachings which inspire and encourage people to:

1) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole

2) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services

3) prefer peacebuilding which supports and actualizes mutually beneficial understandings, forgiveness, and reconciliation—*and which abstains from violent conflict resolution*—as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end

4) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

5) support community life and cultural traditions which "… bring to the fore how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it".

Are we headed in directions which are consistent with the Treasured Wisdom of Religious, Spiritual, and Moral Traditions? Does the content of traditional mass media, Internet media, and Internet social media, provide evidence that wisdom and compassion are "coming through the mist as much as they should be"? Are our communities examples of our success at passing along to future generations the most treasured wisdom human beings have accumulated in more than 5,000 years of human history?

D*o most of us believe that our* m*oral compasses are sufficiently calibrated to overcome a convergence of unprecedented challenges in the most complex cultural landscapes ever created on Earth?*

If we have serious concerns about the nature and reliability of our moral compasses at this critical time, *and let those serious concerns go unresolved* (even now, when we are in the most complex cultural landscapes ever created)

1) we may lose significant traction and critical momentum on challenges for which there is an urgent need to reach positive tipping points

2) we may do more to create widespread cynicism, rather than confidence, about our collective capacity to resolve the unprecedented challenges we face.

This writer believes we have an urgent need to make unprecedented progress towards resolving timeless shortcomings of human nature—*even though such shortcomings are perceived as so much a part of who we are that most of us accept such as inevitable*. **Thus, the uncharted territory we thought we were in to achieve carbon neutral economies might be more accurately described as "way beyond" uncharted.** There should be no one who has any doubts: there is no culture or association of societies that ever existed on planet Earth which has had to resolve the kind of challenges the next few generations of people will have to resolve.

It is the complexity of succeeding in integrating wisdom and compassion into the everyday circumstances of community life--at this critical time when wisdom and compassion are so urgently needed--which has persuaded this writer to make what contributions he can, and to issue this Convergence of Critical Challenges Alert.

We need a plan of action along these lines--

a) which goes beyond the efforts currently in progress
b) which will exponentially increase the likelihood of success
c) which can assure us that wisdom and compassion will be "coming through the mist as much as they should be"
d) *which people from every variety of circumstances can trust*
e) *which will help people discover for themselves how much we all need to be learning so that we can be part of the solutions… and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.*

<u>"Constellation of Initiatives" Approach</u>

The CPCS Initiatives' "constellation of initiatives" approach to collaborative problem solving, community education, and citizen peacebuilding (offered as an example of the kind of "constellation of initiatives" approach necessary to fulfill the above requirements, and help accomplish the unprecedented cultural transformation ahead):

1) Recalibrating Our Moral Compasses Surveys
2) Community Visioning Initiatives
3) Neighborhood Learning Centers
4) Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Projects in local newspapers

(end of excerpt)

<u>Closing Comments</u>

Since this "Convergence of Critical Challenges" alert (from which the above text was excerpted) was issued (in February, 2017), I have expanded a previous CPCS Initiative "foundation" document, and done much outreach [mostly on the Twitter platform (@StefanPasti)] with the result—<u>"13 Steps for Long Term Culture Change"</u> (78 pages; May, 2017).

Both the "Unprecedented Challenges Ahead—February 2017" document (the 2 page assessment referred to on p. 1), and the "13 Steps for Long Term Culture Change" document--together--represent an executive summary of my 30+ years of research and analysis for critical challenge alerts, and 30+ years of research and support for collaborative problem solving and community education initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation, and accelerate solution-oriented activity.

I believe that if many people could see and feel the practical value of carrying out the kind of collaborative problem solving and community education initiatives represented by the "13 Steps", such collaborative, solution-oriented activity could become a common experience… a common cultural tradition… a cultural tradition which can link many diverse communities of people together, in a fellowship of people working towards the greater good of the whole… and a cultural tradition which can help pass on to future generations the most treasured wisdom human beings have accumulated in more than 5,000 years of human history.