

The Tipping Point Action Campaign and Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change: proposals comprehensive enough to keep momentum on the side of “We can do it”

## Introduction

The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative provides research for critical challenge alerts, and support for collaborative problem solving initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation.

The CPCS Initiative believes that we—collectively—are at a critical point in the evolution of life on Planet Earth. As a way of helping the evidence “come through the mist”, this writer (founder and resource coordinator of the CPCS Initiative) created the document [“Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors \(at www.cpsc.info\)”](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/invitation_package_for_possible_board_of_advisors.pdf) (589 p.; 3.65 MB)(see [https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/invitation\\_package\\_for\\_possible\\_board\\_of\\_advisors .pdf](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/invitation_package_for_possible_board_of_advisors.pdf)[Here is a link to the [“Short version Table of Contents”](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/short_version_table_of_contents_invitation_package.pdf) (1 p.)([https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/short\\_version\\_table\\_of\\_contents\\_invitation\\_package.pdf](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/short_version_table_of_contents_invitation_package.pdf) )].

Many of the sections in the “Invitation Package” document are in a compilation of excerpts format—excerpts from articles, documents and websites—to help readers with “connecting the dots”, on both challenges and solution options. [For a quick reference summary of this writer’s assessment of the challenges of our times, see [“A List of Ten Critical Challenges”](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a_list_of_ten_critical_challenges_2014.pdf) (1 p.)(at[https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a\\_list\\_of\\_ten\\_critical\\_challenges\\_2014.pdf](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a_list_of_ten_critical_challenges_2014.pdf) )]. As a consequence of the research necessary to create that “Invitation Package” (and much previous research), this writer is aware of many sources for evidence on critical challenges, and many highly relevant and already established solution pathways.

This post is being made to highlight two solution pathways:

- 1) The Tipping Point Action Campaign: Creating 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives to maximize citizen participation and accelerate solution-oriented activity
- 2) “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change”

## Creating 1000 Community Visioning to Assist with Accelerating Solution-Oriented Activity

Community Visioning Initiatives can be described as a series of community meetings designed to facilitate the process of brainstorming ideas, organizing the ideas into goals, prioritizing the goals, and identifying doable steps. One of the main goals of Community Visioning Initiatives is to maximize

citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity.

This writer's interest in Community Visioning Initiatives was inspired instantly when, in 1994, he watched a video documentary titled "Chattanooga: A Community With A Vision" (13 minutes)(see <http://vimeo.com/9653090> ). The video includes many interviews and how-to details, and documents two very successful Community Visioning Initiatives organized by the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture (Chattanooga, Tennessee USA)—one in 1984, and a follow-up in 1993. The 1984 Chattanooga Community Visioning Project ("Vision 2000") attracted more than 1,700 participants, and produced 40 community goals—which resulted in the implementation of 223 projects and programs, the creation of 1,300 permanent jobs, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars. What this writer saw in the documentary was a way of revitalizing the sense of working together with our neighbors for the greater good, so that there would be an electrifying feeling about what going to happen next—a collective revitalization of the belief that many good things would be happening in the community, and that many people who lived in the same community would have a part in it.

The Tipping Point Action Campaign—assisting with creating 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives to maximize citizen participation and accelerate solution-oriented activity—

1) identifies many intertwined critical challenges, and thus does not predetermine that communities focus on any one particular challenge, as

a) different communities will "grow" their response-to-identified-challenges narratives in different ways, according to the leanings of the local residents, and the influences of environment, culture, and local economies

b) there is such a need to focus on so many challenges that we cannot afford to get bogged down by trying to figure out how to engage people on one particular issue, at the exclusion of many other related issues (especially if whole communities of people are not anywhere near ready to be engaged on that issue)

2) emphasizes creating regional and local specific Community Visioning Initiatives which will encourage the development of many new affordable local learning networks (both formal and informal)

a) Creating many Neighborhood Learning Centers (a key supportive piece of Community Visioning Initiatives) can provide places in local neighborhood for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship—so that the exchanging of information and resources will also include the building of a "close-knit" community of people (who now have many new opportunities to help and support each other towards common goals).

3) advocates for many supplemental and supportive pieces for the Community Visioning Initiatives,

which would ensure that the need for Community Visioning Initiatives are widely appreciated, and thus widely supported

a) The CPCS Initiative advocates for a combination of preliminary surveys to 150 key leaders in local communities, time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives supported by many Neighborhood Learning Centers (offering workshops suggested by the preliminary surveys); sister community relationships for communities needing assistance with basic human needs; job fairs; local currencies; and community service (multi-faceted and ongoing coverage of local visioning initiatives) from local newspapers as a starting point for accelerating solution-oriented activity—and as a way of creating more “close-knit” communities (communities with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, communities with a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges, and communities which demonstrate a high level of compassion for their fellow human beings).

[Note: Since the website for The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative is currently offline, a link is provided here to the complete proposal—“Tipping Point Action: Citizen Participation in Times of Unprecedented Challenges”—at the MIT Climate CoLab Crowdsourcing Platform (see <http://climatecolab.org/plans/-/plans/contestId/1300103/planId/1702> ).]

### The Spiritual/Moral Dimensions of the Critical Challenges of Our Times

There is no doubt in this writer’s mind that if the spiritual/moral dimensions of the critical challenges of our times are not sufficiently incorporated into solution-oriented activity, we will lose significant traction and critical momentum on issues which require urgent solutions (Ex: the risk of runaway global warming). Here are three examples of what is meant by the spiritual/moral dimensions of the critical challenges of our times:

- 1) The “reduce” part of the “reduce, reuse, recycle” triplet
- 2) Different ideas about morality sometimes lead to negative stereotypes, and polarizing perceptions, which, in turn, are magnified and reinforced by the media
- 3) “Entrepreneurs” who prey on people’s fears, manipulate people’s trust, and/or encourage people to abandon hope in higher aspirations, and indulge in unhealthy, or immoral behavior.

Widespread cynicism that many of the critical challenges of our times will not be resolved could become a crippling factor affecting many positive and constructive solution-oriented projects. Thus, what we need are efforts—to resolve the critical challenges of our times—which are comprehensive enough to keep momentum on the side of “We can do it”.

### Three Summary Questions

1) How can the “reduce” piece be incorporated into the dominant values, social norms, and attitudes of communities around the world without somehow coming to terms with the fundamental inconsistencies between cultures which encourage indiscriminant consumption and the treasured wisdom of most religious, spiritual, and moral traditions, which emphasize

- a) sacrificing personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) finding contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- c) using resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

2) How many readers of this post believe that all the needed changes in dominant values, social norms, and attitudes of our society, all the needed changes in technology, economies, and business models—and all the needed changes in individual investments in time, energy, and money—are going to happen without significant turmoil in cultural and social infrastructures around the world (and thus within a context of peaceful coexistence among countries and societies with profound differences in access to resources, and economic circumstances... and profound differences in definitions of what is morality, and what is the best way to live)? (Note: many readers may agree with this writer that question #2 is rhetorical....)

3) Given that such significant turmoil is already occurring, how can we minimize such turmoil in the future, when cultural and social infrastructures in many communities around the world may become much more unstable—and thus maximize the likelihood of positive and constructive collaborative problem solving during an unprecedented transition which may take decades?

### Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change

One response by this writer, to

- 1) the fundamental inconsistencies between cultures which encourage indiscriminant consumption and the treasured wisdom of most religious, spiritual, and moral traditions
- 2) the related marginalization of the treasured wisdom associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions
- 3) “Cultures” of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence—which have become so common that many of us accept such as inevitable; which are a significant part of the current crises of confidence in financial markets; and which are in many ways slowing the restructuring of investment priorities needed to respond to an increasing number of other critical challenges

is the proposal “Tipping Point Action: Citizen Participation in Times of Unprecedented Challenges”

referenced above—which emphasizes collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding *without predetermining that communities focus on any one particular challenge* (as there is such a need to focus on so many challenges that we cannot afford to get bogged down by trying to figure out how to engage people on one particular issue).

As an extension of that proposal—and as an example of what could become a natural outcome of many such Community Visioning Initiatives—this writer also offers a document titled “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change” (see pdf file attached to this post). The ten steps are:

- “Community Good News Networks”
- “Community Faith Mentoring Networks”
- “Spiritual Friendships”
- “Interfaith Peace Vigils”
- “Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities”
- “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace”
- “Neighborhood Learning Centers”
- “Spiritually Responsible Investing”
- “Ecological Sustainability”
- “Community Journal/Newsletters”

In the “Ten Steps” document, a brief overview of each step is provided, and a summary statement, three related fields of activity [from a list of “125 Related Fields of Activity”—Appendix 5 in the “Invitation Package...” document referenced above (see p. 549)] and one sample question are included with each step, as examples of starting points for workshop discussion.

These “Ten Steps” are examples of projects and programs which can be initiated before a Community Visioning Initiative takes place, to build up to the Visioning Initiative—or as workshops which can take place in Neighborhood Learning Centers, as part of an ongoing Community Visioning Initiative.

Again, for emphasis: creating the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GGE) (see Footnote #1 for some of the evidence for the need to “drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions”), and minimize other related challenges (again see [“A List of Ten Critical Challenges”](#)—at [https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a\\_list\\_of\\_ten\\_critical\\_challenges\\_2014.pdf](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a_list_of_ten_critical_challenges_2014.pdf)), will require encouraging as much formal and informal educational experiences as possible between neighbors—and people living in the same local community. Creating many Neighborhood Learning Centers can provide places—in local neighborhoods—for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship.

What we need more of now are collaborative problem solving processes which help citizens understand that the investments of time, energy, and money (the “votes”) each of us make in our everyday

circumstances become the larger economy. And that wisely directed, such “votes” can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to drastically reduce GGE, and minimize other related challenges. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such “votes”—through workshops and meetings at Neighborhood Learning Centers during a Community Visioning Initiative, and through other local learning experiences. The “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change” document highlights specific workshops and projects which can help citizens from every variety of economic and cultural backgrounds learn how to wisely cast such “votes”.

[*Special “Encourages Equal Participation” Note about the “Ten Steps”*: Readers of this post who do explore the “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture change” document (attached to this post) will find that the steps associated with “spiritual” and “faith” terms can be applied in communities with every variety of economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds—and that these steps encourage equal participation, without discrimination, by members of any and all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. This emphasis on “encouraging equal participation” in the “Ten Steps” is a deliberate effort to assist with the realization of the potential in all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions in the fields of collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding. For surely, if members of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions cannot work together to accomplish the level of collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding needed at this critical time, widespread cynicism that many of the critical challenges of our times will not be resolved will be a crippling factor affecting many positive and constructive solution-oriented projects.

[Here this writer will repeat, for emphasis, one of the three summary questions from above:

1) How can the “reduce” piece be incorporated into the dominant values, social norms, and attitudes of communities around the world without somehow coming to terms with the fundamental inconsistencies between cultures which encourage indiscriminant consumption and the treasured wisdom of most religious, spiritual, and moral traditions, which emphasize

- a) sacrificing personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) finding contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- c) using resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance?]

Many people may think it is naïve to imagine that people from so many diverse religious, spiritual, moral, and cultural traditions can decide to come together in such a way as to not only encourage, but participate in, a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in response to the difficult challenges ahead (as in the high levels of participation encouraged by comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives). From this writer’s point of view, such skepticism and cynicism depend for their existence on doubts as to whether it is possible for people to achieve highly advanced forms of wisdom and compassion through genuine instruction and sincere effort. *Thus it is that there is a great responsibility on those people who are in any way representatives of religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions—to demonstrate what is possible along the lines of wisdom and compassion, to provide*

*genuine instruction when sincere efforts are being made, to contribute to the greater good of the whole, and to help restore confidence in the higher values of life. (And thus the emphasis on the “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change” ....)*

Closing Comments—What we need are efforts comprehensive enough to keep momentum on the side of “We can do it”.

The Tipping Point Action Proposal (“Assisting with creating 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives to maximize citizen participation and accelerate solution-oriented activity”) is offered as way to help as many people as possible to “become stakeholders”—and at the same time increase their capacity to think clearly about challenges, solutions, and what they can do in their everyday behavior to accelerate solution-oriented activity (across a broad range of critical challenges). This kind of collaborative problem solving is comprehensive enough to take on difficult questions like “Where does the ‘reduce’ piece fit in?”; can be scaled up in the same way the Peace Corps was scaled up (through training modules designed and implemented by colleges and universities); and can mobilize and accelerate citizen participation and solution-oriented activity on a scale which would be sufficient to facilitate even a profound demographic shift from megacities to more ecologically sustainable and villages, towns, and small cities (with much more potential to achieve carbon neutral economies).

However, it took a lot of being confused about the cardinal directions on our “moral compasses” to get where we are (global warming can be understood as the cumulative result of many other unresolved issues which have, in themselves, become critical challenges)—and many of the unresolved issues contributing to global warming have been around since the dawn of civilization (Ex: cultures of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence).

There is no doubt in this writer’s mind that if the spiritual/moral dimensions of the critical challenges of our times are not sufficiently incorporated into solutions, we will lose significant traction and critical momentum on issues which require urgent solutions (Ex: the risk of runaway global warming).

Consider the following propositions:

- 1) If many people can learn to find contentment and quality of life while consuming much less, this limiting of desires at the ‘root’ will save much trouble trying to respond to the symptoms as they materialize worldwide. This is part of the ‘spiritual teachings’ element which often gets overlooked.
- 2) If many “spiritual teachings” elements become incorporated (thru workshops in Neighborhood Learning Centers, as part of recurring Community Visioning Initiatives) into local community responses to the multiple challenges we face, the positive multiplier effects on all other solution-oriented initiatives would exponentially accelerate our capacity to resolve the challenges of our times.

3) If the goal is to resolve the unprecedented challenges ahead, then it would seem necessary to exponentially increase the number of actively engaged citizens—citizens who (thus) have a much more comprehensive sense of civic duty. It's not like mobilizing for war, where there will be drill sergeants and basic training, but people should begin to realize: problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before means there is a lot of work to do.

One of the keys to appreciating the value of the Tipping Point Action proposal: Community Visioning Initiatives can help people “become stakeholders”, with the faith that as they do so, and become involved in the education at the level of Neighborhood Learning Centers (and “voting” on priority challenges and priority solutions), they will discover for themselves just how much we all need to be learning to make this transition, and how much we need each and every one of us to contribute our skills and resources towards solutions. |

One of the keys to appreciating the value of the “Ten Steps for Long Term Cultural Change” document: (again, for emphasis), it took a lot of being confused about the cardinal directions on our “moral compasses” to get where we are (global warming can be understood as the cumulative result of many other unresolved issues which have, in themselves become critical challenges)—and many of the unresolved issues contributing to global warming have been around since the dawn of civilization (Ex: cultures of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence). Widespread cynicism that many of the critical challenges of our times will not be resolved could become a crippling factor affecting many many positive and constructive solution-oriented projects. What we need are efforts—to resolve the critical challenges of our times—which are comprehensive enough to keep momentum on the side of “We can do it”.

[Additional Notes:

a) There is a “Press Kit for the Tipping Point Action Campaign” (10 pages); however, since the website for The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative is currently offline, the links to the documents in the “Press Kit” will not be active. The “Press Kit” (see [https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/press\\_kit\\_for\\_tipping\\_point\\_action\\_campaign\\_1.pdf](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/press_kit_for_tipping_point_action_campaign_1.pdf)) is included as an attachment to this post so that readers who are interested can see what the Press Kit includes. Readers who are interested in specific documents referenced in the Press Kit are invited to request a file of that document from this writer, Stefan Pasti ([stefanpasti@gmx.com](mailto:stefanpasti@gmx.com) ).]

Footnotes



1. Listed below is some of the evidence this writer has considered in arriving at the conclusion that there currently exists a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before, and thus an urgent need for creating 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives to maximize citizen participation in solution-oriented activity—and an urgent need for implementing the “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change”:

- a) “The principal threats to our future are no longer armed aggression but instead climate change, population growth, water shortages, spreading hunger, and failing states. What we now need is a mobilization to reverse these trends on the scale and urgency of the U.S. mobilization for World War II.” (“World on the Edge”—Lester R. Brown; January, 2011)
- b) “...the energy industry’s ability to boost production of oil, coal, and natural gas in North America is feeding a global surge in demand for these commodities, ensuring ever higher levels of carbon emissions. “ (article “World Energy Report 2012: The Good, The Bad, and The Really, Truly, Ugly” by Michael T. Klare; November 27, 2012)
- c) “Some might assume that bond markets are shielded from the effects of climate change, ecosystem degradation, and water scarcity. With more than \$40 trillion of sovereign debt in global markets at any given time, that is a very high-risk game.” [article titled “Sovereign Environmental Risk” by Achim Steiner (under-Secretary General, United Nations and Executive Director of United Nations Environmental Programme) and Susan Burns (Founder of the Global Footprint Network); October 27, 2012]
- d) “Achieving such a deep transformation of the energy, industrial, and agricultural systems over the next few decades will represent one of the greatest technical, organizational, and financing challenges that humanity has faced.” (from “An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development: Report for the UN Secretary-General”) (October, 2013)
- e) “(U.N.’s climate chief Christiana Figueres) urged an ‘urgent transformation’ to greener production after top scientists warned on Monday that climate change would damage food supplies, slow economic growth and aggravate the underlying causes of armed conflicts. Limiting global warming to an agreed U.N. ceiling ‘means that three quarters of the fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground, and the fossil fuels we do use must be utilized sparingly and responsibly,’ she said.” (article “UN Climate Chief Figueres Urges ‘Urgent Transformation’ Of Oil And Gas Industry” by Alister Doyle in Huffington Post; April 3, 2014)
- f) “On July 8, 2014, the Deep Decarbonization Pathway Project presented its interim 2014 report to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York. ““The report has been produced cooperatively by leading research institutes in 15 countries to outline national pathways for staying within 2°C.”(From the “Deep Decarbonization” report, which can be accessed at [http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DDPP\\_interim\\_2014\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DDPP_interim_2014_executive_summary.pdf) .)

Here are some highlights from a New York Times article on this DDPP interim report. The New York Times article is titled “Blueprints for Taming the Climate Crisis”, and is located at [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/09/business/blueprints-for-taming-the-climate-crisis.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/09/business/blueprints-for-taming-the-climate-crisis.html?_r=0)

Consider the passages below (from paragraphs 20-21):

“Most important, perhaps, the new assessment suggests that deep decarbonization can be done without breaking any economy. Chinese incomes, for instance, are assumed to grow about 4.6 percent a year until midcentury.

“The decarbonization paths rely on aggressive assumptions about our ability to deploy new technologies on a commercial scale economically. For instance, carbon capture and storage is supposed to be available starting in about 10 years. Second-generation biofuels are assumed to come into play by 2020. Hydrogen fuel cells and power storage technology are deployed starting around 2030.”

This writer’s “A List of Ten Critical Challenges” (see also [https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a\\_list\\_of\\_ten\\_critical\\_challenges\\_2014.pdf](https://worldpulse.com/files/upload/1111/a_list_of_ten_critical_challenges_2014.pdf) ) factors in many “social and environmental externalities” which it is hard to imagine are factored in to projections like “Chinese incomes, for instance, are assumed to grow about 4.6 percent a year until midcentury” (see passage in second-to-above paragraph). It does seem that this writer is in a very small minority which sees many trajectories moving in a dangerous direction, and thus believes that “decarbonization paths (relying) on aggressive assumptions about our ability to deploy new technologies on a commercial scale”—however unprecedented and successful the efforts—can hardly be successful[in keeping Greenhouse Gas Emission from rising above 2°C (3.6F)] if world population trends and indiscriminant consumption trends continue, and can hardly be successful if cultures of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence remain critical challenges, and the marginalization of the treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions also remains a critical challenge. However, each of us has to decide, based on the information we have and the experiences we have, what kind of good life we want for ourselves, and future generations, and what we are willing to do—or risk—to get it.