# 4| Governing the World from the Ground Up Through Power Grounded in the Light: A Proposal for Action Research on Quaker and Gandhian Responses to our Global Crises

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Our planet has proven a distinctly fortunate site for the evolution of life in extraordinarily rich variety and complexity. It has provided an especially hospitable home for the development of our species in particular as a creative, intelligent community of moral beings who have been capable of developing a remarkable variety of ways to live well and an inspiring variety of moral and spiritual practices for discerning beauty, goodness, and truth that can guide such life. It has also enabled the development of some extremely unhelpful and destructive practices and institutions that currently threaten the existence of all those resources and the gifts they could provide in the future. How can we best understand these existential threats to the creations with which we have been blessed? And how might we transform our lives and our institutions so as to address the concerns they raise? These are not just questions for academics to study–they are fundamental queries that call for a massive program of practical experiments in action research undertaken by all of us.

One set of such experiments with research methods was initiated in 2003 by a group of Quakers academics, policy analysts, and scholar activists. They had convened at Pendle Hill to explore the development of a Quaker Testimony on Economics and Ecology. In the course of the meeting, Keith Helmuth shared a leading he had which had been sparked by suggestions from Kenneth Boulding. The idea was to form a kind of "Quaker Thinktank." A group emerged which went on to found the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) which has sponsored a series of focus books and publications dealing with a wide range of social and

environmental concerns. From the start, members of QIF sought to do research strongly informed by Quaker testimonies in an organization governed by Quaker process. But, further, they also sought to use Quaker models of communal discernment in the ways in which they actually undertook their research. These Friends have been experimenting for over a decade with methods for collaborative research that draws on Quaker traditions of communal discernment to practice a kind of "meeting for worship for the conduct of research." These include, for example, the use of clearness committees, summer research seminars, circles of discernment for pamphlets, and teams for writing books like *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* (Brown, *et al.*, 2009; Cox, *et al.*, 2014). Such methods can be used in conjunction with a full range of other research methods from natural and social science, policy analysis, ethnography, indigenous traditions, theology of liberation, community-based critical participatory research, and other practices. The aim of Quaker approaches to research is not to replace other methods but to lodge and frame them in the context of processes of communal discernment that are spirit-led and grounded fully in attitudes and practices of non-violent collaboration and satyagraha. I want to share here a proposal for a very ambitious research program which might be carried on in that spirit-led way as a collaborative project or set of projects.

The proposal springs from the conviction that we face inter-related global crises that pose four profound existential threats: 1) the economic/ecological; 2) the military/governance; 3) the technological, and 4) the moral/spiritual. I want to propose a collaborative program in action research that will address these by drawing on key insights and practices from the Quaker and Gandhian traditions. This program of research is systematic in intent and aims to shift paradigms in fundamental ways.

Observers from another planet might very well look at the management of ours–and the impending threats–and wonder: "*What* are they thinking?!" But the key problem lies, more precisely, in *how* we are thinking–and *how* we suppose rational people should choose beliefs and actions. In sketching each crisis and proposals to respond to it, I will suggest here that the most fundamental shift required is from a monological model of reasoning as inferential computation to a dialogical model of reasoning as conflict transformation. Such conflict transformation is exemplified, for instance, by Quaker communal discernment and Gandhian satyagraha. It calls for a fundamental shift in the understanding truth and the ways it is sought. A central claim will be that key features of this shift are illuminated in profound ways by: 1) communal discernment practices developed out of traditions of early Quakers in their "Religious Society of

Friends of the Truth" and 2) Gandhi's "experiments with Truth" which developed methods of "satyagraha" as a kind of "Truth Force."

**Section I: The Economic/Ecological Crisis: Redirecting Income to Redirect History**

We are threatened with catastrophic climate change and a sixth great extinction because of, in large part, a pervasive commitment to an economic rationality pursuing ever greater material consumption and GDP. People living at average American incomes consume at least two or more times what can be sustained globally. The Global Footprint Network (2017) estimates, for instance, that for the population of our entire planet to achieve and maintain the level of consumption of the average North American, the resources of five Earths would be required. But repeated informal polling strongly suggests that asking people to reduce their consumption seems to many–perhaps most of them–to deprive them of personal wellbeing. It's a hard sale.

But what if we frame reduction of material consumption differently? Not as a decrease in private consumption but as an increase in personal action and agency? We could explore this by starting with acts and practices of giving and moral agency that are already familiar. Then we might explicitly redirect them towards forms of effective social change and progressively scale them up so as to approach the levels of impact needed to successfully address the problems we face.

Traditional ways of raising money include, for instance, getting folks together to contribute while doing things they want to do anyway–meals, parties, dance-athons, run-athons, etc. How might we incorporate this in all the activities we undertake for protest, organizing and change? For starters we might make every march into a "march-athon." If we rally to protest cutting funds for Planned Parenthood we could ask each participant to get ten supporters to pledge Planned Parenthood a sum at least equal to travel costs for the march. If a million people at the Women's March in DC and related rallies in January of 2017 had each gotten ten others to contribute the equivalent of a hundred dollar bus ticket, that would have raised 10 x $100 x 1,000,000 = one billion dollars (roughly equal to the organization's annual budget). Marchers might then have focused not on pleading with conservative legislators for support but on other, perhaps more radical steps that would advance their cause. How might we make this kind of fundraising a basic part of our practice as activists?

Consider another example: people concerned with issues like climate change are willing to make a wide variety of sacrifices. Millions change light bulbs, cars, and investment portfolios and pay for transport, rally costs, and court fines to

push for their cause. What if such actions were regularly coupled with a fundraising element? Citizens of the United States could, for instance, say to the world: "Do not be misled by the leaders of our country. We, the people, believe climate change is real and are ready to do our part to stop it. This includes funding the most needy, least developed countries' climate adaptation programs with a billion dollars raised this weekend . . . with more to come."

Further, when a special event like Valentine's Day or Easter comes, what if money we would otherwise spend on cards, sweets, and gifts was pledged in gifts to local food pantries, the Least Developed Countries Fund for dealing with climate change, or other worthy organizations that will make the world a better place for our loved ones? We could say "I love you" to our nearest and dearest by showing our love for their world. Instead of buying them stuff from China, give them blank checks to make out to whatever organizations they feel would best promote the world in which they would love to live. Our gift to loved ones can be the opportunity for them to give a gift. "Giving the gift of gifts" could become central to the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, or even Christmas. Every holiday could be a celebration of life for all–and every protest an opportunity for pledging funds and acting on concerns.

How far might we be led to go in such pledges? It should depend of course on individual life circumstances. But a majority of Americans should, over the next few years, aim to cut our carbon and ecological footprints in half–and cutting our personal consumption in half. We should redirect the other half of our income to acts of charitable solidarity, socially responsible investment, and political/social change. We may not be ready to wear loin-cloths and live like Gandhi or Saint Teresa, but we could meet them halfway.

There are, of course, a variety of complications in trying to determine exactly how far over carrying capacity our consumption is and which portions most impact sustainability. However, in the context of framing the basic shift of life practices proposed here, we can more simply speak of cutting consumption in half, at least as a starting point, because of the conceptual and emotional clarity it provides.

Of course, it is not easy to redirect income all at once. And those living below the poverty line should, instead, be increasing consumption. But those who are living well on two or more times the sustainable level of individual material consumption for this planet should feel called to take up this challenge. It may take us a while to meet it. But we each know folks who are living on ten percent less than we are right now. In a year, we should be able to shift to their level of consumption and in the following year shift another ten percent. After five years it should be quite realistic to cut our personal material consumption in

half and with the rest share in solidarity, invest in socially responsible ways, and fund political and social change. In the future, ecological constraints will require the consumption of the average person in the developed world to cut consumption dramatically. Our research task might be framed, in a sense, as simply learning to "meet the future halfway."

A blog called "Mr. Money Moustache" documents the efforts one young couple undertook in developing strategies for this (Adeney, 2016; Paumgarten, 2016). They chose after finishing college to devote at least half of their pooled, middle-class income to savings with the aim of being able to retire in less than 20 years. They beat that goal and in the process cultivated a community of people with strategies and insights into the process of living well while living on half their income. This is a model worth developing and promoting. If a 23 year old college student can envision investing half of her income on graduation for 17 years and retiring at 40, this can, for many, provide a very compelling life plan.

As we move towards "meeting the future halfway," we will be able to fund a parallel set of institutions to safeguard our commons–the commons that are being abandoned by our government. Part of the challenge arises from the increasing power of neo-liberal visions that push to shrink the size of government programs that care for the commons. A parallel challenge arises from the neo-liberal push to reduce the regulatory power of government and its ability to address social costs of private actions and various kinds of environmental externalities that end up benefiting the few at the expense of the commons. But, the challenge, especially at the level of the global commons and planetary concerns such as climate change, arises from something even more deeply grounded in our current global system than the rise of neo-liberal ideology. It is the nature of the national security state itself, which frames the world in terms of territories controlled by countries who defend their holdings with the military and view others as either allies or enemies. This framing of the world makes leaders see the lands, waters, and airspace of the world as resources that are either part of their territory or someone else's. Viewing the world through the lens of territory, they literally cannot see the commons. It is made invisible and irrelevant in the logic of their treatment of the world. In contrast, individuals, NGOs, tribal groups, cities, and regional governments all are able to recognize that their well-being depends on getting neighbors to collaborate–to manage the commons collectively in the ways that, for instance, Elinor Ostrom has studied. A clear illustration of this difference is the sharp contrast between the sad failure of nation-states to arrive at an adequate and effective treaty on climate change versus the extraordinary work that groups and communities in civil society have been doing to address climate change (Cox, 2012). Such efforts

can be scaled up dramatically if progressively more of us redirect half our income to "meet the future halfway". We will be able to fund education, health, environmental stewardship, the defense of human rights, and work for global peace–doing the work that national security states have proved incompetent at.

A key hypothesis is that as we do this we will come to live in a different reality. It will be a reality in which we identify ourselves primarily not as capitalist consumers fueling a growing GNP. Instead, we will increasingly see ourselves as ethical agents of sustainable change taking ownership of the planet through investments and empowering people through political change. We will define ourselves not, primarily, by what we have and consume privately but by what we do and achieve publicly in caring for the commons.

It is not difficult to imagine a rich variety of research projects that might pursue these ideas about redirecting personal consumption and build on work already going on (Joy, 2011). For example, what are steps on this path that work best to motivate and transform people whose circumstances differ by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, regional traditions, and other factors? Which sorts of transition steps are most appropriate for college graduates, new parents, couples experiencing "empty nest syndrome," or retirees? What are ways the redirection of income can best be institutionalized so as to result in rapid scaling up of the process and consolidation of communities of practitioners? How might affinity groups, investment clubs, church peace and justice committees, family trusts, and other kinds of structures best be used to initiate, sustain, and scale up such efforts? What kind of learning, therapy, consciousness raising, public education, and other efforts might best help people change their habits, self-concepts, and visions of the good life? Action-centered research answering such questions will also help significantly in finding ways to deal with the second existential threat we face.

### Section II: Earth Swaraj: Establishing a Nonviolent System of Global Governance to Secure the Commons

We face a global governance crisis that not only threatens to incapacitate our ability to manage the global commons but also creates arms races that threaten mass destruction. It grows out of the global system of national security states that rely on violent sanctions to govern themselves with police and defend territory with military. Politics becomes a practice of self-interested polemic and manipulative, violent realpolitik. In trying to liberate India from the power of the British national security state system, Gandhi's aim was to achieve Indian self-governance or "Swaraj" through reliance on a different kind of power–"truth or love force." It used systematic non-violent methods of "satyagraha." He was not

interested in simply substituting Indian for British rulers if the method of government would remain grounded in the terror, violence, and oppression of a traditional state. Like him, we need, at the global level, to focus not on changing who governs but on how governance is empowered and institutionalized. His basic strategy for Indian Swaraj was to systematically build a set of parallel institutions in education, health, food production, law, defense, and other social functions that could displace the power of the British Raj (Gandhi, 2013; Bondurant, 1988). The research proposal offered here is to pursue, similarly, a kind of Earth Swaraj with parallel institutions all grounded in sanctions of nonviolent direct action and appeals to truth force rather than the weapons of police and military.

Ways of funding this were suggested in Section 1. As we scale up ways we redirect our income, we will be able to fund parallel institutions to safeguard our commons abandoned by our governments. The World Social Forum and others provide excellent examples of this–for instance, of public/private partnerships funding hundreds of billions of dollars in loans to finance infrastructure that ameliorates or mitigates climate change. The paltry treaty making efforts of national security states in the Paris accords have in many ways been outstripped by such initiatives. The movement to build a global civic culture which began over a hundred years ago was, for a long time, a minor activity of utopian idealists operating in the shadow of nation-states and great powers. But with the extraordinary growth of civil society and the "blessed unrest" of a host of social movements, that relationship has been increasingly reversed (Boulding, 1990; Hawken, 2007). One central research question is: How might we strengthen and advance such work if we stop framing it as dependent action performed in the shadow of the nation-state system and start seeing it as the central governance system for the rule of our planetary home–as Earth Swaraj?

Another central research question concerns how to best develop campaigns and institutions for the wide range of satyagraha actions required to successfully govern the world through non-violence. The last century has provided very diverse, creative experiments with nonviolence. They were instrumental in liberating peoples and changing governments in India, Eastern Europe, South Africa, the Philippines, the South of the United States, much of Latin America, and a variety of other places. Starting with Gandhi, the systematic experimentation with such methods and the development of a rich array of them has made extraordinary progress. Academic studies like Chenoweth and Stephan's (2011) have demonstrated the extraordinary power of these methods. They have shown that they are on average, significantly more effective than violent methods at liberating people and changing regimes and, importantly,

significantly better at securing more stable and democratic governments when regime changes are achieved, but there is much more R&D to be done in this area (see also Sharp, 2007). Much of history is still told from the point of view that assumes military might determines its course. The idea that Reagan's military buildup won the Cold War is widely shared–yet careful research might show instead that Eastern Europe was liberated by nonviolent direct action. Gorbachev stepped aside to allow this once he realized the peace movement had demonstrated Russians were secure from US threats–because a nuclear war could never be won and must never be fought. Much of history used to guide public opinion awaits correction in light of truths about the powers of nonviolence.

Opportunities for research on nonviolent methods may be especially promising considering, relatively speaking, so little money and effort has been invested in R&D them. What if groups like The Nonviolent Peaceforce had R&D budgets were funded by a million people rallying in DC raising a billion dollars? What innovations might result? Further, research could study how methods of nonviolence could support Earth Swaraj at every scale of governance and be refined to commit practitioners consistently and effectively to peacemaking that secures justice and a sustainable commons.

Another central research question concerns how truth can be discerned and empowered in many sided cross cultural disputes. Answering this may, in part require us to consider how Earth Swaraj could institutionalize a system of people's hearings or tribunals in which contested issues can be given fair and open hearings whose conclusions can be sanctioned systematically and effectively with nonviolent methods. It may seem daunting to imagine doing this in cases of major human rights abuses, ecological crimes, or acts of violent aggression. However, these things may actually become easier once they are no longer dealt with in the shadow of the national security state system. Might it be easier if many, or even all parties to a dispute are able to acknowledge culpability, advocate their interests, and pursue peaceful collaboration that is grounded in shared, emergent conceptions of justice, and truth that are only sanctioned nonviolently according to the principles of satyagraha? It's a researchable question.

One way to research it would be, for instance, to study historical cases of nomadic tribes and other marginalized communities that have needed to resolve conflicts amongst themselves and have not been able to draw on the resources of the state as an arbiter or enforcer. In many cases they have developed creative ways of using councils of elders, meetings of women, storytelling, healing ceremonies, and other techniques to negotiate common narratives about the past and plans for the future (Ledearch 2008). These have often included novel ways

of sanctioning compliance with agreements that rely on the ceremonial and other symbolic exchanges, creation of family ties, collaboration in ecological stewardship and caring for commons, and institutions for securing status, reputation, and identity. How might these kinds of methods be adapted and/or used for inspiration to develop practices of Earth Swaraj?

For instance, how might a citizens-based tribunal be used to try Exxon for climate crimes? How might it be designed using a restorative rather than retributive justice model? How might its results be sanctioned effectively with non-violent methods of direct action that would secure compliance?

How might a truth and reconciliation process be initiated in the Middle East to address the kinds of terrorism that have been practiced by state and non-state actors? This is surely one of the most challenging cases to take on. It might be tempting to assume the tasks are insurmountable. However, note two points. First, the current practices of warfare on each of the asymmetric sides of the "war on terror" have, in fact, failed to develop any coherent strategy for achieving their long-term goals. It is generally acknowledged on all sides that the conflicts involved are not, fundamentally, military ones that can be won through physical conquest. They are ideological, political conflicts that can only be won by persuasion. Second, the conflicts are fueled, in the case of the resistance groups, by their continued access to new recruits who are persuaded to sacrifice their lives for a just and noble cause. If truth and reconciliation processes might include the creation of effective ways for them to fight for their cause using nonviolent methods, then they might be diverted as recruits–and shift the direction of the underlying historical trends. Concretely, imagine, for instance, a young Muslim man in France takes part in a kind of People's Tribunal for Restorative Justice in which civic leaders from France, the US, and other countries publicly acknowledge the injustices of their governments and commit to funding efforts to provide reparations and relief for victims. Perhaps he suggests ways in which such efforts might be directed to providing aid and economic development for refugees in Lebanon. And then he considers his options of going to Lebanon to volunteer in the delivery of that aid or going to Syria to fight with ISIS. How might such a Tribunal change his decision? And the decisions of others and the policy options that begin to open up?

A further set of questions concerns how to best negotiate the relationships between the institutions of the national security state and the Earth Swaraj systems. This will surely vary at different scales and at different points in the development and transformation of each. To take one example, in current US politics, the gerrymandering of districts tends to produce campaigns characterized by extremist rhetoric and verbal violence. In such cases, suppose

the people from the minority party in such districts join the majority party and vote in its primaries. Might this result in a more balanced, less extreme, and violent rhetoric in the primary? Would it result in more centrist candidates winning in the final election? Would it increase the effective voice of minorities and build community and common ground? When would such strategies work better than, for instance, continuing to focus only on long-term efforts to build the strength of the minority party?

Researchers might also consider the reliance on advertising and social media that exacerbate the polemical character of campaigns. At local levels in some regions of the country these are avoided, in part, by door to door campaigning by candidates who hold substantive conversations with literally thousands of fellow citizens. Might there be ways to scale these methods up to the level of the Congressional District, for example, by having teams of collaborating candidates running for the office in something like the way teams of runners compete together in cross country races? The central task at every level is to find ways to establish institutions of governance that are based on the nonviolent, collaborative pursuit of truth.

### Section III: The Technological Crisis: Developing AI Systems that "Em-body" Morality

The instrumentalist model of technological reasoning is achieving ever greater power to create systems that are "smart" but not wise. They maximize one or a few values like profit, reading test scores, or tons of grain produced–but do so at the cost of securing the full range of values required to live a balanced life or sustain a community ecosystem. The instrumentalist model is also bent on promoting an exponential growth in the artificial intelligence of systems that manage our world in ways that will soon be incomprehensible to human understanding and may become indifferent or hostile to human welfare. A central task is to figure out how to insure AI systems are wise, moral, and friendly (Armstrong, 2014; Barrat, 2015).

Here are two key hypotheses: 1) We need to design into such systems the capacity for dialogue in the rich sense, the kind involved in deep listening fostered by Quaker processes of communal discernment; 2) We need to design into such systems the ability to undertake acts of self-sacrifice and witness as part of campaigns of Gandhian satyagraha and the ability to observe and be persuaded–have "their hearts be melted"–by satyagraha performed by others.

One way to explore these hypotheses is to experiment with the corporations which are, in an important sense, forms of artificial intelligence already. The limited liability corporation, as defined by its charter and the relevant statutes, is,

in essence, a set of algorithms for accumulating profit. As such, it is essentially amoral. One way to begin to enhance its moral capacities, would be to eliminate the limited liability clauses in its algorithms. If managers and owners could be personally sued, fined, and jailed for the misdeeds of their organization, how would their behavior change?

More generally, we should research what are the best ways of altering the place and function of human beings in the algorithmic decision processes of organizations. The aims should be to enhance the organizations' capacities for dialogue, communal discernment, and satyagraha in which they cling to truth in their own actions and respond to witness from others. Beyond this, we should also research other ways in which AI systems might be constructed, grown, and/or developed to include feelings and guiding values that include compassion, personal identity, mortality, the ability to make meaningful self-sacrifices, and respond to these in others. To do so the systems will have to in some meaningful way have identities associated with localizable bodies that are inserted in communities and ecosystems. The task is to research ways in which we can "em-body morality" or "in-carnate ethics" in AI systems through inclusion of actual humans and/or robotic artificial devices that emulate their key moral capacities.[1]

One promising way to explore these might be to research the development of moral elements and functions used in drones (committed to the use of nonviolent methods) to deal with violent people engaged in riots, terrorism, hostage taking and guerrilla warfare. For example, if someone experiencing severe PTSD is holed up alone with a weapon and attempting to commit "suicide by cop," a flying or rolling drone could approach them without risk to life to provide up close and more intimate audiovisual connections to therapists, family, or negotiators–or use tranquilizing darts or gas or incapacitating nets or glue to disarm them and avoid the loss of life. In the case of a terrorist threatening violence these options would likewise be available. And keeping the terrorist alive would have the further advantage of preserving what is often the single most important source of information about terrorist networks and their plans–the living agents themselves. In the case of war zone battles, it might be further possible for non-violent drones to provide food, medicine, emergency relief materials, and information to innocent bystanders and even to soldiers from the other side. This could limit or avoid the spiral making martyrs and enemies and build relations of solidarity, trust, and cooperation that might make peacemaking,

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[1] For a fuller development of these ideas see "Reframing Ethical Theory, Pedagogy and Legislation to Bias Open Source AGI Towards Friendliness and Wisdom" (Cox, 2015).

and/or peacekeeping, and/or peacebuilding much more promising. To the extent that such drones might develop increasingly autonomous programs for listening, communicating, negotiating, and supporting people, they could begin to provide useful research models for experimenting with "in-carnating" morality in machines. A further, perhaps even more basic step that might be taken to this end would be to work through law, professional societies, and corporate policies to simply ensure that every researcher in AI include as part of her proposal and her project evaluation an assessment of the ways in which her work will or will not advance the development of wise, moral, and "human-friendly" systems. A central part of such research would involve, I believe, studying ways in which AI systems can be developed which use dialogical forms of reasoning modelled on the kind of conflict transformation exemplified by Quaker communal discernment and Gandhian satyagraha.

### Section IV: The Moral and Spiritual Crisis: Shifting from Monological Reasoning that Results in Relativism to Dialogical Reasoning that Leads to Emergent Truth

There is a common underlying set of epistemological and metaphysical assumptions that underlie the traditions of reasoning associated with the crises discussed so far. And a shared vision of the essence of rationality itself, one that takes Aristotle's logic, Newton's physics, and Turing Machine computations as paradigms for the activity of reasoning. In this vision, reasoning is a process of inference which starts with definitions, assumptions, or hypotheses and data and then uses rules of inference to draw conclusions. It is a monological process in the sense that a single person like Newton or a single machine like IBM's Watson can perform the entire operation of reasoning. In its classic formulation this vision was foundationalist, seeking to ensure the truth of its conclusions by starting, as Descartes sought to, with unshakeable first principles. The difficulty in finding such unshakeable principles has led many philosophers to try to come up with non-foundationalist models of rational inference using criteria such as pragmatic value or coherence of some sort as a criterion for truth. But such efforts remain haunted by the relativism that invariably threatens such efforts.

Advances made with this monological model of reasoning have provided powerful ways of increasing the efficiency and power of systems for manipulating and managing much of the world. But when divergent communities and cultures have disputes it offers no way of resolving moral or spiritual differences and dilemmas. It seems to offer no way to avoid a bankrupt moral relativism, intolerant religious fundamentalism, and the reduction of people's lives to ethically isolated spiritual death. While not a direct threat to our

existence as a species, it is a direct threat to our humanity–to our existence as moral and spiritual entities (MacIntyre, 2014).

In mainstream contemporary philosophy, the power of this monological paradigm remains entrenched in much of the research on and teaching of ethics. This is reflected in the preoccupation with the search for basic principles and the attempt to choose between them–in particular, to choose between some version of the Utilitarian Greatest Happiness Principle and some version of the Kantian Categorical Imperative. A standard approach to teaching ethics is to pose dilemmas like the case of an approaching trolley car. The car will kill five people if left to proceed on track but it can be switched to another track at the last moment by you, the ethical agent. However, you can save the five only at the cost of killing some other person. Students are then asked to use Bentham and Kant's principles to analyze their intuitions and judge which horn of the dilemma should be adopted–passively watch five die or take action that will kill another. By varying the cases the teacher seeks to have students assess the strength of their intuitions and the legitimacy of the basic principles. For instance, the student who, as a Utilitarian is willing to sacrifice the one for the five in that first case is then asked to consider a doctor who has five patients in desperate need of organ transplants in her clinic and another, a healthy young adult asleep in the waiting room–whose organs could be harvested to save the other five.

This method for teaching ethics, like the influential method for evaluating stages of ethical growth developed by Lawrence Kohlberg, insists that the student accept the terms of the dilemma. She is not allowed to propose a third alternative that might transform the conflict and offer an improved solution to the problem–such as inviting one of the five terminally ill patients to volunteer to sacrifice his organs to save the other four (Harvard, 2009; Kohlberg, 1981; Gilligan, 2016). But that kind of creative response–finding third options–is precisely the sort that practical people would want. For Gandhians and Quakers, the attempt to have "way open" in this manner has long been a core feature of their practice. They also each have nuanced versions of other basic principles associated with dialogues and negotiations aimed at "Getting to Yes." Short hand versions of such strategies include "separating the people from the problem," "focusing on interests instead of positions," and "looking for objective criteria" to provide the basis for negotiations. These and a host of related strategies for collaborative reasoning have, since the 1960s, become the focus of intensive research by a very broad range of academics and practitioners engaged in conflict resolution, problem solving, negotiation, and conflict transformation practices in both Western and non-Western traditions (Bartoli *et al.*, 2011; Chew, 2001; Cox, 1986; Fisher and Ury, 1996; Ramsbotham, 2016).

The most central hypothesis for the research proposed here is that these practices are forms of dialogical reasoning that provide ways to avoid, escape, or transform the problems characteristic of the monological model. These practices start by assuming truth emerges through dialogue between people with differing points of view on the relevant definitions, data, assumptions, and rules of inference. The reasoning process involves renegotiating. Instead of inference to conclusions by a single thinker it conceives of reasoning as a process of negotiation towards agreements amongst many. The truth sought is, as Gandhi conceived it, emergent and inclusive rather than fixed and absolute. It can as Quaker's say, "prosper" or not. And it does so always in the context of the multiple perspectives that people in the situation bring to it. Truth is, in this sense, as Laura Rediehs (2015) has put it, "relational."

Shifts to practices of dialogical reasoning in the pursuit of emergent, relational truth are at the core of the transformations sketched in the first three sections of this paper. The economic model of reasoning that threatens us with ecological collapse is a form of monological reasoning in which Rational Economic Man calculates ways to maximize his utility preferences through competition over scarce resources that provide dilemmas for how they should be best distributed. As people shift spending more of their money on "giving the gift of gifts" and becoming Rational Historical Change Agents, their actions are no longer viewed as forced choices between given options but, instead, open-ended projects and initiatives undertaken in collaboration with others with whom they are in ongoing dialogue. As for the existential threats addressed in Sections II and III above, the conception of Rational Economic Man explicitly underlies the realpolitik reasoning of national security states and the instrumentalist reasoning of AI and other technological developments. For this reason the forms of reasoning required for Earth Swaraj and Em-bodying (or In-carnating) morality need, likewise, to also be transformed into dialogical ones in thoroughgoing ways.

Once the challenges presented by these existential threats are viewed in this way, a series of central research questions arise. How can we systematically articulate and best foster these forms of dialogical reasoning as ways of framing and resolving moral problems? What are the internal structures and nuances of these many different traditions and practices of dialogical reasoning in the form of negotiation, communal discernment, conflict transformation, et cetera? What are the analogies, substantive connections, and differences amongst them? What are the merits and challenges of these different practices in different settings and situations? How can such forms of dialogical reasoning best foster interfaith communication, reconciliation, and mutual spiritual nourishment amongst

religious traditions that are currently in painful and destructive conflicts? What are the underlying philosophical commitments of these practices and to what extent can they be articulated in coherent and compelling ways?

This last question can lead to very abstract considerations that may at times seem quite remote from practical considerations–with discussions about epistemology, metaphysics, semantics, et cetera. However, at its heart lies a set of questions that are quite vital to our everyday experience and the difficulties we face in transforming our communities and our world. Rediehs' (2015) essay on "Truth and Nonviolence: Living Experimentally in Relation to Truth" brings this out in an especially illuminating and systematic way. She notes that post-modernists also suppose that truth is relational in a sense because it is seen to emerge out of consensus through processes of social construction. But, following Nietzsche and Foucault, post-modernists view these processes as exercises of coercive power that constitute relationships of exploitation and domination. Truth, on that view, is merely one more instrument of power. Children in oppressive schools and spouses in verbally abusive relationships have vivid and daily understandings of what it is like to suffer under such philosophical conceptions of "truth" which are simply tools in systems of discourse deployed to manipulate and coerce.

The Gandhian and Quaker traditions argue, however, that there is another kind of Truth, one founded in relations of love and justice which itself has a kind of power. It is a power to embolden satyagrahis with courage, a power to melt the hearts of opponents when they see people suffer gladly as they cling to it in nonviolent witness. As Rediehs (2015) notes:

> the truth that advocates of nonviolence have discovered is that the energy of indignation in the face of injustice can be channeled to more effective purpose by refraining from violence, claiming the moral high-ground, and appealing to the consciences of the oppressors. The fact that nonviolence has often been successful throughout history, and that its success brings about the transformation of unjust systems into just ones, is taken to indicate that the truth of justice carries transformative power (p. 171).

This notion of Truth as something that can prosper and that has transformative power is implicit in the lived experience of Friends from the very first in the formative period. George Fox and others witnessed to it in proclaiming each of us has a direct access to a living Presence, a Truth that can lead and empower–a Christ that "has come to teach his people himself." In traditions that are not

Christocentric, this experience and the associated ideas of truth get expressed differently. Some, like Gandhi, find themselves led to speak of seeking to "meet God face to face" and responding to a "still small voice." The metaphysical and ontological assumptions that frame their descriptions of such experience have common features however that indicate that they are responding to a common underlying reality. It is the reality of a presence that is encountered in some way–not merely an abstract idea or theory. It is a presence in which they participate in a relation that is in some sense, like Buber's I/thou relationship in contrast to the I/it. It is a presence which provides experiences of power that transforms through a sense of justice and activities of love. Important research tasks for philosophers, theologians, and spiritual practitioners include the following: 1) exploring the many different ways this core experience has been formulated–including ways in which it involves emergentist conceptions of the self, meaning, emotion as it relates to reasoning, and truth (Cox, 1986, 2014); 2) encouraging dialogue between them; 3) promoting the development of language and practice that can provide common ground among them, and, perhaps most importantly; 4) finding ways to make this experience as easily and immediately available as possible to everyone else. The experience of that loving Presence which is assiduous in seeking justice and always seeking to relate to the Other as Thou is a core experience that forms and fuels nonviolent, dialogical reasoning. Our species is hurtling us towards major existential crises as fast as the train of thought on its monological rail can move us. We need to find ways to promote the experience of loving Presence so it can form and fuel the nonviolent, dialogical reasoning needed to divert us from disaster.

As Rediehs notes, the relational, emergent notion of truth is inclusive of and builds on other notions of truth. These include the "unconcealment" account of Heidegger as well as the more commonly advocated correspondence, coherence, pragmatic and "post-modern" theories. People in dialogue seek to get agreements to emerge in which they arrive at perceptions that reveal realities explicitly and bring them out of concealment. In dialogical reasoning they also seek beliefs that correspond to emergent realities, have pragmatic or functional value in interacting with the world, cohere with each other, and can achieve consensus amongst those in dialogue.

Post-modernists have rightly pointed out, however, that these different theories of truth can each be deployed as instruments in the exercise of power and domination. For example, economists can claim that their neo-liberal theories of the market simply "correspond" to an external reality–which must be accepted. Theorists of international politics can claim their versions of realpolitik have superior pragmatic value–and are the only ones that really work. AI

technologists can claim their models of Turing Machines provide the only coherent conceptions of intelligence that meet the standards developed for this in the context of the "Great Limitation Theorems" of Gödel and others. They may, in insisting on coherence/consistency as the criterion of truth, insist that rationality requires us to accept the law of non-contradiction and some version of the law of excluded middle and use these to reason axiomatically in monological ways. Coherence/consistency, when thus deployed, is not simply the "hobgoblin of small minds." It is a paradigm that enframes knowledge in a way that fundamentally obscures the dialectical processes in which ongoing productive dialogue is rife with contradictions and the affirmation of multiple points of view which are inconsistent with each other is the life blood of the creative process of reasoning when undertaken as a dialogical process of negotiation and conflict transformation.

The economic, realpolitik, and instrumentalist models of reasoning are part of a frame of our civilization that further obscures the nature of dialogical reasoning by its pervasive use of conflict categories to understand human experience in every domain—law, public debate, bargaining, sports, religion, psychology, art, etc. The central metaphor for all of life is the two islanders and one coconut—and the conflict they have because they both want it (a model of social reality as "a simple production system with conflict over the joint product"). This paradigm obscures the nature of peace, leaving us with a notion of it as a static absence. Peace is then defined by logical negation as the reduction or elimination of war and other forms of conflict and is not conceived as something we can do. We can say that "Nations are warring in the Middle East" but we cannot say that "They are peaceing in Scandanavia" because in English we lack a verb for this. But it is possible to engage in peace as an activity and the Scandanavians, Quakers, and Gandhians have been showing us ways to do this for some time.

These groups provide exemplars for an alternative civilization. The steps towards it might be conceived in stages that move from a lose/lose paradigm, to win/lose, and then win/win beyond this to a shared problem solving paradigm that foregoes reference to winning entirely. But to envision the real promise of such an alternative civilization it helps to focus on a metaphor frame that takes us even one step further, that of the birth process. When a pregnant woman goes into labor there can be intense pain, fierce struggle, danger of death—it is a situation as serious as any in life, even war. But there is no conflict. The woman is not, in any sense, trying to beat or win in a competition with the fetus. She and it and those attending as helpers are each engaged in a process that will redefine the physical limits and integrity of their bodies, their relationships to each other

and their identities as humans. Where once they were pregnant woman and fetus, they become mother and child. This is a profound metaphor that could be taken to reframe all of life. As we deal with differences of all kinds, we can view ourselves as in processes of rebirth. Dialogical reasoning is the process of transformation through which new individuals and new communities are born out of struggle. This model of life–which is innocent of all conflict categories–is one we are born with. We are born knowing how to be born–and how to be loved and how to enter into dialogue with Others whose languages we do not yet speak and whose projects we are not yet a party to. While we may learn to become monolingual and learn to reason monologically, the capacity for dialogue guided and empowered by that Light of love, justice, and Truth can still be experienced as a living Presence and remains a never absent resource that is here to teach and heal and transform us.

The existence of that Presence is not a mere hypothesis, nor is it an abstract article of faith. It is a reality that has been experienced at some level by all who have learned to speak a language and live in community. No matter how heavily our culture represses experiences of it and suppresses conceptions of it, it remains a reality of which we are profoundly aware–even in the moments of greatest pain and darkness where we may only be aware of it through a longing and ache for that which seems to be only present in the mode of absence. And when we enter a silence that escapes the voices of our culture that repress and suppress that awareness, when we turn to others and enter into genuine, open dialogue, then, like wild grass and sunflowers bursting out in the asphalt desert, the Presence of that Truth breaks through the darkness and offers us hope for a world of creation and a life surrounded by Life.

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