It is time for a new story! A story that will create relationships and community for the common good. In this issue of A Matter of Spirit we explore emerging stories for a new way of living into our interdependent future. Our current systems from economic to ecological, ecclesial to cultural and political are built on outmoded myths.

We invite you to bring yourself into this moment of the great turning and ask:

What is the vision I hold that has the potential to transform our community? What will inspire me to participate in the well-being of the whole?

As you read this issue ponder the possibilities and then consider gathering with others to explore the dreams and gifts you hold in common for living a new story!

"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." —Aurndhati Roy
By David Korten

Following World War II, we in the United States made Gross Domestic Product (GDP) our primary indicator of economic progress and encouraged the world to do the same. As global GDP grew, we took the growth as proof that we had unlocked the secret of limitless wealth for all and assured ourselves that poverty would soon be history.

We are now awakening to a harsh reality. To grow economies, we aggressively increased the atmosphere’s carbon burden, clear-cut Earth’s forests, decimated Earth’s fisheries, strip-mined Earth’s mountains, and contaminated Earth’s soils and waters with deadly toxins. GDP grew and Earth’s capacity to support life declined.

We humans now consume at a rate 1.6 times what Earth can sustain and the wealth of the world’s 60 richest billionaires now equals that of the poorest half of humanity—3.5 billion people who struggle for survival on incomes of $2.50 or less per day.

Human Choices

This dramatic system failure is of our own making—a result of three disastrously bad choices:

We claimed the right to dominate nature.

We embraced the worship of money.

We subordinated democratically elected governments to a system of global rule by money-seeking transnational corporations.

In these choices, we have ignored three essential and obvious realities:

We are living beings born of and nurtured by a living Earth.

Money is merely a number. It cannot feed our bodies or quench our thirst.

Life exists only in communities that self-organize to create and maintain conditions essential to their own existence.

One consequence is a suicide economy that is destroying the social and environmental foundations of human existence to make money for those who already have more than they need.

Among the daunting implications, we must leave the remaining fossilized carbons in the ground and resequester much of the carbons already released, cut our current aggregate material consumption by more than a third, and redistribute the human share of Earth’s available bounty to assure every person access to the material essentials of a healthy and fulfilling life.

Success requires:

A cultural transition from seeking happiness in material excess to seeking happiness in material sufficiency and spiritual abundance, and

An institutional transition from a global system of imperial corporate rule to a global system of deeply democratic, self-governing, materially self-reliant, place-based communities.

Together we have the knowledge and the communications technologies required. But everything must change, time is of the essence, and we have no map for no one has been where we must now together go. Creating the new culture and institutions cannot be imposed by fiat. They can be created only through the self-organizing bottom-up processes by which life organizes and by which a living Earth economy will organize.

Humanity is reawakening to the spiritual truth that we find our greatest happiness in the loving relationships of healthy families and communities.

Earth as a Living Household

The word economy derives from the Greek οἶκος meaning “household” of “family.” The word economics derives from ὠικονομία meaning “household management.”

Earth is the living household to which we all belong and on which the wellbeing of all beings depends. We must restore its health and share its bounty to meet the needs of all.

Humanity is reawakening to the spiritual truth that we find our greatest happiness in the loving relationships of healthy families and communities.
life energy from fueling the institutions of the suicide economy to nourishing the emerging structures and processes of a living Earth economy. As we share and live the story, we bring it into our collective awareness to give expression in new priorities, new rules, and new rights.

**A New Story**

From the earliest emergence of human consciousness, we have lived by the stories that embody the common values and understanding we require to organize as coherent groups, tribes, communities, and societies. Our most important stories are those that express our deepest beliefs about our nature, origin, purpose, and what we hold to be sacred—most essential to our well-being.

Society currently organizes around a familiar sacred money and markets story. Economics courses in our most prestigious educational institutions teach this story as settled science. Corporate media constantly celebrates it. Yet its every claim is false, a fabrication created and promoted to serve interests contrary to our common interest.

The transition to a living economy begins with a sacred life and living Earth story grounded in an ancient truth that indigenous people have never forgotten and to which the rest of us are beginning to reawaken.

We humans are living beings birthed and nurtured by a living Earth itself born of a living universe. This truth grounds a sacred life and living Earth story.

Time is life. Real wealth is living wealth. Money is just a number.

**Time is money. Money is wealth. Making money creates wealth, which is the defining purpose of people, business, and the economy. The rich are society’s wealth creators. Their wealth is their just reward. Earth belongs to us. Material consumption is the path to happiness. Poverty is a consequence of laziness.**

The invisible hand of the free market turns individualistic competition into a creative force to grow the economy, create wealth, end poverty, and drive the technological innovation required to eliminate our human dependence on nature. Corporations are people working together to create wealth to the benefit of all and are entitled to fair treatment and the same rights as any person.

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**New Priorities**

The sacred money and markets story supports a global economy devoted to what Pope Francis calls the idolatry of money, the worship of a false god. Seduced by the false promise of happiness through material riches, we turn against the living spirit of creation. Making money becomes our life purpose, shopping a civic duty, markets our moral compass, and institutions of finance our temples of worship. Bankers, hedge fund managers, and corporate CEOs are the moneychangers. And economists are the priests who offer absolution for our personal and collective sins against life and assure us that it is all by God’s will.

We reap what we sow. Choose money as our priority and we reap death as our harvest.

If we are to make life our goal, then we must act as a global community to make life our priority and choose as indicators of the economy’s performance, indicators of the health of nature, families, and communities that reveal terminal economic failure. And we need the support of a

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By Jose Antonio Vargas

Our country is changing. We’re used to conversations about race in Black and White, but a new America is emerging—one that is more multiethnic, more immigrant, more colorful than ever before. In the next 50 years, immigrants and their descendants, largely Latinos and Asians, will make up 88 percent of U.S. population growth. Immigration, yet again, is at the root of our country’s transformation.

I write to you as one of our country’s 11 million undocumented immigrants, many of us Americans at heart, but without the right papers to show for it. Too often, we’re treated as abstractions, faceless and nameless, subjects of debate rather than individuals with families, hopes, fears, and dreams.

I am in America because of the sacrifices of my family. My grandparents legally emigrated from the Philippines to Silicon Valley in the mid-1980s. A few years later, Grandpa Teofilò became a U.S. citizen and legally changed his name to Ted—after Ted Danson in “Cheers.” Because grandparents cannot petition for their grandkids—and because my mother could not come to the United States—Grandpa saved up money to get his only grandson, me, a passport and green card to come to America. My mother gave me up to give me a better life.

I arrived in Mountain View, California, on August 3, 1993. One of my earliest memories was singing the National Anthem as a 6th grader at Crittenden Middle School, believing the song had somehow something to do with me. I thought the first lines were, “Jose, can you see?”

Four years later, I applied for a driver’s permit like any 16 year-old. That was when I discovered that the green card that my grandpa gave me was fake. But I wanted to work. I wanted to contribute to a country that is now my home. At age 17, I decided to be a journalist for a seemingly naïve reason: if I am not supposed to be in America because I don’t have the right kind of papers, what if my name—my byline—was on the paper? How can they say I don’t exist if my name is in newspapers and magazines?

I thought I could write my way into America. As I built a successful career as a journalist—paying Social Security and state and federal taxes along the way—as fear and shame, as denial and pain, enveloped me—words became my salvation. I found solace in the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King, quoting St. Augustine: “An unjust law is no law at all.”

Ultimately, it took me 12 years to come out as an undocumented American—because that is what I am, an American. But I am grateful to have been able to tell the truth. And in the past few years, more undocumented people, particularly young DREAMers, are coming out. Telling the truth about the America we experience.

The public space where we tell our stories—the media—isn’t keeping up. The news coverage and television shows we see about race, immigration, and identity only begin to answer the question of who we are as a nation. It is time for mainstream media—and our news coverage—to more directly reflect the nation we are becoming. Consider a few of these statistics:

White Americans are an emerging racial minority in many parts of the country; White students became a minority in K-12 public schools for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year. Latinos are now the country’s largest racial and ethnic minority group, numbering 54 million. In California, 51 percent of all people age 25 and under are Latino. And as California goes, so goes the country. Asians and Pacific Islanders, numbering 18 million, are the fastest-growing racial and immigrant group. Almost...
75% of all Asian adults in the U.S. are immigrants.

The U.S. is home to the largest population of biracial and multiracial people in the world. 1 in 6 new marriages in America are interracial.

As our country’s demographics shift, we also need to change the way we talk about ourselves. There are too many readers, too many voters—too many people—whose stories are not being told. And, too often, when the stories are told, they lack the necessary nuance and context.

We cannot talk about America being a country of immigrants without acknowledging the struggle of Black Americans and Native Americans. We cannot emphasize our commonality without first confronting what makes our experiences different.

The survival of this emerging America requires that we see each other fully, and more humanely.

This government has deported more than 1.6 million people—fathers and mothers, sons and daughters—in the past four years. We dream of contributing to the country we call our home. In 21st century America, diversity is destiny. That I happen to be gay; that I speak Tagalog, my first language, and want to learn Spanish—that does not threaten my love for this country. How interconnected and integrated we are as Americans makes us stronger.

I am the only one in my extended family of 25 Americans who is undocumented. When you inaccurately call me “illegal,” you’re not only dehumanizing me, you’re offending them. No human being is illegal.

The truth is we don’t need pieces of paper—a passport or a green card—to treat each other as human beings. We need to know each other. We need to tell stories in the public sphere—stories in our media and in our entertainment—that reflect the reality of the Emerging American identity.

How is it that during an election year, we still have trouble defining what “American” means? How is it that whenever someone says “immigrant” we think “Mexican”—even though the country’s fastest growing immigrant group are Asians and Pacific Islanders. How is it, in a nation full of creativity and innovation, the best we can come up with for our friends is an “Other” box?

Since outing myself as undocumented in the summer of 2011, I’ve done more than 470 events in 45 states and visited about 210 colleges. I do not think any other journalist and filmmaker has seen more of America than I have in the past four years. And I’ve learned that the stories of an emerging America are largely untold, a new America where Asians and Latinos are remaking the American South—the same South that has been largely defined by the Black and White racial binary, a new America where immigrants rights intersect with #BlackLivesMatter, LGBTQ rights, women’s rights, and income inequality among working class white people.

This new America is living through an unprecedented demographic earthquake unlike anything our country (and the world) has ever seen. You can and should demand that your news diet more accurately reflects the stories of our changing country—and I invite you to join me at www.emergingus.com.

Our ambition for #EmergingUS is to tell the stories of an emerging America, one that’s beyond black and white during this time of tremendous demographic shifts and political transitions. We are creating a new story for this new America: Join us.

Jose Antonio Vargas is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, filmmaker, and media publisher whose work centers on the changing American identity. He is the founder of Define American, a non-profit media and culture organization that seeks to elevate the conversation around immigration and citizenship in America; and the founder and editor of #EmergingUS, a digital platform that lives at the intersection of race, immigration, and identity in a multicultural America.
Recently, I watched a short video of a chick working its way out of its protective shell into expanded life. It was an enjoyable experience for a born-and-bred city person like me who has never seen this process live. I noticed first a tiny crack in the shell and very soft sounds of whimpering and also at the same time a persisting pecking action. Next came a rather large crack and I found myself kind of cheering for the chick and wanting her to get out of the shell now, to break out and come into fuller life now, to shortcut the process so that she would not have to undergo anymore birth pangs. But she didn’t; she kept pecking away until it was time and then she burst forth.

This experience led me to think about how from start to finish this chick came into being. Hens produce eggs almost daily, but of course only the ones fertilized will turn into chicks and the ensuing natural process requires the hen to hover over the egg for about a month, turning it regularly and keeping it warm. But equally important, the chick herself develops an “egg tooth” at the end of her beak which she uses to peck away at the shell and then out of it into her full self. Of course, I also thought about the perennial question: “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” and contemplated the deeper truth underlying that question: that the egg-and-chick life dynamic stretches back to Godlife itself through the Big Bang and evolution.

Our church today—all of us and our leaders—urgently need to bring into being new forms in our organizational structures to make room for the ever expanding Godlife that is “breaking out” today.

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An Evolving Ecclesia

There are some similarities between this chicken and egg process and our ecclesial life today. There has been a lot of birth- ing and dying and rising again in the long history of our church, though at one time it was described as the “the perfect society,” a phrase that persisted well into the twentieth century. In the 1960’s, though, during the Second Vatican Council, we became familiar with another phrase: “ecclesia semper reformanda—the church always reforming.” The recovery of this ancient truth became a key that brought all us through a new door of stretching discoveries about an expanded understanding of who and what our church is, about its new challenges to relate to the contemporary world, about its universal mission to connect in fresh ways with cultures and societies and other religions throughout the world.

I propose that today we add another phrase, “ecclesia ever evolving,” to make room for even bigger and broader expressions of Godlife seeking to burst forth in our age of expanded global consciousness from movements seeking justice, equality and inclusion and also the challenging universal call to live simply, witnessing to the relational communion of God and us and our earth home in an integral ecology, as Pope Francis identifies it. Our
Pushing Out Into Expanded Life

Vatican II so enriched and so challenged all of us with its recovery of the biblical images of church: the temple of God; the vine and its branches alive in time; the people of God; a pilgrim people always moving into holiness; the community of Jesus Christ; the community transformed by the presence of the Holy Spirit; koinonia or the communion of believers expressive of the very relational life of the Trinity; the Body of Christ, “the fullness of him who fills the universe in all its parts” (Eph 1:23). The Council also proclaimed three other biblical teachings, corollaries of the church as the whole people of God, though very new for most pre-Vatican II Catholics: that everyone is called to holiness, that all are called to discipleship, and that all are called to ministry and mission. This foundational teaching gradually took root and the period after the Council saw an emergence of many new forms of lay ministry which led laypersons to achieve degrees in theological education and pastoral and spiritual formation. Many also, including women, became theologians. A new experience of leadership in well informed practice emerged as both women and men became leaders in parish and diocesan and educational institutions.

The Council of course also upheld the episcopal and sacramental ritual character of the church in continuity with their roots in early Christian community developments. But it also promoted two new practices, collegiality and dialogue, as important ways to generate new life into our episcopal structure and our relationship outward with culture and other religions. While these processes continue in our post Vatican II times, might it not also be the time now to employ them more widely in the life of the church itself? Should we not also examine where our ecclesia can be more collegial and more dialogic among all the members?

Instead of issuing proclamations that shut down conversation, is it not time for trust and courage to see how new theological probing in dialogue with scripture and culture can take us into innovating and more inclusive ecclesial deliberation and pastoral practice? There has been plenty of good “egg tooting” going on for several decades now among the whole people of God, and especially among women theologians, in favor of a wider realization of the church as the ever expanding Body of Christ, “the fullness of him who fills the universe in all its parts.”

Godlife Anew Today

Our church is and will remain episcopal in structure, but does that mean that it has to prolong the patriarchal and hierarchical form that presently marks it and the Renaissance palaces that many of its Vatican members inhabit? Scholarship shows that this patriarchal form emerged from the confluence of the Twelve designated as the Apostles in scripture, derived in part from Jewish practice, with the gradual emergence of bishops from presbyters which developed over several generations in early church communities. No doubt that presbyters and then bishops would be male in the Greek and Roman cultures of that time. But today, could we not make the case theologically and pastorally for a more inclusive and representative episcopacy, inclusive of women and married persons?

Such a development in doctrine and practice could unfold, not from an argument of human rights – for ordination is not a right but rather a call – but from one of giving a fuller witness to the fact that all of us are in and of Christ fully through his resurrected life and thus any of us, provided we have the call and the gifts trained and tested, are able to sign this immense and inclusive mystery of Godlife. Imagine extending and enlarging the visible celebration of the Eucharist with such added fullness! Imagine the challenge from such a powerful and effective sign and symbol to societies all around our fractured world where such inclusion does not yet exist, even at the most basic levels and especially for women! Imagine Synod processes that would include elected proven lay leaders with both voice and vote! Yes, our church is not a democracy, but neither is it a perfect society. In its ongoing Christogenesis today, it needs to express much more fully in its symbols, teachings, and practices the ongoing emergence of the Life and Love of our Trinitarian God that is in all of us and that grounds our commitment to extend love, justice and mercy.

Mary Ellen Sheehan is a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters of Monroe, MI. She received a doctorate in theology (STD) from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. Currently, she is Professor Emerita at the University of St. Michael’s College of the Toronto School of Theology where she taught for thirty-five years and resides in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.
A GRAND STRATEGY FOR EVOLVING A NEW WORLD

By John L. Petersen

Humans have entered the most extraordinary transition in the evolution of our species. The outcome will be a new human—a new version of the species, genetically and in terms of capabilities.

This is not the first time that fundamental change has catapulted life into a dramatically different space. In fact, this shift, although the largest and fastest of all shifts (as far as we know), is only the latest in a long series of rapid, dramatic transitions that are a regular structural pattern in our understanding of how life has evolved on planet Earth.

Starting with single cellular life, there emerged multiple celled organisms, which were followed by vertebrates and then mammals. Primitive hominids gave way to early humans and then social, cultural and technological shifts produced organized agriculture, written language, cities and towns, and then movable type—which greatly accelerated and proliferated how ideas moved through the leading edge of development. Computers and the Internet are only the latest in this sequence of breakthroughs that is inexorably rocketing toward the full development of a ‘global brain.’

At the same time, cosmic cycles are converging to generate a confluence of charged energetic particles and magnetic waves coming from the center of our galaxy and our sun that are affecting all of life on the planet by activating previously dormant DNA sequences and producing new human capabilities. The whole mix is complicated by a number of other inputs, not the least of which is Earth’s rapidly collapsing magnetic field. These forces (and others) are driving climate change, the development of breakthrough technologies and extraordinary scientific discoveries, rapid social value shifts and the implosion of almost all of the present systems-economic, financial, energy, governmental, etc. that support and enable the life that is so familiar to us all.

A prerequisite of this remarkable transition is a global mind shift. If people don’t see themselves differently, they’ll do the same things that they have always done and the change will become dystopian. No different outlook no new world. On the other hand, many different sources say that a revolution in perspective will inevitably come perhaps as the result of a catalytic event, or maybe it will transpire over a period of time. But, in any case, people will see themselves and each other in a different light.

The slow motion, systemic collapse will open up a vacuum into which a new world can evolve. Many spiritual sources now say that the endpoint is dear and inevitable the only question is how we get from here to there. It could be relatively smooth or pretty rough. It’s up to us, they say. We’re playing the central roles in the emergence of a new human and a new world.

And that’s where evolution gets particularly interesting. Never before has
the major organism involved in the many historic transitions—whether simple animals or human beings—understood what was happening to and around them or the role that they were playing in the whole epochal shift. In the past, all life surfed the wave into an unknown future, carried along by unseen and little understood forces and having slight, if any, idea about what was going on. 

This time it is fundamentally different.

Humans have the technology, historical perspective and spiritually derived understanding of the whole process such that, for the first time, we have a central role in how this transition plays out. As individuals and groups, we will decide how this amazing new future evolves, and we will do so with knowledge and tools that have never existed before.

The mind shift must be converted into new ways of doing things. We live in a complicated world that will not automatically reconfigure itself to our liking just because we change our minds about things. There is a sequence of requirements—each component dependent upon previous ones—that must be put in place to effectively turn new perspectives into a new world.

Context
We make sense of things only by understanding context. Nothing stands by itself. Everything is connected to many other things. The whole system is very dynamic and constantly changing.

Ideas
It’s one thing to know what needs to be done and quite another to understand how to do it. What we’re talking about here are ideas. You do not build a new world without some new concepts about the fundamentals of what drives and defines this new world. It is different from the past, after all, so there must be some coherent thinking about how it is different in terms of values, principles and perspectives. All of the images in the new tapestry we will build will be woven with threads of basic colors like interconnectivity, sustainability, responsibility, resilience, etc. Once these core informants are identified, then the intellectual scaffolding is in place. Upon this scaffolding, more specific aspects (e.g., energy, agriculture, healthcare, government, economy and education) can be explored and refined.

It all starts with ideas.
If you’re really going to do this, you’ll need a place where it happens. Ideas by themselves may be born in the shower, but they only live and flourish if they have a home where they are nourished. In this new world, there needs to be a physical place as well as a virtual one. Meeting personally with others to work on the issues will provide the efficiency and selectivity that face-to-face groups have always produced. But without very large, global involvement you won’t get global change; you need the Internet as well.

But there must also be a dedicated and specialized location in cyberspace where anyone can come to participate in the new world design process. This needs to be an interesting and engaging place that is fun, entertaining and rewarding. It needs to be constantly moving and changing, morphing with the new ideas and tasks that will be required for the systemic puzzle pieces.

Communications
Great ideas that are not communicated are like humming a tune that no one else can hear.

Because this is fundamentally an emergent process, communications must be bidirectional. Feedback loops must constantly update and upgrade the deliberations. The process will necessarily be sophisticated and interesting, making it easy for individuals to stay informed and become players in the big game. Effective communications are the backbone of the larger network—the global system that needs to be built.

Community
The world is not changed by individuals working alone. Effective communications produce community. As ideas are generated and distributed, like-minded individuals will cluster together, either physically or virtually, to support the underlying interests. In terms of a transition toward a new world, there will be nothing more structurally effective than a network of global communities, all working to develop and implement the fabric of the desired future.

Tools
With all of the inefficiencies and pollution that we produce, it’s obvious that new tools will be required to enable the emergence of the new world. At the same time, humanity has never seen the level of discovery and invention that is happening now.

Focus and timing are two salient issues related to the technological explosion and the emergence of a new world. No matter whether it is energy, communications or agriculture, there will be extraordinary breakthroughs coming our way that have

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I don’t know about you, but after a couple of decades of driving less and taking public transportation more, eating food with a lower carbon footprint, recycling, composting and changing out my lightbulbs, I sometimes feel more than a tad weary these days.

I am tired of the siloed calls to action as we crawl our way toward a very, very slowly-emerging future. My Facebook feed and mailbox are full of specific siren calls: “Save the forests!” “Save the bears!” “No GMOs!” “Bees!” “Birds!” “Frogs!” “Peace!” Every voice represents a canary in the proverbial coal mine, angstily chirping as darkness falls too soon, each voice crying too little, too late.

Our good intentions blunt our best actions.

To find our way forward, it seems to me we need a new kind of sustainability. And to achieve that, we just might need a new kind of spirituality. And we can only find our way to this new spirituality as we embrace a new kind of story that finds room for all of creation at the table, for as Larry Rasmussen pithily puts it, “All the createds are relateds.” What if our canaries found one another, joined their voices and sang the same bright song in rich, vibrant harmony? What might that look like? And what might be the result?

A New Sustainability
The millennial generation seems to have an innate sense of our need for a new sustainability. NPR recently profiled Lisa Curtis, a 26-year-old from Oakland, California.

Her grandmother, Sis Curtis was an avid hiker and at 84 remains a Sierra Club and World Wildlife Fund member. Lisa’s 55-year-old mother, Barb Curtis, drives a hybrid car, roofed her house with solar panels, and avoids using plastic.

Although they aren’t the types to flaunt it, both women would call themselves environmentalists. However, it’s Lisa who truly sets the bar for sustainability in this family. But Lisa refuses to call herself an environmentalist.

“I think the term has been sort of corrupted...politicized,” she says. The very language around issues of sustainability is itself problematic. In conversation, Curtis worries she may hear, “Oh you’re such an environmentalist. You’re not in touch with the real world.”

Clearly, this is in no small part due to the incredible politicization of climate change. But those of us who have been environmentally conscious for some time also have to confess our hubris, mingling our values with hipster culture, using “eco-” as a prefix (ala “eco-tourism”), shopping only in gleaming, bright boutique shops and rushing to trade in our Priuses for the latest electric vehicles. We may have been doing “the right thing,” but it’s been “the cool thing,” too, and every craze finds its backlash in mainstream culture. Every fad waxes and wanes. If our “hipness” has been a problem, so is our insistence that science is on our side. Simply, the facts may not matter.

I have followed an ongoing study at Yale, summarized this way: “Yale study concludes public apathy over climate change unrelated to science literacy.” An avalanche of new and better information around divisive issues like the science of climate change is unlikely to sway people already predisposed to believe or deny it. We tend to adopt or dismiss facts on the basis of what is essentially groupthink. This has to inform the way we address “inconvenient truths” in conversation with others.

Culture trumps science. We need
something deeper to get to this new sustainability. We need conversations at the level of our values and deeply held beliefs. We need a new spirituality.

**A New Spirituality**

The world’s religions, in their multi-varied colors and flavors, are both a help and a hindrance as we reach into the future, striving toward hope. Driving through Portland, Oregon to attend a conference, my wife spied a large pickup with three neatly-spaced bumper stickers. She read them in order:

“*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*”

“*Not perfect, just forgiven.*”

And the kicker: “*Buy a Prius—I need your gas.*”

As a believer who still holds on to the “Evangelical” label by a thread or two, I was not amused. Far too many in my tribe have fallen mindlessly into a Christianized Randism, steeped in dualism, consumerism and a false end-of-the-world theology that marries hyper-“stewardship” with a perverse quest to use up what is too often seen as a doomed, commodified planet—in spite of what many readers find to be a scripturally consistent eternal destiny for our terra firma. In this view, “Jesus saves,” as they say—but only in a narrow, provincial and distinctly human-centered way. The birds and the bees, the rocks and the trees be damned—quite literally.

In 2012, I became a Greenfaith fellow (greenfaith.org) after training with religious leaders across a broad swath of faith traditions. As an Evangelical, I interacted with several fellows who represented various Christian traditions, along with Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Unitarian-Universalists and even a pagan or two. I had been exposed to interfaith initiatives in the past, and the emphasis on finding a “lowest common denominator” minimized their value. Greenfaith was different. Each of us was encouraged to bring the strengths of our various traditions to the table, finding pathways of common un-derstanding and laboring together around environmental understandings.

It is these kinds of initiatives—creating safe places for dangerous conversations, recognizing our diversity but finding ways to work together anyway—that are both the foundation and motivation for the new story we need.

**A New Story**

Our new story just might require a new vocabulary. Our story needs a holistic mindset and it must be told with a brazen confidence, as a kind of new and deep mythology. In short, we need a wholacious story, a grand “myth” in its classic sense; it is a myth—not because it isn’t true—but precisely because it is so deeply and universally true. It lives in our bones. It dances in our spirits.

When I address groups that may include folks who are naturally resistant to anything “green,” I like to point out that, while only a few of us in the room may be treehuggers, there are many different shades of green. The logger, hunter, fisherman and the weekend camper—even the moms and dads sitting on the sidelines of a soccer field on rainy afternoons—all of us crave experiences in some version of our natural habitat, with animals, bugs, sunshine and rain, trees, grass and flowers nearby.

Our new story is a tale best told outdoors, where it is not only heard but experienced. It recognizes our shared connectedness, understands that we are all stardust, born of the earth and destined to return to the earth.

This kind of story leaves space for humanity’s diverse creation stories, includes everyone and everything in its scope and offers ample transformative power for collaboration on both a community-wide and global scale. This kind of story oozes its way into the nooks and crannies of our hearts and minds to transform human tribalism of every sort, reigniting our common purpose in sustaining the planet we share.

▲ Dr. Russ Pierson is an APPA Certified Educational Facilities Professional (CEFP) and a Certified Sustainable Building Advisor (cSBA), as well as a GreenFaith Fellow and a 2013 USGBC Greenbuild Scholar. He is currently the Interim Director of Lane Community College Florence Center in Eugene, OR.

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Amid Media Megamergers, a Mosaic of Community Media Thrives

By Amy Goodman and Denis Moynihan

The business press is all atwitter with merger news, as federal regulators are set to approve a massive deal between cable behemoths Charter, Time Warner and Bright House Networks. The $78 billion transaction will create the second-largest cable TV/Internet company, dubbed “New Charter,” next to Comcast, and leave just three major cable providers in the U.S. Meanwhile, the Gannett Company, which owns more than 100 newspapers, including USA Today, is attempting to acquire Tribune Publishing, which owns several major newspapers, including the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Tribune. This looming consolidation in the corporate media is happening as we celebrate the “Democracy Now!” news hour’s 20th anniversary. We are on a 100-city tour of the United States, going from city to city, hosting fundraisers for community media stations and broadcasting the news as we travel. Our travels confirm that a thriving, vibrant community media sector exists, serving the public interest, free from the demands to turn a profit at any cost.

On Feb. 19, 1996, “Democracy Now!” began as the only daily election show in public broadcasting. President Bill Clinton was running for re-election against Kansas Sen. Bob Dole. The plan was for the show to run through Election Day. Our hope was that the issues in the presidential race were important enough and the audience cared enough that they would tune in to daily coverage that brought them voices and ideas not normally heard in the corporate media.

That’s how we started: giving a voice to the grassroots. When the election wrapped up, we thought that “Democracy Now!” would wrap up as well. But there was more demand for the show after the elections than before. Why? There is a hunger for authentic voices—not the same handful of pundits circulating through all the media networks who know so little about so much, explaining the world to us and getting it so wrong.

The show grew from being carried on just nine community radio stations in 1996 to more than 1,400 today.

These outlets each serve their community uniquely, providing relevant, locally created and curated content. As we travel, we see the connection that local media institutions help forge, both within a community but also across traditional barriers of race, class and age.

Take, for example, the new low-power FM (LPFM) radio station that is being built in Albuquerque, New Mexico. LPFM is a noncommercial radio service that recently got a boost from the Federal Communications Commission after activists spent years pushing the federal government to allow more stations. This new station in Albuquerque is licensed to a long-standing media nonprofit organization called Quote...Unquote, which provides training in digital-media creation, to empower people to tell their own stories. To launch the station, they have partnered with a remarkable school, the Robert F. Kennedy High School.

The school is in the South Valley, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Albuquerque, with a population of students who are largely undocumented immigrants. “This school serves students that traditional schools have given up on,” Robert Baade, the school’s director, told us. “The radio station will be one more tool for them, to allow them to speak for themselves.”

This is just one of hundreds of innovative community media institutions that we are supporting as we travel the country. They are largely nonprofit, supported by enthusiastic volunteers, and are hyperlocal and beloved by the community they serve.

Juxtapose this with increasingly consolidated major media corporations. “Thanks to this merger both Charter and Comcast now have unprecedent- ed control over our cable and Internet connections,” Craig Aaron, of the media reform organization Free Press, said after the news broke that these two corporations will likely merge. “Their crushing monopoly power will mean fewer choices, higher prices, no accountability and no competition.”

Even in this high-tech digital age, all we get is static: that veil of distortion, lies, misrepresentations and half-truths that obscure reality. We need the media to give us the dictionary definition of static: Criticism. Opposition. Unwanted interference. We need a media that covers power, not covers for power. We need a media that is the Fourth Estate, not for the state. And we need a media that covers the movements that create static and make history. That is the power of independent media. That is a media that will save us.

Amy Goodman is the host of “Democracy Now!,” a daily international TV/radio news hour airing on more than 1,400 stations. She is the co-author, with Denis Moynihan and David Goodman, of the newly published New York Times best-seller Democracy Now!: 20 Years Covering the Movements Changing America. They are currently on a 100-city U.S. tour.
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living Earth economics grounded in the logic of living systems rather than the logic of financial systems.

New Rules
Complex societies organize around the rules we call laws. Laws codify rights and adjudicate conflicts. Consistent with the choice to prioritize money over life, current law gives corporations more rights than people and gives people more rights than nature. Yet, without nature, there are no people and without people, there are no corporations. Current law turns logic on its head.

A living Earth economy requires the support of a system of living Earth law grounded in recognition that we humans belong to living Earth and that our survival, health, and well-being depend on health and well-being of the living systems by which she maintains climate stability, fresh water sources, fertile soils, forests, and fisheries.

Well-organized citizen campaigns are gaining traction to secure the rights of nature and return corporations to their proper status as the servants rather than the masters of living communities.

New Rights
The most important rules are those that govern our access to the essentials of life—including food, water, and shelter. From the beginning of history, those who owned the land and the tools of production have ruled over those who didn’t.

In the suicide economy, global corporations are rapidly expanding their ownership of the rights to these essentials and using these rights to reduce the vast majority of humans to wage and/or debt slavery. To get what we need to live, we must give corporations money that in turn we can only get from them in return for our labor or promise to pay later with interest.

A just distribution of income is a worthy goal. It is, however, the right to an ownership stake in the means of producing our living that is foundational to a just society and to a living Earth economy. Ownership may take many legal forms so long as the chosen form distributes ownership rights equitably and links decision power directly to real people who share a common interest in the health of the community of place in which they live.

To transition from the suicide economy we have to the living Earth economy we must now live into being presents a daunting challenge. The sooner we embrace the challenge as a shared global priority and apply the full potential of our human intelligence and creativity to addressing it, the greater our prospect of success.

David Korten is co-founder and board chair of YES! Magazine, president of the Living Economies Forum, co-chair of the New Economy Working Group, a member of the Club of Rome, and the author of influential books, including Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth. Follow his bi-weekly YES! Magazine column at yesmagazine.org and on Twitter @dkorten and Facebook.

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the potential to help catapult us into the new era. The question is, will the new tools mainly drive us toward the new world or help sustain and erode the old world?

During the earlier years, the kinds of breakthroughs that have the most potential for good will likely be seen as existential threats to some of the largest established industries on the planet. This likelihood will need to be seriously considered in how the new capabilities are presented to the world.

Permeability and Foresight
The strategic approach detailed here is necessarily based upon what makes sense to us now. It assumes dynamics and principles that we currently understand to work the way that they do. But we are heading toward a world that will not operate in a way that is familiar to us, it’s a new world. It almost certainly isn’t compatible with the giant load of presumptions that we carry around with us: how money works, how families are organized, the role of government, the ability to keep secrets, the need for food, the isolation of the planet, the availability and cost of energy, the inevitability of sickness, etc.

All of this argues for extraordinary openness—a permeability—to new ideas and developing a foresight process and capability that sweeps the horizon looking for the early indicators that will presage the wild card events headed our way. If we don’t have some way to anticipate the possible incoming shocks to the system (whether positive or negative), then everything of significance will turn out to be a surprise, and that would make our options reactive rather than proactive and far less effective.

If you’ve made it to the end of this article, it’s almost certain that you have a role to play in evolving this new world. It’s also almost certain that some aspects of this grand strategy will begin to emerge in the coming months and years and will provide concrete vehicles for your efforts. Isn’t it interesting how the Universe seems to provide the capabilities that are needed just in time for the evolutionary push?


John L. Petersen is a futurist and strategist. Author of three books on anticipating futures, he founded and leads The Arlington Institute located in West Virginia near Washington, D.C., and edits and publishes the acclaimed free e-newsletter, FUTUREdition. He can be reached at johnp@arlingtoninstitute.org. Visit arlingtoninstitute.org for more info.
Young Adult Justice Cafés
Act for Water Justice!
For the Spring Justice Cafés, young adults planned and carried out many actions for water justice including: participating in water education at the St. Louis Earth Day Festival; working with a local restoration project in the City of Oakland to clean up waterways and drains; hosting a water conservation scavenger hunt at Davidson College; and facilitating a panel of water experts to educate the Seattle community about water issues at home and around the world.

The Vincentian Mission Corps acts for water justice at the St. Louis Earth Day Festival.

Advocacy on Human Trafficking
As part of a nation-wide effort of the US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, IPJC is organizing legislative visits with senators to urge them to co-sponsor the Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015. Learn more and send a message to your senators by visiting IPJC’s Legislative Action Center at ipjc.org or sistersagainsttrafficking.org.

Kelly Hickman, Elizabeth Murphy, Mary Thorne, CSJP, Georgia Yianakulis, SNJM, Iva Gregory, OP at Washington Senator Patty Murray’s Office.

Staff Spotlight!
Giselle Cárcamo, Justice Circle Coordinator, provided the keynote for the Universal Leadership Conference at the University of Washington, Bothell Campus. The conference provided an opportunity to connect service, social justice, and leadership.

Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
Year of Hopeful Progress on Climate Change
The Paris Agreement signed by 175 Nations, April 22
Green Climate Fund—Countries committed to raise $100 billion a year by 2020 to assist developing, climate-vulnerable countries.

Juliana v. the US—Historic lawsuit brought by 21 children against the US government for violating children’s constitutional and public trust rights by promoting the use of fossil fuels. On April 8 Judge Coffins denied motions to dismiss case.

May 24 ExxonMobil Annual Meeting—NWCRI was among over 30 faith-based investors calling on Exxon to acknowledge the moral imperative to limit global warming to 2°C.

June 18—Celebrate the one year anniversary of Laudato Si’!
2016 JustVideo Contest Winners!

1st Place: “Human Trafficking”
By Reanna Salvador, Tori Conception, Dora Bezonsky, and Alexa Gomez from Ramona Convent Secondary School, Los Angeles, CA.

2nd Place(tie): “Climate Refugees”
Holy Names Academy, Seattle, WA

2nd Place(tie): “Uptown Funk Cover: Water Saves the Lives”
Ramona Convent Secondary School, Los Angeles, CA

3rd Place(tie): “Bound”
Holy Names Academy, Seattle, WA

3rd Place(tie): “Syrian Refugees”
St. Mary’s Academy, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Watch all of the winning entries at ipjc.org/programs/justvideo_winners.html

Donations

In honor of: Joanne McCauley, OP, Madison Schumm, CSJP 2016 Jubilarians

THANK YOU for partnering to Dream Big and make our collective dreams possible! We had a grand 25th Anniversary event complete with a graphic recorder to illustrate your dreams, Betsey Beckman dancing our story and a great evening to launch us into a future full of vision and hope! Watch our Dream Big Video and video of the evening at ipjc.org
This Issue: Creating a New Story

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"Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable."
—MARY OLIVER

Before the gathering invite people to read this issue of *A Matter of Spirit* and bring a symbol of a “New Story” they envision for our church, world, or Earth community.

Around a family meal, with friends, a book group or faith community explore the new stories living among us.

As you begin remember the words of Margaret Wheatley: “It is possible to prepare for the future without knowing what it will be. The primary way to prepare for the unknown is to attend to the quality of our relationships.”

**Facilitator:**
What article or specific insight from the articles encourages you to pursue your new story or act in a new way with others?

**Facilitator:**
Thomas Berry tells us, “There is a newness about our time and we need to be sensitized to the awesome transformation that is required of us.” What call are you hearing in the midst of our sharing with one another? Or is there a common thread or call we hear for living a new story?

**Facilitator:**
As you read this issue of *A Matter of Spirit*, what is the vision you hold and with what community do you imagine you could act on this new story?

**Quiet and Sharing:**
After a few moments of quiet everyone is invited to share her/his vision or new story and its potential community connections.

**Facilitator:**
Let’s take a moment of quiet to hold one another’s stories as sacred.

**Closing Prayer:**
Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something Unknown, something new.
Only God could say what this new spirit, Gradually forming within you will be.

—Teilhard de Chardin