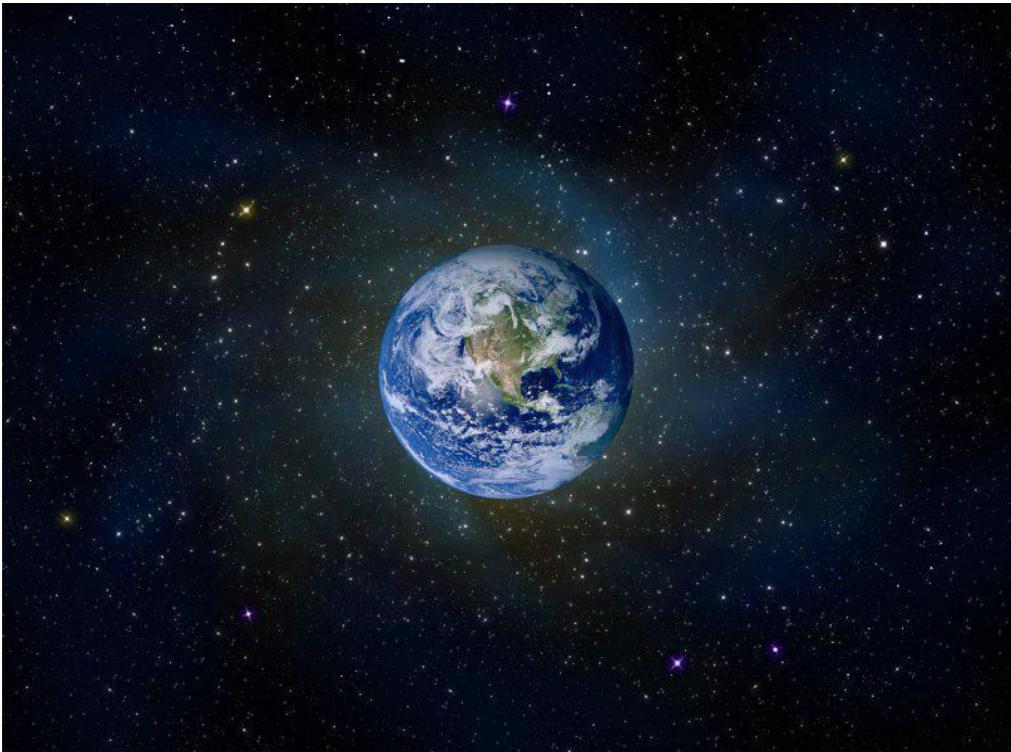Chapter #4

Harvest Song

"The Play is an attempt to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life." (Thorton Wilder about his play "Our Town")

<u>Harvest Song</u>
Long ago
we were sown
now we're here
hear our song

Introduction to Chapter #4
of the "Harvest Song"

We are at one of the most critical crossroads humanity has faced since the dawn of civilization.

The first two Chapters of "Harvest Song" provide what this writer considers sufficient evidence that there is now a convergence of unprecedented challenges. However much we may move forward with the technology pieces needed to limit global warming to 1.5^{o}C (2.7^{o}F), there are many other pieces to the unprecedented cultural transformation which we must also achieve--*and failure to also reach positive tipping points on the many other pieces may cause us to lose positive traction, and slide downhill into cynicism.*

In Chapter #3 and Chapter #4 of "Harvest Song", this writer provides some examples of what he believes are significant movement towards our best chances of avoiding catastrophic climate breakdown. He also includes key steps he advocates for to reach positive tipping points on climate breakdown, *and on many other unprecedented challenges.*

Confidence will be dimmed by a lack of clarity until there is truthful public discourse on the full dimensions of the unprecedented challenges ahead. Confidence will be built up when people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing.

[Special Note--COVID 19 (April 11, 2020):
Because of the severity of the coronavirus pandemic, there is now more need than ever for strengthening local resilience. While stay at home orders are in effect, many local community strengthening approaches highlighted in this Chapter 4 document can still be worked on, through local online discussion forums (forums are free from https://www.proboards.com/). For one example of the potential of these online forums, though not currently active, see https://cpcsdiscussionforum.freeforums.net/ .]

(2008)--"1,500 colleges and universities across the U.S. hosting an all-day symposium called 'Focus the Nation'" (more details on p. 61).

(2020?)--Colleges and universities assisting with local **Community Visioning Initiatives** + supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers = exponential increase in solution activity.

[Source of Screen Capture: "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision" 13 minute video documentary at http://bit.ly/2uE1XX5 . This writer's interest in Community Visioning Initiatives was inspired instantly when, in 1994, he watched "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision". 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, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars.]

1000 time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives--in communities around the world--would create an exponential increase in solution-oriented investment, an exponential increase in solution-oriented employment, and an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times.

Catalyzing Solution Activity with Community Visioning Initiatives, etc.

1) Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are series of community meetings designed to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in identifying solution-oriented activity--which can help people discover for themselves how much we need to be learning so we can be a part of the solutions, and how much we really need to be on same side, helping each other. The 13 minute documentary "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision" http://bit.ly/2uE1XX5 is highly recommended as an inspiring example of the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives.

2) Neighborhood Learning Centers (NLCs): can be a) multi-purpose support centers for implementing CVIs b) neighborhood meeting places and workshop centers c) a critical part of a low cost lifelong learning education system. NLCs can provide places for discussion, information sharing, mutual support, encouragement, and friendship--so that exchanging of information, and resources also includes building close-knit communities of people with healthy appreciation for each other's strengths.

3) Further: results from well thought out preliminary surveys (administered to at least 150 key leaders from a significant variety of fields of activity in the community) can help residents appreciate the need for a Community Visioning Initiative (CVI), and for many "Neighborhood Learning Centers" (NLCs)--and provide starting points for topics to be covered by workshops in the NLCs. The job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process provide opportunities for all key stakeholders in the community (businesses, organizations, institutions, government, etc.) to demonstrate their upgraded awareness--and their interest in the welfare of the community--by offering and facilitating new employment opportunities.
In addition, people (especially unemployed people) who volunteer their time and energy to assist with the CVI, with NLCs--and/or advance the resulting action plans--could receive, as compensation, local currency. Also, there are many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute valuable community services associated with the visioning process (making preliminary survey results accessible, providing analysis of resources in the Neighborhood Learning Centers, reporting on different phases of the Visioning Initiative, etc).

4) Many Colleges, Universities assisting with carrying out local Community Visioning Initiatives + many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers = exponential increase in solution-oriented activity.

Successful Community Visioning Initiative pilot projects in ten or so of the most progressive communities and regions would be most helpful to encourage communities/regions where there are many conflicting world views, and conflicting cultural practices.

Community Visioning Initiatives/Neighborhood Learning Centers (continued)

1) The Community Visioning Initiative (CVI) approach to collaborative problem solving and community education advocated by this writer is described in a "15 Step Outline" http://bit.ly/2AWpDKL , and further illustrated by details in "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision"--a 13 minute documentary http://bit.ly/2uE1XX5 . Although the 15 Step outline was written in 2008, it will help people to visualize how a face-to-face visioning takes place (face-to-face being preferred by this writer over website oriented, because we now need as much collaborative activity with our fellow community residents as possible).

2) Appreciating Community Visioning Initiatives and Neighborhood Learning Centers--

a) such collaborative problem solving processes can help people "become stakeholders", with the faith that as they do so, and become involved in 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 so that we can be part of the solutions… and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other*.
b) through workshops and other informal education (and associated local learning networks), citizens can gain greater awareness of how all the "little events" in everyday community life have a positive and cumulative effect on the challenges-solutions-investment-training-employment sequence… and thus how all the investments of time, energy, and money (the "votes") each of us make in our everyday circumstances become the larger economy. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such "votes". Wisely directed, such "votes" can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to 100% renewable energy, carbon neutral and socially responsible local economies, living lightly and practicing wisdom and compassion, *and the basic common sense* necessary to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and minimize other related challenges.

Successful Community Visioning Initiative pilot projects in ten or so of the most progressive communities and regions around the world can provide detailed confirmation of how the process would work. Such confirmation would be most helpful to encourage communities/regions where there are many conflicting world views, conflicting moral compasses, and conflicting cultural practices.

It's not like mobilizing for war, where there will be drill sergeants and basic training, but people should begin to realize: creating the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to resolve the challenges of our times means there is a lot of work to do.

Even More about Neighborhood Learning Centers

Creating the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to resolve the challenges of our times will require encouraging as much formal and informal meetings as possible between neighbors--and people living in the same local community. Creating many Neighborhood Learning Centers (NLCs) can provide places--in local neighborhoods--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 with a healthy appreciation for each other's strengths (repeated from p. 67, for emphasis).

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project (overview in Chapter #3, on p. 48, and p. 68) advocates for a new section in local newspapers--which would be used to highlight and accumulate stories, personal experiences, and other forms of reader contributions that identify helpful people and valuable resources, and reinforce important community goals. Partnerships between the NTNCE Project and the many Neighborhood Learning Centers in the community/region would surely accelerate community awareness about challenges identified and solution activity.

Educational institutions, and other organizations, could increase their existing efforts, or take up the call, to develop related curriculum and offer classes, workshops, and teacher training, to support the development of Neighborhood Learning Centers. Many Colleges, Universities assisting with carrying out local Community Visioning Initiatives + many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers = exponential increase in solution-oriented activity. The 13 minute documentary "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision" http://bit.ly/2uE1XX5 is highly recommended as an inspiring example of the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives (repeated, for emphasis).

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.

Partnerships between the Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project and the many Neighborhood Learning Centers (NLCs) in the community/region would surely accelerate community awareness about challenges identified and solution activity.

Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project
proposal for a new section in local newspapers

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project advocates for a new section in local newspapers. The new section (NTNCE section) would be used to highlight and accumulate stories, personal experiences, and other forms of reader contributions which identify helpful people and valuable resources, and reinforce important community goals.

In this "Harvest Song" book, readers have been provided with credible evidence-based information about a convergence of unprecedented challenges happening now-- and guidelines for many solutions which can be implemented in local communities.

We need many plans of action, in communities around the world--
a) which will exponentially increase solution-oriented activity
b) *which people from every variety of circumstances can trust*
c) *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.*

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.

There are now many ways for people to learn and share information--television, radio, websites, social networks on the Internet (maybe even too many ways....) Having established, reliable, and local sources--the local newspaper being one--to act as a key hub for the community (and an arbitrator on what information is valid, and what is misinformation) can be critical, especially if circumstances change rapidly.

People (especially unemployed people) who deliberately direct their investments of time, energy, and money towards assisting with Community Visioning Initiatives, Neighborhood Learning Centers--and supporting and sustaining the solutions identified by the Community Visioning Initiative--could receive, as encouragement, **local currency**. Such local currency can, in its turn, be spent in ways which are particularly helpful to building stable and sustainable local economies.

Local Currencies

(while there are many local currencies, this overview focuses on Berkshares)

From the "What are Berkshares?" subsection of the Berkshares website (at
http://www.berkshares.org/what_are_berkshares

"… local currencies are once again being recognized as a tool for sustainable economic development. The currency distinguishes the local businesses that accept the currency from those that do not, fostering stronger relationships between the responsible business community and the citizens of the region. The people who choose to use the currency make a conscious commitment to buy local, and in doing so take a personal interest in the health and well-being of their community by laying the foundation for a truly vibrant, thriving economy."

From the "Local Currency" webpage at the website for the Schumacher Center for a New Economics (at http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/content/local-currencies)

"Launched in the fall of 2006, BerkShares had a robust initiation, with over one million BerkShares circulated in the first nine months and over 4.3 million to date. Currently, more than four hundred businesses have signed up to accept the currency. Five different banks have partnered with BerkShares, with a total of thirteen branch offices now serving as exchange stations."

--From the "What are Berkshares?" subsection of the Berkshares website (at
http://www.berkshares.org/what_are_berkshares)

"The members of BerkShares, Inc. envision a diverse and resilient regional economy that supports and prioritizes responsible production and consumption, wherein community members rely on the land and each other to fulfill the basic needs of food, culture, clothing, shelter, and energy."

From the "Local Currency Resources" webpage at the website for Berkshares, Inc (see
http://berkshares.org/resources)

"The Schumacher Center for a New Economics has been an innovator for over 30 years in the issuing of place-based non-profit currencies. The Local Currency section of their website is a resource for people interested in building local currencies in their own region." (see
http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/content/local-currencies for resources)

1) We are at the one of the most critical crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth.

2) 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives supported by many Neighborhood Learning Centers = exponentially accelerating solution activity at this critical time.

3) Here are seven different ways of looking at where 10 billion dollars might come from, so that 1000 communities could carry out Community Visioning Initiatives

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Can We Afford 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives?

The more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees; preliminary surveys or assessments; workshops; task forces; and collaboration between many organizations, government agencies, businesses, and educational institutions--and seek to build up consensus in the community for specific goals and action plans by encouraging a high level of participation by all residents.

This writer offers a rough estimate of $10 million to carry out one (1) time-intensive (possibly 18 months) Community Visioning Initiative of the kind he advocates for [see pages 66-69, "15 Step Outline" http://bit.ly/2AWpDKL referred to on p. 68; and the 13 minute documentary "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision" http://bit.ly/2uE1XX5 (highly recommended)].

Here are 7 different ways of looking at where 10 billion dollars might come from, so that 1000 communities could carry out Community Visioning Initiatives (Note: although these statistics were originally sourced in 2011-2012, the points that they make will still be valid).

1) $10 billion is only .005% of the $207 trillion in personal wealth held by the richest 10 percent.

3) $10 billion is only .57% (a little more than half of 1%) of $1,750 billion in military expenditures in 2012.

4) $10 billion is 1.8% of (est.) $557 billion in worldwide advertising spending in 2012.

5) $10 billion is 2.4% of the $419 billion of worldwide gambling revenues in 2011.

6) $10 billion is 6% of the $162 billion people in the United States spent on beer, wine, and liquor in 2011.

7) If 18% of cable TV subscribers in the United States unsubscribed from cable TV, they could re-direct that money to finance 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives.

We are at the one of the most critical crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth. Confidence will be built up when people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing.

Village Technology Handbook, Small Scale Foundries for Developing Countries, Foot Powered Thresher, Village Water Systems, Water Treatment and Sanitation, Charcoal Making for Small Scale Enterprises, Micro Hydro Electric Power, Wind Resistant Block Houses….

Appropriate Technology Library--1050 Books on 1 USB Drive
by Village Earth

From the webpage "Appropriate Technology Library" at the Village Earth website (at https://www.villageearth.org/ under the "Publications" tab)

1) "The Appropriate Technology (AT) Library contains the full text and images from over 1050 of the best books dealing with all areas of self-reliance, do-it-yourself technology--over 150,000 pages. Portable and easy to use on 1 USB drive. The AT Library is currently in use in over 74 countries worldwide."

2) "The AT Library gives you the knowledge to solve real-world problems such as: harvesting clean drinking water, making tools, growing your own crops, building and maintaining an irrigation system, preserving crops, reforesting a denuded watershed, starting a small fish hatchery, building a small-scale hydropower scheme, building and maintaining pumps, treating human and animal waste, utilizing solar energy, improving rural cookstove efficiency, constructing energy efficient structures, caring for the sick, non-formal education, preparing for a natural disaster, etc."

3) "The AT Library is the complete text and graphics of each book, digitally scanned into Adobe PDF format…. Each book is summarized and indexed in the Appropriate Technology Sourcebook, included with each library. This format is easy to use and navigate and can be read on virtually any computer operating system. It can also be used with the most basic hardware including low MHZ laptops, tablets or smartphones."

4) A complete list of the 1050 books included in the AT Library is accessible on the webpage for the Appropriate Technology Library. Here is a sampling of the titles included in the AT Library: Technologies for Basic Needs, How to Make Twelve Woodworking Tools, Permaculture II, Animal Power in Farming Systems, Small Scale Solar Powered Irrigation Pumping Systems, Water-Pumping Devices, Compost Toilets, Hot Water, The Wind Power Book, Small Scale Hydropower Technologies, Low Cost Passive Solar Greenhouses, Low Cost Country Home Building, Small Scale Papermaking, etc.

"Village Earth helps reconnect communities to the resources that promote human well-being by enhancing social and political empowerment, community self-reliance and self-determination."

"Many rural and urban development schemes have overlooked the importance of locally specific ways of meeting needs for food, health, shelter, energy, education and other fundamental human needs." "'**Food sovereignty'** is an alternative paradigm for food, fisheries, agriculture, pastoralism and forest use that is emerging in response to this democratic deficit."

Locally Specific Ways of Meeting Basic Human Needs and Food Sovereignty

1) "The knowledge, priorities and aspirations of small-scale producers, and other citizens whose livelihoods depend on food provisioning, are rarely included in policy debates on the future of food, farming and development (Edelman, 2003). When governments do decide to hold public consultations to help guide their decisions… (and) when policy think tanks and academics organise discussions to inform the choices of decision-makers, it is striking that the voices of farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, food workers and indigenous peoples are largely absent from such processes (Pimbert *et al*., 2006). (Chpt. 3 p. 39)

2) "Subsistence farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk and artisanal food processors are seen as poor if they wear home-made garments of natural fibre rather than synthetics. They are perceived as poor if they live in houses constructed from natural materials like bamboo, thatch and mud rather than concrete. They are backward and poor if they farm without hybrid seeds, chemical fertilisers and weed-free monocultures. The ideology of development declares them to be so because they neither fully participate in the market economy nor consume commodities produced for and distributed by the market, even though they may be satisfying their fundamental needs themselves. This neglect of human ingenuity and diversity ultimately reinforces the dominant model of development based on uniformity, centralisation and control." (Chpt. 4.6 p.55)

3) "'Food sovereignty' is an alternative paradigm for food, fisheries, agriculture, pastoralism and forest use that is emerging in response to this democratic deficit. This alternative policy framework for food and agriculture is also a citizens' response to the multiple social and environmental crises induced by modern food systems everywhere. Indeed, many proposals for food sovereignty directly seek to reverse the socially and ecologically destructive nature of industrial farming, fisheries, forestry and livestock management, and the wider food systems they are part of. *Self sufficiency and autonomy are now political demands, well rooted in the experience of millions of Indians, campesinos, 'urban marginals' and many other groups in the southern part of the globe. Rerooting and regenerating themselves in their own spaces, they are creating effective responses to 'the global forces' trying to displace them* (Esteva and Prakash, 1998)." (Chpt. 3 p. 39)

[Source: "Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems" by Michel Pimbert Accessible from IIED website (International Institute for Environment and Development) London UK 2009 (Table of Contents and downloadable chapters at http://www.iied.org/towards-food-sovereignty-reclaiming-autonomous-food-systems). Excerpts above are from Chapter 3 "Food sovereignty: a citizens' vision of a better world" and Chpt. 4.6 "The need to strengthen local organisations for food sovereignty".]

Local Food Policy Councils: "Many organizations, both local and national in scope, have developed tools, informational resources, or successful model policies that support an integrated, sustainable and equitable food system at the city or regional level. We have collected a sample of those experiences and resources…."

"Cutting Through the Red Tape:
A Resource Guide for Local Food Policy Practitioners and Organizers"

"Levers of change exist in municipal and county governments around the U.S. Community organizations are using local policy to develop a better food system through farm to school programs, local business incubation and food policy councils, and citizen advisory boards to city and state governments. This document is a collection of resources for local food policy assembled from groups across the U.S. Many organizations, both local and national in scope, have developed tools, informational resources, or successful model policies that support an integrated, sustainable and equitable food system at the city or regional level. We have collected a sample of those experiences and resources to provide community advocates with practical tools and ideas for creating local food policy change."

"This document is organized with policies and tools for each area of the food system: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and food waste recovery…. Each of (these) five sections contains 'toolkits' created by a range of non-profits, universities, or think tanks…. In regards to production, they offer model language for zoning ordinances that establish or expand protections for both community gardens and farmers' markets, as well as how neighborhood groups can organize to create a community garden. With food processing, the available toolkits describe how to start a community kitchen incubator and supporting network. Toolkits related to distribution explain how to start a farm-to-school program, establish a sustainable food purchasing policy, improve school food policy rules and help local farmers market their products to local institutions. In regards to consumption, the featured toolkits cover city zoning ordinances that encourage healthy eating choices and how to organize a healthy corner store project. The waste recovery toolkits explain how city officials can implement food and yard waste recycling programs and on-site food reduction and composting for businesses."

[Source: From Food First Policy Brief #19 "Cutting Through the Red Tape: A Resource Guide for Local Food Policy Practitioners and Organizers" by Beth Sanders, MPH Intern and Annie Shattuck Research Fellow--Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy   December 2011 (at the webpage for "Cutting Through the Red Tape…." https://foodfirst.org/publication/cutting-through-the-red-tape-a-resource-guide-for-local-food-policy-practitioners-organizers/ (from introduction to the report--p. 1, paragraphs 2, 6-7; pdf file of complete report accessible at bottom of page)]

There is now a great responsibility on 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.

Interfaith Prayer Vigils

The news media tend to focus more on conflict than on cooperation--especially in stories about religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. However, if the leaders of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions cannot cooperate and work together to 1) reverse the marginalization of the treasured wisdom which has accumulated over the many centuries of human experience and 2) *provide more evidence that such wisdom does exist*, they may contribute more to creating widespread cynicism rather than confidence, and we may lose significant traction and critical momentum on issues which require urgent solutions.

One way leaders of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions could make a significant contribution to positive tipping points is by encouraging and supporting Interfaith Prayer Vigils. One possible goal for an Interfaith Prayer Vigil would be for communities to have at least one person from the community participating in the Prayer Vigil at all times (24/7)(in such time intervals as they choose). With an emphasis on silence, participants could silently recite prayers for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation--and/or carry on with any kind of silent practice or silent spiritual discipline which is relevant and appropriate for a sacred space dedicated to praying for help when we are at one of the most critical crossroads humanity has faced since the dawn of civilization.

One inspiration for this kind of silent effort in a sacred place is the 24 Hour Prayer Vigil for World Peace at Kunzang Palyul Choling (KPC), a Tibetan Buddhist Temple in Poolesville, Maryland (USA). The Prayer Vigil at Kunzang Palyul Choling (KPC) began in April, 1985 and continued 24/7 all year round until February, 2015. At that time it became a prayer vigil for 12 hours on Wednesdays. Some details about the KPC's Prayer Vigil (from the webpage "Prayer Vigil") are at http://www.tara.org/ourprojects/prayer-vigil/).

This writer personally believes Faith helps move belief from "it hardly seems possible" to "it must be possible" (since Faith believes Love will prevail). And he believes "God can do anything".

Now would be a good time for people of Faith to join in "Interfaith Prayer Vigils"--which could be formed, and maintained (24/7 if possible), by members of any local places of worship and/or local spiritual fellowships with the desire to serve in this way.

"The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at _____."
(Please list 5-10 responses which you believe would best fill in the blank. Then please rank those responses, with #1 being most important, #2 being second most important, etc.

Questionnaires and Surveys Can Help Identify Challenges and Solutions
and Build Consensus for Collective Action

1) What is your definition of "the good life?"

2) During the course of any given day, each of us consciously or unconsciously places our faith in a variety of people, institutions, organizations, businesses, beliefs, principles, practices, commonly agreed upon codes of conduct, etc. Consider carefully the 'things you do in the everyday circumstances of your life'-- and then list 10 people, institutions, etc. which you personally place your faith in. Then, please mark or arrange the list so that #1 is the most significant person, institution, etc. which you personally place your faith in, #2 is the second most significant, and so on.

3) Who are the most valuable peacebuilders in your local community? Please name 5-10 people you would identify to others as the most valuable peacebuilders--and then please describe five qualities, skills, experiences, knowledge, etc. which you believe are essential to identifying someone as a most valuable peacebuilder.

4) The investments of time, energy, and money (the "votes") each of us make---
---in our everyday circumstances---
---can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to, rather than impair---
---the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts---
---necessary to reach positive tipping points on many critical challenges at the same time.
Question: Do you agree with the above statement, or do you disagree? Please explain why you agree or disagree.

5) 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.
Question: Do you believe such wisdom exists? [Please rate your level of belief or doubt in response to the question "Do you believe such wisdom exists?" on the following scale: "Strongly believe it exists—Somewhat certain it exists—Would like to believe it exists, but there isn't much evidence to support it--Am Somewhat Skeptical about its existence--Seriously Doubt that it exists"

There is now a great responsibility on 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. (repeated for emphasis)

Living Lightly and Practicing Wisdom and Compassion
in carbon neutral and sustainable small cities, towns and villages
can resolve many challenges at the same time

From Worldwatch Institute "State of the World 2004: Special Focus--The Consumer Society"
a) "The energy invested in a particular thing, during its life from cradle to grave, is called the 'embodied energy' of that object. The amount of embodied energy that an item contains depends on the technology used to create it (the origin of materials inputs, how they were created and transported, etc.), the nature of the production system, and the distance the item travels from inception to purchase."
b) *"By supporting items and processes that have lower embodied energy, as well as the companies that produce them, consumers can significantly reduce society's energy use."*

From "Why the Village Movement?" by J.C. Kumarappa (economist who worked with Gandhi)
"… every article in the bazaar has moral and spiritual values attached to it… if we feel it is beyond us to guarantee the concomitant results of all our transactions, it necessarily follows that we must limit our transactions to a circle well within our control. This is the bed rock of swadeshi. *The smaller the circumference, the more accurately can we gauge the results of our actions, and (the) more conscientiously shall we be able to fulfill our obligations as trustees."*

***There is now a great responsibility on 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.*
****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 of unrestrained desires--as they materialize worldwide. This part of the value and benefit of spiritual teachings is often overlooked.*
****"Were I to have the least bit of knowledge, in walking on a Great Road, it's only going astray that I would fear. The Great Way is very level; but people greatly delight in tortuous paths."*
(Lao Tzu)

We have the knowledge and wisdom to create, support, and sustain smaller cities, towns, and villages which can keep global warming below 1.5^{o}C (2.7^{o}F)--and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.

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13 Steps for Long Term Culture Change

1) Community Good News Networks 2) Community Faith Mentoring Networks 3) Spiritual Friendships 4) Interfaith Peace Vigils 5) Recalibrating Our Moral Compasses (ROMC) Surveys 6) Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) 7) Neighborhood Learning Centers (NLCs) 8) Spiritually Responsible Investing 9) Ecological Sustainability/Permaculture/Ecovillages 10) Appropriate Technology 11) Food Sovereignty/Food Waste/Obesity/Local Food Councils/Community Supported Agriculture 12) Local Currency 13) Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Projects in Local Newspapers

Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are a series of community meetings designed to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and solution-oriented activity. Neighborhood Learning Centers (NLCs) are multi-purpose support centers for implementing CVIs, meeting places, workshop centers, and part of low cost lifelong learning education system. Initially, surveys of key informants globally on challenges/solutions would inspire similar local surveys, and both surveys would highlight the need for CVIs and NLCs--and provide key starting points for topics to cover in workshops at NLCs. Progressive communities following this approach will recognize the need for increasing the reliability of our "moral compasses", and Steps 1-4 and 8 (and possibly Step 5) will help provide starting points for positive interfaith cooperation along such lines. Colleges and universities assisting with carrying out local Community Visioning Initiatives + many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers = an exponential increase in solution-oriented activity. (Ex: CVI 13m documentary http://bit.ly/2uE1XX5).

Concluding Comments: This writer prefers that priorities (for urgently and drastically cutting global emissions) be given to small cities, towns, and villages--as more sustainable-friendly in the long run; having less complex vulnerabilities; creating more emphasis on downsizing and focusing on what basic necessities are most needed; where it is easier to see the results of our actions; and where a truly natural circular economy (sewage treatment; food miles; less packaging; zero waste; etc.) is much easier to implement, and more likely to actually happen. He also believes that it is possible for local communities and regions to use Community Visioning Initiatives and Neighborhood Learning Centers to do ongoing collaborative problem solving and community education, and to make profound changes in less than ten years. ("13 Steps for Long Term Culture Change"-- http://bit.ly/2GFaVJ4)

Agrarian Reform; Appropriate Technology; Circular Economy; Civic Responsibility; Community Visioning Initiatives; Food Security; Forgiveness; Gender Equality; Hard Work; Honesty; Inspiring Role Models; Interfaith Peace Vigils; Local Currency; Mentoring; Permaculture; Wisdom….

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178 Related Fields of Activity

This writer has identified 178 fields of activity related to the collaborative problem solving, community peacebuilding, ecological sustainability, and community education efforts he advocates most strongly for to resolve the convergence of unprecedented challenges which now exists. Crowdsourcing efforts would surely result in a much longer list; however this list should be sufficient to suggest that we--collectively--have the knowledge and wisdom to create, support, and sustain communities which can keep global warming below 1.5^{o}C (2.7^{o}F); minimize resource requirements; maintain ecological sustainability; maintain a high level of compassion for fellow human beings--and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.

Here are 65 fields of activity which this writer will highlight, as a sample of what is included in the list (complete list in 6 page "178 Related Fields of Activity" http://bit.ly/2rsNeOE):

Agrarian Reform; Alleviating Hunger; Appropriate Technology; Biological Sewage Treatment Systems; Circular Economy; Civic Responsibility; Community Education; Community Land Trusts; Community Peacebuilding; Community Supported Agriculture; Community Supported Manufacturing; Community Visioning Initiatives; Compassion; Cooperation; Divest/Invest; Ecological Sustainability; Ecovillages; Emergency Humanitarian Aid; Employment Training (esp. Transitional); Energy Descent Pathways; Energy Returned On Energy Invested (EROEI); Energy Storage Systems; Faith; Food Security; Forgiveness; Gender Equality; Hard Work; Holistic Education; Holistic Health Care; Honesty; Hydropower; Inspiring Role Models; Interfaith Peace Vigils; Justice; Lifelong Education; Local Currency; Mentoring; Microgrids; Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (in newspapers/newsletters); Neighborhood Learning Centers; Permaculture; Plant-Based Protein; Prayer; Questionnaires/Surveys; Relocalization; Renewable Energy; Right Livelihood; Small-Scale Farming; Socially Engaged Spirituality; Socially Responsible Investing; Solar Energy; Spiritual Discipline/Spiritual Practice; Spiritual Diversity (Religious Pluralism); Spiritual Friendships; Sympathetic Resonance; Transition Towns; Village Industries/Cottage Industries; Village Support Centers; Violence Prevention; Voluntary Simplicity; Wind Power; Wisdom; Zero Waste