

A Greater Force than the Challenges We Are Now Facing Introducing the “1000Communities²” Proposal

--On November, 17, 2007 the United Nations Development Programme released the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World”, which included, in the summary, the following statement:

“Avoiding the unprecedented threats posed by dangerous climate change will require an unparalleled collective exercise in international cooperation.”¹

--On January 17, 2008, the website of the Post Carbon Institute’s “Relocalization Network” featured a “News Posting” which was a press release for a new book by Lester Brown titled “Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization”. The “Introduction” to that book includes the following passage:

“Implementing Plan B means undertaking several actions simultaneously, including... cutting carbon dioxide emissions 80% by 2020, largely through a mobilization to raise energy efficiency and harness renewable sources of energy. Not only is the scale of this save-our-civilization plan ambitious, so is the speed with which it must be implemented. We must move at wartime speed, restructuring the world energy economy at a pace reminiscent of the restructuring of the U.S. industrial economy in 1942 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.”²

--On April 10, 2008, an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online) included the following statement:

“Last week, the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, warned that 33 nations are at risk of social unrest because of the rising prices of food. ‘For countries where food comprises from half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival,’ he said.”³

--On October 24, 2008, an article titled “Global Recession Fears Intensify” on the website of Reuters News Service, began as follows:

“Signs of a sharp slowdown in Europe and a barrage of profit warnings and job cut announcements from companies around the world intensified fears of deep global recession on Friday. Stock Markets slid across the globe, currencies experienced almost unprecedented volatility, and oil and other commodities tumbled on fears of plummeting demand that would accompany a global economic slowdown. ‘I sense we’ve moved beyond the credit crisis. There’s a recognition of the damage inflicted on the global economy, that is, the recession, by the credit crisis’ said Mike Lenhoff, chief strategist a Brewin Dolphin Securities in London.”⁴

--On October 20, 2008, the Energy Bulletin website published an article by Richard Heinberg, which included the following passage:

“Peak Oil and Climate Change present threats and imperatives of a scale unprecedented in human history. By taking up these imperatives through a de-carbonized retrofit of the nation’s (and ultimately the world’s) transport, food, and manufacturing systems, policy makers can address a number of crises simultaneously—environmental decline, resource depletion, geopolitical competition for control of energy, unemployment, balance of trade deficits, malnutrition and food related health problems, and more.”⁵

[For “Notes and Source References” related to the above quotations, see p. 32)

Letter From the Editor

More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that we—collectively—have a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never seen before. This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative. The Mission Statement for The IPCR Initiative is included in this issue on p. 32. This particular issue of The IPCR Journal/Newsletter (Fall, 2008) introduces a recently completed proposal (by this writer) titled “1000Communities²” [accessible for free at The IPCR Initiative website (at www.ipcri.net)]. This issue includes:

- 1) three different outreach messages currently being used to share the “1000Communities²” proposal with people who might be able to make good use of it
- 2) Appendix 6 from the “1000Communities²” proposal. Appendix 6 is titled “Integrating Spiritual Wisdom into the Everyday Circumstances of Community Life”. [This writer believes that there is a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. *And yet... an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings is, currently, not widely recognized as an essential and critical element of most comprehensive responses to the challenges of our times.* This writer hopes that he can contribute something to bringing this need to the forefront of more and more responses to the challenges of our times.]
- 4) a reprint of the contents of the “Workshops” section of The IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net).

There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not yet been done. There is much that needs to be done.

Stefan Pasti, Editor
The IPCR Journal/Newsletter
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The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

The “1000Communities²” Proposal: Determining the Markets that Supply the “Ways of Earning a Living”

Introduction—Much Potential, Many Challenges

At no other time in the course of history has so many people had access to so much in the way of time-tested guidelines, inspiring role models, and service-oriented initiatives.

We should be able to actualize this potential into acceptable standards of living for a very high percentage of the people on this planet, and do so in a way that creates economic stability, maintains ecological sustainability, and demonstrates a high level of compassion for our fellow human beings.

And yet there are many difficult challenges ahead. Consider the following quotations:

[See p. 8 for “Notes and Source References” related to this section. Additional Note: The “1000Communities²” proposal includes over 150 quotations and excerpts, which are provided to refer readers to relevant sources for further research.]

a) *From the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World”*

“Avoiding the unprecedented threats posed by dangerous climate change will require an unparalleled collective exercise in international cooperation.”¹

b) *From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002)*

“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.”²

c) *From an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online)(April 10, 2008).*

“Last week, the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, warned that 33 nations are at risk of social unrest because of the rising prices of food. ‘For countries where food comprises from half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival,’ he said.”³

There now exists a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

We are in need of innovative and imaginative solutions. One suggestion which could assist in bringing to light many solutions is a 161 page proposal by this writer titled “1000Communities²”. “1000Communities²” (“1000CommunitiesSquared”) advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” with ongoing workshops, and “sister community” relationships, as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times. [Note: The “1000Communities²” proposal is accessible in pdf format for free at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative, at www.ipcri.net. (This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The IPCR Initiative.)]

About Community Visioning Initiatives and “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

Many of us will be familiar with the problem solving strategy of identifying problems and brainstorming solutions. Well organized efforts to identify problems and brainstorm solutions are a universally recognized approach to problem solving which is commonly used in family, community, business, and government settings in every part of the world. In its most basic format, a Community Visioning Initiative is simply a more comprehensive variation of the above mentioned approach to problem solving. The more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees, preliminary surveys or assessments, workshops, task forces, 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.

Equally important to the “1000Communities²” proposal is the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (a concept created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization). So that readers may fully appreciate the importance of this concept, please consider the following: on the homepage of the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative, there is reference to a “Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”. Such an assessment indicates there is a need for problem solving which approaches fully utilizing all the knowledge, tools, and resources accessible to them for the highest good possible in every area of capacity building (physical, ecological, medical, spiritual, educational, social, economic, technical, political, etc.).

This writer does not see how such a “full utilization” can be approached without an increase in local community points of entry which provide ongoing, affordable, and neighborhood-friendly workshops. He also believes that coordinating such workshops with a Community Visioning Initiative can produce a positive effect of an exponential nature. The need for innovative and imaginative solutions is urgent. Many communities around the world already need positive results of an exponential nature—and many more communities may soon need positive results of an exponential nature. Thus, it would seem practical to experiment along these lines.

Expanding the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

In this “1000Communities²” proposal, the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization is expanded so that such local community points of entry function as

- a) information centers, resource centers, and clearinghouses (on how residents can deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges)
- b) locations for workshops on topics suggested by the “Preliminary Survey” (for more about “Preliminary Surveys” see p. 9), and as determined by the “Community Teaching and Learning Center” Coordinator
- c) practice sites for the development of “teacher-leaders”
- d) community centers for meetings, both planned and informal
- e) locations for “Community Journals” (which are collections of formal and informal input which may be contributed to or accessed at all times)
- f) locations for “Final Version” Document submission (“voting”) as part of Steps 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 of the 15 Step Outline (for an example of “voting”, see “Step 5” on p. 28-29 of the “1000Communities²” proposal)
- g) locations for “Summary of Community Visioning Initiative Process to Date” Notebooks, for latecomers, and as an information resource for media
- h) central locations for listings of employment opportunities
- i) as a special form of community education, which can respond quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

Three Propositions—and “Job Fairs”

The “1000Communities²” proposal also advocates three propositions which are especially relevant when considering the value of local community points of entry information clearinghouses, and ongoing workshops....

- a) There are countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

b) People can, one by one, decide to deliberately focus the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on many or all of the action plans which emerge from Community Visioning Initiatives.

c) The result can be that there are countless ‘ways to earn a living’ which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

Furthermore, Community Visioning Initiatives can include “Job Fairs” in the final phases of the process, which summarize the knowledge accumulated during the Visioning process.

Here are some excerpts from “Step 12: Summary Presentations and Job Fairs” of the “15 Step” outline (see p. 22-42) provided in the “1000Communities²” proposal:

“Job Fairs will provide a forum for organizations and businesses working in solution oriented fields of activity to describe employment opportunities and future prospects, to discover local talent, to hire qualified prospects, and to build knowledge bases and skill sets for the future.” (from p. 39)

“Special Commentary: By now, there will have been sufficient public discourse for those people with understanding about high level shifts in investment portfolios to have learned something about what directions future shifts will be leaning towards. 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... and thus helping with a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which *in many ways* represent solutions to prioritized challenges.” (from p. 39)

“[Note: As mentioned on p. 125, one aspect of this just transition can be that people who do deliberately focus their investments of time, energy, and money towards solutions identified by the Community Visioning Initiative being carried out in their community may receive, as encouragement, local currency. *And then such local currency can, in its turn, be redeemed in ways which will be particularly helpful to people transitioning from less solution-oriented employment to more solution-oriented employment.*]” (from p. 39)

It is possible.... and yet....

This message is offered as one way of demonstrating that it is possible for communities of people to deliberately create countless “ways to earn a living” which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

And yet... consider the following:

This writer believes that there is a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. This profound and critical need is especially urgent when viewed as only a part of the challenges listed in “Ten Point Assessment...” accessible on the homepage of The IPCR Initiative website.

And yet... an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings is, currently, not widely recognized as an essential and critical element of truly comprehensive response to the challenges of our times.

As a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings, the “1000Communities²” proposal makes a special point of encouraging communities (with the resources to do so) to enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs. [Why? This writer understands that it is often very difficult for people in one country to understand the indirect effects of their investments of time, energy, and money—even if those indirect effects are unquestionably beneficial. *If we are to “fully realize the repercussions of our actions on our neighbours”—and on people in others parts of the world—it seems that it would be most helpful for whole communities of people to have direct contact with a whole communities of people in another part of the world, for an extended period of time. In the context of this “1000Communities²” proposal, the “sister community” relationship would provide a way for residents of a community with sufficient resources to do so to be in direct contact with residents of a community where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.*

If even a few....

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the ways of earning a living. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative (“Vision 2000”) that attracted more than

1700 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.⁴

If even a few of the kind of Community Visioning Initiatives described in the “1000Communities²” proposal generated results similar to those achieved by the Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) Visioning Initiative, people in all parts of the world—keenly attuned when it comes to resolving challenges which require urgent solutions at all levels of society— *could be* inspired to carry out similar Community Visioning Initiatives. And if many communities carried out similar initiatives, and also achieved significant results, our collective capacity to resolve the challenges of our times *would surely* begin to accumulate at an accelerating rate.

Hopefully—by encouraging as much formal and informal meetings with other people in the local neighborhoods for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship—a combination of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” and “sister community” relationships can contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, 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.

Notes and Source References

1. From the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 *Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*” Director and Lead Author: Kevin Watkins Published for the United Nations Development Program Released November 27, 2007 In “Summary” of Complete Report (See http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_summary_english.pdf for free download) On p. 19, in section “Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: Strategies for Mitigation” paragraph 1 (Confirmed June 1, 2008)
2. From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002) in Chapter 9 “The Way Forward: Recommendations for Action” p. 254 (at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/9241545615.pdf>) (Confirmed June 11, 2008)
3. From an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online). Published April 10, 2008 (at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/opinion/10thu1.html>) (see paragraph 3) (Confirmed June 13, 2008)
4. The statistics are from “Revision 2000: Take Charge Again”, a brochure this writer received from Chattanooga Venture. These statistics are also accessible in a detailed overview of Chattanooga community revitalization efforts titled “Chattanooga: The Sustainable City”, at the website for the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership at <http://www.academy.umd.edu/Resources/AcademyPublicationsPDF/BoundaryCrossers-CaseStudies/Ch3-Chattanooga/Chattanooga.pdf> (see Chpt. 3, p. 7) (Confirmed June 15, 2008)

A Greater Force than the Challenges We Are Now Facing

Dateline: September—October, 2008

We are living in very complex and challenging times. More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that all of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges. Currently, here in the United States, the crisis in the financial markets has become the challenge regarded as most in need of urgent resolution.

This writer has viewed or heard observations and commentary on the nature of this financial market crisis, and descriptions of possible solutions, from many credible sources—as a result of access to the Internet, and access to programming provided by C-Span (a private, non-profit company, created in 1979 by the cable television industry to provide public access to the political process). In the context of this essay, this writer will make reference to two comments made by Dr. Peter R. Orszag, who is Director of the Congressional Budget Office (briefly, a government agency with a mandate to assist the House and Senate Budget Committees). One comment is from his testimony before the Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives, on September 24, 2008 (“Federal Responses to Market Turmoil”)(testimony accessible at <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/97xx/doc9767/09-24-MarketTurmoil.pdf>), and one from the Director’s Blog section of the Congressional Budget Office’s website [see blog entry titled “Troubled Assets Relief Act and Insolvencies” (September 25, 2008) at <http://cboblog.cbo.gov/>].

Why Confidence is Dissipating: Yet Another Viewpoint

Consider first this comment:

“Over the past several weeks, the collapse of confidence in financial markets has become particularly severe.” (Dr. Peter R. Orszag, House Budget Committee Testimony, see p. 3, 3rd paragraph)

It is this writer’s interpretation that Dr. Orszag’s comments in this particular testimony focus primarily on the kind of “confidence” which is built up or dissipated depending on whether there is more or less certainty about the structure and systems of the financial markets. It is also this writer’s interpretation that much of the observations and commentary he viewed or heard relating to the financial crisis focused on the structure and systems of the financial markets—in accordance with the view that the financial markets are the “grid” through which transactions are conducted, and if the “power stations” are constrained from generating “current”, there will be a limit to the number of financial transactions which can be “conducted”, no matter what else happens.

This writer believes that it will always be helpful for people with much experience in the related fields to assist the general public in understanding of the structure and the systems associated with financial and economic markets. However, public discourse of this nature will consistently fail to provide sufficient understanding of how to build up “confidence” as long as it cannot or will not identify enough of the “whole picture” to properly serve the needs of the problem solving process. For *true confidence* is never really built up by merely convincing a majority of the people involved that they *believe* the markets are based on sound and practical principles; *true confidence* is built up because people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force *than the challenges they are facing*. In accordance with this point of view, confidence is dissipating rather than being built up—particularly in the United States—because our public discourse does not honestly and truthfully identify enough of the actual challenges we are now facing for all of us—collectively—to **know** that our efforts will be enough to overcome them.

How We Can **Know** Which Institutions Are More Likely to be Solvent in the Future

Here this writer will acknowledge that specific expectations are created by the above discussion: in particular, that this writer can offer a sufficiently compelling approximation of the “whole picture” with regard to the challenges which we are facing—and that this writer can provide suggestions for how we can arrive at **knowing** that our efforts will be enough to resolve those challenges. And here he will assure readers that he intends to fulfill those expectations. But first, it will be helpful to consider one additional comment from Dr. Peter R. Orszag, this one from the blog he provides as Director of the Congressional Budget Office (from September 25, 2008):

“As I stated in my testimony yesterday before the House Budget Committee, the current crisis is fundamentally one of collapsing confidence in the financial markets and ‘providing more transparency about the lack of solvency at specific institutions may be necessary to restore trust in the financial system.’ In other words, to restore confidence, participants in the financial markets need more clarity about which institutions are solvent and which are not. To the extent proposals like the Treasury one can accomplish this end, it would be a step toward resolving the crisis, not worsening it.” (see above reference, paragraph 3)

As a way of expanding on the above observation, this writer would add that *everyone* would be more confident if there was also more clarity about which institutions—*of every kind*—were more likely to be solvent **in the future**, and which less likely. But unless we can see into the future somehow, how can we be sure which institutions are more likely to be solvent in the future? This writer believes that even though we cannot see into the future, **we can achieve**

much more clarity than we have now about which institutions—of every kind—are more likely to be solvent in the future. We can do so by being more honest and truthful in our public discourse. In our own personal lives, honesty, responsibility, transparency and confidence are all mutually supportive... we must find ways to inspire, encourage, and support honesty, responsibility, and transparency in our public discourse. Returning to the “electricity” metaphor, when the “power stations” are more honest, responsible, and transparent, the “current” more naturally flows to the institutions which are most critical to overcoming the challenges ahead.

We are living in very complex and challenging times. Currently, here in the United States, the crisis in the financial markets has become the challenge regarded as most in need of urgent resolution. However, there are other crises which are also in need of urgent resolutions, both here in the United States, and in other parts of the world. This writer identifies the following five challenges as sufficient to suggest that we—collectively—are in urgent need of problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before:

- a) global warming and reducing carbon emissions
- b) peak oil and reducing dependence on petroleum based products
- c) global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death
- d) an increasing world population requiring more resources when many resources are becoming more scarce (*with a special emphasis on the increasing number of people who are consuming resources and ecological services indiscriminately*)
- e) there still seems to be a majority of people on the planet who do not have a clear understanding, well-grounded in personal experience, of which basic elements of community life and cultural traditions lead to mutually beneficial understandings, which lead to cycles of violence—and why it is so important for people to achieve clarity on this subject.

There may be many readers who disagree with the emphasis on these particular challenges. Those readers may then just consider the above list *as an example* which will serve to illustrate how we can answer the question raised above: “Can we really **know** which institutions are more likely to be solvent in the future, and which are less likely?” Here is how we can **know**. Earlier in this essay, this writer stated the following:

“... *true confidence* is built up because people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing. In accordance with this point of view, confidence is dissipating rather than being built up—particularly in the United States—because our public discourse does not honestly and truthfully identify enough of the actual challenges we are now facing for all of us—collectively—to **know** that our efforts will be enough to overcome them.”

The above challenges identified by this writer may or may not be the challenges other people would identify as the five challenges most in need of urgent resolution, but the most important points to be made here are as follows:

- 1) if public discourse does not honestly and truthfully identify enough of the actual challenges we are now facing for all of us—collectively—to **know** that our efforts will be enough to overcome them—how will it ever be possible to build **true confidence**?
- 2) if our public discourse does succeed in bringing to the forefront enough of the actual challenges we are now facing—and also contributes to the creation of a greater force (in the form of high levels of citizen participation in local, regional, national, and international action plans) than the actual challenges—then we will have established a high degree of *true confidence* about what institutions will be more likely to be solvent in the future (*i.e. the ones which will be most helpful to us in overcoming the challenges ahead*).

What then do we need to do? We need our public discourse to be as honest, responsible, and transparent as possible, so we can identify, nurture, support, and sustain ways to build a collective force greater than the challenges we are now facing. The remaining part of this essay will focus on how we, collectively—through the efforts we can make in the everyday circumstances of our lives (by deliberately focusing our time, energy, and money)—can become that greater force.

Creating a Multiplier Effect of a Positive Nature: The “1000Communities²” Proposal

In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative that 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. (For source references, see p. 8)

This writer has recently created a 161 page proposal which expands on the community building tools used in the above mentioned Community Visioning effort, and which is tailored specifically so that it will be possible for communities of people to overcome even the most profound challenges. The proposal is titled “1000Communities²”.

The “1000Communities²” proposal advocates organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives in 1000 communities (communities—or segments of rural areas, towns, or cities—with populations of 50,000 or less) around the world

1. which are time-intensive, lasting even as much as 1½ years (18 months), so as to give as much importance to developing a close-knit community as it does to
 - a) accumulating and integrating the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the highest percentage of people to act wisely in response to challenges identified as priority challenges
 - b) helping people to deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges
 - c) assisting with outreach, partnership formation, and development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations, businesses, institutions, and government agencies
 - d) helping to build a high level of consensus for specific action plans, which will help inspire additional support from people, businesses, organizations, institutions, and government agencies with significant resources

2. which expand on the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization) so that such local community points of entry function as information clearinghouses, meeting locations, educational centers for ongoing workshops (on a broad range of topics related to the Community Visioning Process, and to building the local knowledge base), practice sites for developing “teacher-leaders”, a location for an ongoing “informal” “Community Journal”, a location for listing employment opportunities—and provide a means of responding quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

3. and which suggest—as a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings—that communities (with the resources to do so) enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.

What are Community Visioning Initiatives?

Here it may be necessary to pause for a moment... for there is good reason to imagine that there are many people who do not know what a Community Visioning Initiative is. Unfortunately, at this particular point in time, there seems to be *many* important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” Thus, this writer believes it may be very helpful, as a supplement to the above proposal description, to offer in this place a brief “primer” on Community Visioning Initiatives. This “primer” is an excerpt from the “1000Communities²” proposal, mentioned above. It is worth noting that although there are at least 100 cities and towns in the United States

which have carried out strategic visioning initiatives or community visioning initiatives, and although some of these initiatives have been time-intensive as suggested by the above proposal, there have not been any such initiatives—that this writer is aware of—which identify community visioning initiatives as a “centerpiece” for problem solving as it might relate to the five challenges listed above... and thus as a “centerpiece” for helping us—collectively—to become a greater force than the challenges we are now facing.

Here is the excerpt from the “1000Communities2” proposal, offered as a brief “primer” on Community Visioning Initiatives.

[beginning of excerpt...]

[From Section 3—“A Summary of the Potential of Community Visioning Initiatives”]
(see pages 5-9 in the “1000Communities2” proposal)

A. What are Community Visioning Initiatives?

1. Well organized efforts to identify problems and brainstorm solutions are a universally recognized approach to problem solving which is commonly used in family, community, business, and government settings in every part of the world.
2. In its most basic format, a Community Visioning Initiative (CVI) is simply a more comprehensive variation of the above mentioned approach to problem solving.
3. Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are especially useful as a means of increasing or maximizing citizen participation in the planning phase of community revitalization efforts.
4. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative that 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. (For source references, see p. 8)
5. Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) 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.
6. Many CVIs have followed a model which has three basic steps, and which requires 3 to 6 months to complete (this is a variation of the “Oregon Model”; for source reference, see p. 9 of the “1000Communities²” proposal):

a) Where are we now? (or What are we now?)

An assessment which incorporates:
Community Values
Strengths and Weaknesses

Most Difficult Challenges

Most Valuable Resources

b) Where do we want to go? (or What do we want to be?)

Brainstorming and strategic planning sessions which involve:

Brainstorming Positive or Desirable Community Improvements

Developing these Ideas into Practical Goals

Prioritizing the Goals

c) How can we get there?

Brainstorming and/or focus group sessions which answer the questions:

What action plans will help us achieve our goals?

Who will implement the action plans?

How will they be implemented? (With what funding?)

How will we know if our efforts are achieving the desired results?

7. Many CVIs 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.

8. This “1000Communities²” proposal incorporates input from many different fields of activity, and emphasizes a time-intensive approach to Community Visioning, which may take up to 1^{1/2} years (18 months) to complete. (For more details, see Section 6 “A 15 Step Outline for a ‘1000Communities²’ Version of a Community Visioning Initiative” of the “1000Communities²” proposal.)

[end of excerpt]

An Additional Note: The “1000Communities²” version of a Community Visioning Initiative includes a step (Step 12) which is described as follows: “Summary Presentations and Job Fairs”. Here is an excerpt relating to job fairs, from p. 39 of the “1000Communities²” proposal: “The job fairs which come at the end of the CVI 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...”

If even a few....

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” Community Visioning Initiatives can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as

this community building tool encourages and facilitates the creation of a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) solutions to the most difficult (*in the view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) challenges can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of people’s time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money. The result can be a deliberate increase in the “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to overcoming the challenges identified by residents as priority challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

If even a few of these kind of Community Visioning Initiatives generated results similar to those achieved by the Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) Visioning Initiative carried out in 1984 (see references in both of the last two sections of this essay), people in all parts of the world—keenly attuned when it comes to resolving challenges which require urgent solutions at all levels of society— *could be* inspired to carry out similar Community Visioning Initiatives. And if many communities carried out similar initiatives, and also achieved significant results, our collective capacity to resolve the challenges of our times *would surely* begin to accumulate at an accelerating rate.

Concluding Comments

“...the soundness of ideas must be tested finally by their practical application. When they fail in this—that is, when they cannot be carried out in everyday life producing lasting harmony and satisfaction and giving real benefit to all concerned—to oneself as well as to others—no ideas can be said to be sound and practical.”

[D.T. Suzuki, from *Essays in Zen Buddhism* 1st Series Grove Press
New York 1961 p. 317 (Originally published in 1949)]

Are our economic and financial markets based on sound and practical principles? Are our government and educational institutions being honest, responsible, and transparent about the challenges we are now facing, so that we may be *truly confident* that our efforts will be enough to overcome the challenges of our times? Which institutions—*of every kind*—will be more likely to be solvent and sustainable into the foreseeable future, and which less likely?

The above mentioned “1000Communities²” proposal suggests one way in which a significant majority of people can attain a high degree of *true confidence* that economic and financial markets, government and educational institutions—and all other fields of activity which have a significant role in determining the quality of everyday community life—are based on sound and practical principles, and are likely to be solvent and sustainable into the foreseeable future.

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets which supply the “ways of earning a living”. All of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges in the months and years ahead. Communities of people can deliberately create countless “ways of earning a living” which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times. *We—collectively—can become a greater force than the challenges we are now facing.*

Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world. A combination of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” and “sister community” relationships can bring to light the many truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill in your community and region, and contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... 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: In light of the urgent need to increase collaboration between diverse communities of people, anyone may access all IPCR documents (including the above mentioned 161 page “1000Communities²” proposal) for free, at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (www.ipcri.net). In addition, this writer has created an “Educational Materials Outreach Package” which introduces the “1000Communities²” proposal, and which is also accessible for free (see the bottom of The IPCR Initiative homepage).]

The IPCR Initiative:

(from the document “30 Different IPCR Business Cards”)

Responding to the challenges of: global warming and reducing carbon emissions; peak oil and reducing dependence on petroleum based products; global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death; an increasing number of people using resources and ecological services indiscriminately; and the need for more proactive and preventative peacebuilding

Introducing the “1000Communities²” Proposal:

“1000Communities²” advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” with ongoing workshops, and “sister community” relationships, as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

The “1000Communities²” Proposal

Creating a Multiplier Effect of a Positive Nature

Introduction

In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative that 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. (For source references, see p. 8)

Many Difficult Challenges Ahead

We now live in very complex and challenging times. More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that all of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a number of very serious challenges, which include (but are not limited to):

- a) global warming and reducing carbon emissions
- b) peak oil and reducing dependence on petroleum based products
- c) global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death
- d) an increasing world population requiring more resources when many resources are becoming more scarce (*with a special emphasis* on the increasing number of people who are consuming resources and ecological services *indiscriminately*)
- e) there still seems to be a majority of people on the planet who do not have a clear understanding, well-grounded in personal experience, of which basic elements of community life and cultural traditions lead to mutually beneficial understandings, which lead to cycles of violence—and why it is so important for people to achieve clarity on this subject.

In addition, a crisis of confidence in the financial markets, which began in the United States, could be an indicator of fundamental problems in the structure of economic systems worldwide, and could spread to become a global financial crisis.

The “1000Communities²” Proposal

One suggestion which could assist in bringing many solutions to light at the local community level is a 161 page proposal by this writer titled “1000Communities²”.

The “1000Communities²” proposal advocates organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives in 1000 communities (communities—or segments of rural areas, towns, or cities—with populations of 50,000 or less) around the world

1. which are time-intensive, lasting even as much as 1½ years (18 months), so as to give as much importance to developing a close-knit community as it does to
 - a) accumulating and integrating the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the highest percentage of people to act wisely in response to challenges identified as priority challenges
 - b) helping people to deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges
 - c) assisting with outreach, partnership formation, and development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations, businesses, institutions, and government agencies
 - d) helping to build a high level of consensus for specific action plans, which will help inspire additional support from people, businesses, organizations, institutions, and government agencies with significant resources
2. which expand on the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization) so that such local community points of entry function as information clearinghouses, meeting locations, educational centers for ongoing workshops (on a broad range of topics related to the Community Visioning Process, and building the local knowledge base), practice sites for developing “teacher-leaders”, a location for an ongoing “informal” “Community Journal”, a location for listing employment opportunities—and provide a means of responding quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise
3. and which suggest—as a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings—that communities (with the resources to do so) enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.

If even a few....

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” Community Visioning Initiatives can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as this community building tool encourages and facilitates the creation of a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) solutions to the most difficult (*in the view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) challenges can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of people’s time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money. The result can be a deliberate increase in the “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to overcoming the challenges identified by residents as priority challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

If even a few of these kind of Community Visioning Initiatives generated results similar to those achieved by the Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) Visioning Initiative carried out in 1984 (“Vision 2000”)(see reference in first paragraph), people in all parts of the world—keenly attuned when it comes to resolving challenges which require urgent solutions at all levels of society— *could be* inspired to carry out similar Community Visioning Initiatives. And if many communities carried out similar initiatives, and also achieved significant results, our collective capacity to resolve the challenges of our times *would surely* begin to accumulate at an accelerating rate.

Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world. A combination of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” and “sister community” relationships can bring to light the many truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill in your community and region, and contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... 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: In light of the urgent need to increase collaboration between diverse communities of people, anyone may access all IPCR documents (including the above mentioned 161 page “1000Communities²” proposal) for free, at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (www.ipcri.net). With Kind Regards, Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator The IPCR Initiative P.O. Box 163 Leesburg, Virginia 20178 (USA)].

Integrating Spiritual Wisdom into the Everyday Circumstances of Community Life
(Appendix 6 from the “1000Communities²” proposal, see p. 151-155)

A. Introduction

1. Appendix 4 provides evidence of a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. This profound and critical need is especially urgent when viewed as only a part of the challenges listed in Appendix 1 [the “Ten Point Assessment” accessible on the left side of the homepage of The IPCR Initiative (at www.ipcri.net)].

2. And yet arriving at a full appreciation of the difficulty of our current circumstances is an unpredictable and potentially dangerous proposition, as arriving at such a point *without also having* sufficient faith and wisdom—and access to appropriate resources—could be overwhelming, and could lead to many people losing hope and becoming desperate. After all, consider that in one of the documents which has assisted many people to a fuller awareness of the implications of “peak oil” (the “Hirsch Report”), the suggestion is made that successful risk management of such a profound change in human affairs will require that large scale mitigation activity commence ten years before the actual “peak” occurs.¹

How much more time, might we imagine, will be needed for the profound changes in human affairs necessary to overcome all the challenges described in Appendix 1?

B. “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

1. 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 faiths and moral “world views”.

2. Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.

3. *And yet...* 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

- a) place a high priority on the development of truth, virtue, love, and peace—and live disciplined lives for the purpose of adhering to truth, cultivating virtue and love, and maintaining the pathways to enduring peace

- b) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- c) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- d) 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
- e) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance
- f) support community life and cultural traditions which ‘... bring to the fore what is often hidden: 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.’”

What can we do—at this particular point in time—in the everyday circumstances of our lives, to bring the best ideas *from* the storehouses of accumulated wisdom now accessible to us and “*through the mist*”, so that our community building processes will be most effective in helping us overcome the challenges of our times?

C. The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative

1. This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The IPCR Initiative.
2. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to apply the accumulated wisdom now accessible to us towards the general goal of integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life—and towards the specific goal of generating practical responses to the challenges of our times.
3. The IPCR Initiative is aware of an urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people; both as a response to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil—and to be proactive about individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, and the creation of ecologically sustainable communities.
4. The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—*and the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

5. Assessments of the challenges of our times such as the one offered in Appendix 1 provide evidence that there is a profound and critical need for human beings—collectively—to be

- a) much more organized and deliberate about “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: 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.”
- b) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
- c) much more resourceful in the use of the storehouses of accumulated wisdom and “embodied energy” which are now accessible to us.

6. Specifically, the contributions The IPCR Initiative hopes to make along the lines described by the three goals listed above are as follows:

- a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of this “1000Communities²” proposal—so that the Community Visioning Initiatives take place in as many ways and in as many communities as possible
- b) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts through workshops offered at the local community level
- c) actively develop the concept of “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”, administer such questionnaires at the community and/or regional level, and then share compilations of the responses (with summary and conclusions)
- d) help to establish, and contribute to, local community points of entry acting as “clearinghouses”, where residents can discover more about the countless number of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- e) identify, develop, and create enough descriptions and examples of the 105 fields of activity

and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional good news, workshop and conference listings, committee reports, resource reviews, letters to the editor, “community journal” postings, and links to other useful information and organizations

to justify monthly local community specific publications of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter (or a similar publication with a different name....)

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

f) combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts—such as those in “A List of Related Fields of Activity” (see Appendix 7)—and thus assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building and development of service capacity associated with a significant number of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, all at the same time.

7. The IPCR Initiative is providing this assistance as a result of believing that any community of people, however small in numbers, who follow through on most or all of the practical assistance described in the seven steps mentioned above, will contribute a “multiplier effect” of a positive nature on *whatever goals are decided on at the local community and regional levels.*

D. Filling in the Blank

1. This writer believes that the “multiplier effect” of a positive nature referred to above will contribute to

a) re-affirming the real treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions

b) demonstrating the truth of the following propositions

i) There are countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

ii) People can, one by one, decide to deliberately focus the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on many or all of the action plans which emerge from Community Visioning Initiatives.

iii) The result can be that there are countless ‘ways to earn a living’ which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

and thus create many meaningful answers to the challenge of filling in the blank in the following statement:

In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, friends, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

E. Ongoing Revitalization of a Communities’ “Moral Compass”

How can local communities arrive at practical definitions of “right livelihood”? What local institutions would be most appropriate as commissioners and overseers of a resource guide to “right livelihood”? How can leaders at the regional and local community level assure residents that they understand the challenges of our times, if they themselves do not participate in the very activities they advocate for overcoming the challenges of our times? How can our communities change “the way things get done” so that more people can live in accordance with their moral convictions? Workshops associated with The IPCR Initiative can identify, discover, create, support, and sustain comprehensive and practical answers to these very relevant questions—and provide a system by which the answers can be re-evaluated and re-stated on an ongoing basis. *Therefore, it may be said that by its very nature The IPCR Initiative includes a built-in and ongoing process for re-evaluating and re-stating the “moral compass” of a community or region.* And it may also be said that such a “moral compass” would incorporate any genuine and sincere contributions from participants associated with any religious, spiritual, or moral tradition without any damage to the genuine and sincere parts of the “framework” which gives meaning to their lives.

F. Our Particular Moment in Time on This Planet Earth *Could Be* the Best of Times

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” The IPCR Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as it encourages and facilitates a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in the view of the participants using these processes*) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of peoples’ time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals, and on other related fields of activity (see Appendix 7). As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

One of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness “to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it”—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a “way to earn a living” providing such assistance. The IPCR Initiative can help to remedy such an unfortunate irony by helping to create “caring communities”, which are defined here as follows:

“Caring communities” are communities with residents who are aware of the depth and range of the challenges of our times, and therefore do their best

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

to take actions which will have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals (see p. 32), and on other related fields of activity (see p. 33).

The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.

Our particular moment in time on this Planet Earth *could be* the best of times.

G. Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form

Peacebuilding in its most compassionate form is not a competitive field of activity. Viewed in this light, the most valuable forms of peacebuilding will nurture, support, and sustain the development of an infinite variety of other forms of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecologically sustainability initiatives. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form.

Notes and Source References (relating to Appendix 6)

1. From the “Hirsch Report” [“The Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation and Risk Management”—Project Leader: Robert L. Hirsch (SAIC) Commissioned by the Department of Energy, and dated February, 2005] [Accessible at the website of Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD)(USA) at www.bartlett.house.gov/EnergyUpdates/ (Accessed August 24, 2007)] (see Point #3: “Oil Peaking Presents a Unique Challenge”; on p. 64).

The IPCR Initiative:

(from the document “30 Different IPCR Business Cards”)

Expanding the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” so that these community centers function as resource centers, meeting places, educational centers where workshops are offered, practice sites for the development of “teacher leaders”, and clearinghouses on how residents can deliberately channel their time, energy, and money

Offering a new definition of job fairs (in “1000Communities²”):

“The job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process provide opportunities for all key stakeholders in the community to demonstrate their upgraded awareness—and their interest in the welfare of the community—by offering and facilitating new employment opportunities...”

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

About IPCR Workshops

[Note: This content is a reproduction of the content in the “Workshops” section of The IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net)]

On the Content and Focus of IPCR Workshops

In general, IPCR workshops will provide an overview of evidence supporting the need for an IPCR Initiative [see the document “An Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”)], and provide an introduction to some or all of The Eight IPCR Concepts.

The Eight IPCR Concepts are:

“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”

[Note: Here is a link to the pdf document ["Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts"](#). This document can also be accessed in the "All IPCR Documents" section of the IPCR website's homepage.]

Specifically, IPCR workshop discussion can “branch out” using—as starting points—content from “The IPCR Workshop Primer”. Here are some examples of content from “The IPCR Workshop Primer” which can be used as starting points for workshop discussion:

- 1) the 10 goals in “The IPCR Mission Statement”
- 2) the “105 Related Fields of Activity”
- 3) the 4 parts of the “IPCR Vision Statements”
- 4) the “23 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative”
- 5) the 60 sample questions in the “Building Caring Communities” Questionnaire
- 6) the 79 Inspiring Role Models
- 7) the 75 Service-Oriented Initiatives

In addition to focusing on material provided by the “The IPCR Workshop Primer”, IPCR workshop discussions can also be supplemented by other material at this IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net), by comments contributed to the IPCR Community Journal (at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ipcri/>), by material associated with the 105 Related Fields of Activity (see p. 33 of this issue), and by other related material accessible through the Internet, or

by personal experience. There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not yet been done. There is much potential which can be explored in the context of IPCR Workshop discussion.

Encouraging and Facilitating a “Constellation” of Initiatives

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” The IPCR Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as The Eight IPCR Concepts encourage and facilitate a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in the view of the participants using these processes*) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of peoples time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on the goals listed in the IPCR Mission Statement, and on many or all of the “105 related fields of activity”. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

Workshops introducing The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”) can be a starting point for many practical collective efforts, based and sustained at the local community and regional level, and representing contributions towards the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. This writer is confident that applying these concepts—at the local community and regional level—will provide for each of us more and more opportunities to contribute towards such goals, more and more understanding about why we would want to contribute—and more and more opportunities to encourage and support each other in the process.

Location, Cost, Facilitators

Workshops providing an introduction to The IPCR Initiative—and to some or all of The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”)—are now being offered in the Leesburg, Virginia area.

Facilitation services for IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops are currently offered at a rate of \$75 for a 1 hour workshop, \$100 for a 2 hour workshop, \$150 for a 3 hour workshop, and \$200 for a 4 hour workshop. (Longer workshops will have greater variety in the approach, structure, and content of the workshop experience.) The recommended number of participants for workshops is 5-15 people. [i.e. If there are 5 participants for a 2 hour workshop, the cost would be \$20 for each participant; if there are 15 participants for a 3 hour workshop, the cost would be \$10 for each participant.] Currently, the only person facilitating IPCR Workshops is the founder of the IPCR Initiative, Stefan Pasti. (For more information about Stefan Pasti, see “IPCR Staff” in “About the IPCR Initiative”)

The cost, suggested by The IPCR Initiative, of attending such workshops is deliberately affordable, to emphasize and encourage frequent participation. Participating in IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops at intervals—over a long period of time—will make it possible for participants to come in contact with a valuable variety of input and experiences relating not only to the IPCR concepts, but to many other efforts associated with peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability.

The location of IPCR Workshops will be determined according to demand-- and according to availability of public access community use buildings.

For more information, please contact:

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The IPCR Initiative:

(from the document “30 Different IPCR Business Cards”)

Contributing to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, 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.

Because one of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness “to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it”—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a “way to earn a living” providing such assistance.

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

The IPCR Mission Statement

The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative is an effort to facilitate the practical application of the Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”)—at the community and regional level—as a way of contributing to the following goals:

- 1) “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: 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.”
- 2) increasing our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individual spiritual formation—with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc.
- 3) building trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions
- 4) increasing our capacity to be responsible stewards of our time, energy, and money
- 5) increasing our capacity to access what is necessary for basic human needs and quality of life through principles and practices of ecological sustainability and permaculture, especially in light of the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil
- 6) increasing our awareness of the countless number of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in our own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- 7) reducing the incidence of violence—and all the costs associated with war
- 8) increasing emergency assistance to people with basic human needs
- 9) reflecting an understanding of the value of silence
- 10) creating local community and regional publications that provide a format for sharing the good news which would be identified, encouraged, supported, and sustained by contributions to the first 9 goals

The IPCR Initiative:

(from the document “30 Different IPCR Business Cards”)

Bringing to the fore what has 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 faiths and moral “world views”.

Because an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings is not, currently, widely recognized as an essential and critical element of a truly comprehensive response to the challenges of our times.

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

A List of Related Fields of Activity

[which are in some way—or which are in many ways—
related to the goals of The IPCR Mission Statement (see p. 32)]

accountability indicators, alleviating hunger, alleviating poverty, alternative gifts, appropriate technology, barter networks, biodynamic agriculture, building civic skills, building community, car-free zones, character education, citizen participation, citizen peacebuilding, co-housing, community banks, community development, community economics, community gardens, community good news networks, community journals, community land trusts, community membership agreements, community revitalization, community revolving loans, community self-awareness, community service work, community supported agriculture, community supported manufacturing, community visioning initiatives, consensus decision making, cottage industries, creative commons, cultural diversity, development assistance, disease control, eco-classifieds, ecological architecture, ecological footprint analysis, ecological tipping points, economic conversion, edible schoolyards, emergency humanitarian aid, emergency medical assistance, energy conservation, energy descent pathways, energy farms, fair trade, faith-based educational institutions, faith mentoring, farmers markets, food co-ops, green living, green politics, green purchasing, green retrofitting, holistic health care, homesteading, identifying problems and solutions, inclusive decision-making processes, individual spiritual formation, inspiring role models, interfaith dialogue, interfaith peacebuilding, intergenerational projects, local community points of entry, local currency, locally based food processing, locally grown organic food, low impact transport systems, medical assistance, meditation, mentoring, neighborhood revitalization, non-profit human service organizations, non-violent conflict resolution, oil depletion protocol, peace studies programs, peak oil, permaculture, positive news, powerdown projects, preventative health care, questionnaire construction, recycling, relocalization, renewable resources, right livelihood, right livelihood employment listings, rural renaissance, socially engaged spirituality, socially responsible investing, solutions journalism, spiritual discipline, spiritual diversity, spiritual friendships, spiritually responsible investing, sustainable health care, vegetarian nutrition, village design, village industries, violence prevention, voluntary simplicity, water conservation, win-win conflict resolution, world population awareness, yoga, zero waste, etc.

The Potential for a Wide Range of Workshop Offerings

The IPCR Initiative is currently offering workshops with the goal of introducing The IPCR Initiative, and The Eight IPCR Concepts—and the goal of making the resources of The IPCR Initiative as accessible as possible, so people can make use of them. There does exist, however—and it is worth emphasizing here in this issue—both the need and the potential for people (including myself) to provide workshops at the local community level on all of the 105 fields of activity listed above, so people can make best use of *resources associated with those concepts*. Such a wide range of workshop offerings would, I believe, be most accessible as workshop offerings from some kind of community center. If there are any readers of this IPCR Journal/Newsletter who would be interested in developing the idea of a community center for such a “wide range of workshop offerings,” please contact me—Stefan Pasti—at stefanpasti@ipcri.net. Thank you.

“The more we realize the repercussions of our actions on our neighbours and strive to act according to the highest we are capable of, the more shall we advance in our spiritual development.” [J.C. Kumarappa in “Why The Village Movement?” Rajchat, Kashi (India) 1960 p. 73]

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets
that supply the “ways of earning a living.” (SP)

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Notes and Source References

(relating to quotations and excerpts on p. 1)

1. From the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 *Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*” Director and Lead Author: Kevin Watkins Published for the United Nations Development Program Released November 27, 2007 In “Summary” of Complete Report (See http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_summary_english.pdf for free download) On p. 19, in section “Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: Strategies for Mitigation” paragraph 1 (Confirmed June 1, 2008)
2. From Lester Brown’s “*Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*” Published by Earth Policy Institute 2008 (See <http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/Contents.htm> for free download) From “Introduction”, in section “Plan B—A Plan of Hope” p. 20, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 (Confirmed June 13, 2008)
3. From an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online). Published April 10, 2008 (at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/opinion/10thu1.html>) (see paragraph 3) (Confirmed June 13, 2008)
4. From an article titled “Global Recession Fears Intensify” by Patricia Zengerie, published on the website of the Reuters News Agency on October 24, 2008 (at <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE49N5VU20081024>) (Confirmed October 24, 2008)
5. From an article titled “The Green New Deal” by Richard Heinberg, published on the website of Energy Bulletin on October 20, 2008 (at <http://energybulletin.net/node/46934>). (Confirmed October 24, 2008) (Initially published on October 20, 2008 by Post Carbon Institute).

About the Writer and Editor of this Issue

Currently, the writer and editor for The IPCR Journal/Newsletter is Stefan Pasti. Mr. Pasti has been actively involved in peacebuilding and community revitalization work for over 20 years— as a writer (project-related correspondence, short novel, short story); an editor (newsletters, quotation collections); an advocate of ecologically sustainable communities; a practitioner of voluntary simplicity; and, more recently, as founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (www.ipcri.net). Mr. Pasti has been employed in many different settings—door-to-door canvasser for citizen action groups; field worker on organic farms; activity director, companion, and transportation provider for elders with special needs; etc. The most important influence in Mr. Pasti’s life has been, and continues to be, the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba (age 81, with a main residence in Puttaparthi, India). In 1997, Mr. Pasti completed a 301 page arrangement of selected quotations from “Sathya Sai Speaks” (Vol. 1-11, first U.S. editions) (discourses by Sri Sathya Sai Baba from the years 1953-1982).

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