

Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, June 30th 2005

The Life's Salvation Manifesto - A Draft

by Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher

A. A Prognosis of the Situation Facing Life in the Coming Decades

1. Premises

It cannot be controversial to state that a living thing must want to continue living.

This means that the human individual, who is the self-motivating expression of the human species at that point in time, has no option but to conduct her/his life in such a way as to maximize safety and prosperity for herself/himself and also continuation for the human species, i.e. safety and prosperity also for all other human individuals present and to come. Otherwise she/he would be working towards suicide as well as human extinction, and this cannot be right. If it were right, the human species would already have become extinct.

Human life is dependent on other species. The safety of these species is, therefore, as important for human beings as is the safety of other human beings. Since the human individual needs to kill individuals of other species for food and for the satisfaction of other needs in order to go on living, the human burden in ensuring the safety of other forms of life applies to the species level, not to every individual of any other species. There could be situations, however, in which a species is so near extinction that the safety of one individual determines the safety of that species as a whole. The life of such an individual animal, plant or micro-organism thus becomes more sacrosanct than that of a human individual.

Other species which are not useful to humans but do not endanger human life need not be harmed. In any event, we cannot be certain that it is not our ignorance that is making them look non-essential for us. Even if we knew enough to be certain that a particular species is now useless to us, we cannot be certain that it would not be useful at some time in the future. We must, therefore, heed the Precautionary Principle and treat all species which we do not know to be harmful as essential for human life.

Obviously, we cannot foster co-existence with a species that is dangerous to human life, e.g. the polio virus. If we can eliminate it, therefore, we must try to.

Considering all this, humanity must examine itself and, if the full application of its competitive advantage becomes so large as to overwhelm other species, it has to curb that advantage accordingly. It may, otherwise, unwittingly transform its advantage to a disadvantage and harm itself by destroying other species on which it depends.

The human species is recent, arguably around a hundred thousand years old. Other species, including the majority of those present now, have existed before us for much longer, and have a prior claim on the earth. It would, therefore, be a recognition of this fact to accept that other species have the same right to continue on earth as humanity has. Recognizing this fact would make it easier for us to take the action needed to curb our excesses of demand on the biosphere and to help conserve other species. However, it should not be seen as essential for convincing us to be concerned about other species: we disregard other species at the risk of our own peril.

2. Limits to Knowing

The human (or other species) individual becomes aware of the outside world by interacting with it through her/his senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch). What she/he finds out about anything sensed depends on the nature of the stimulus and/or ability of the sense organ as well as the nervous system. That is why we can recognize colour and dogs cannot. If we had the limitations of the visual system that dogs have, therefore, what we would have made out of the nature of the earth would have been

different from what we now do. Discussions with the colour-blind show us something of what this world would have been like. We can now make sensors that detect infrared light, to which our eyes are insensitive. Through these sensors, we now have an idea of what additional information (and hence knowledge) we would have obtained from the world around us if our eyes were sensitive to infrared light. It is even possible that there are stimuli which none of our senses or the senses of any other living species can detect but which are released by the surrounding world. It is, in fact, also possible that there are aspects of the nature of the universe which do not at all release stimuli, and thus will never be sensed by any living thing / species.

Therefore, there could be phenomena in nature about which we have no information. We cannot even be certain that the information which we are capable of receiving is complete or undistorted. It is, therefore, impossible for us to be certain that we know the truth in absolute terms, and the whole truth about anything.

This is not to say that we should not try to know. Knowing is an ability which we have in our nature and which equips us to deal with our interactions among ourselves and with other things. That we can know is certain; it is only the completeness and accuracy of that knowledge that is uncertain.

In light of the possible incompleteness of our knowledge, we should not be surprised by claims of a sixth sense. Even if it is not very likely, other species may even have seventh, eighth etc. senses which react to stimuli for which we have no senses.

When the components of revealed religion correspond with the information we receive with our senses and the synthesized knowledge we make out of that information, we can easily accept it as valid. If some of its components do not tally with what our mind makes out of the information we receive with our senses, e.g. the existence of angels or the soul, we often dismiss it as unscientific. Is such a dismissal, itself, scientific? Since 'science' is the systematization of knowledge and the appreciation of the coherence among the elements of the system that thus emerges, such a dismissal would be scientific only if we were certain that

every kind of information in the universe is received by one or other of our five senses and thus no information escapes human notice. Even then, we would have to assume that the processing of information by our minds is absolutely competently done. Is the human mind absolutely competent? We would also have to be sure that there are no parts of nature that do not at all release stimuli. Can we be sure?

Given this situation, is it 'scientific' and safe to act only according to what our knowledge tells us is imperative? I think that we should always take into account the possibility that our knowledge is incomplete and thus partially or even completely wrong. The information at our disposal and our knowledge of ourselves and the universe should thus be used with caution.

3. Human Survival

A single-celled organism carries out all the basic functions of life: it receives stimuli from the environment, and reacts to those stimuli in a manner that maximizes its chances of survival and reproduction.

A human being is made up of billions of cells which function in a co-ordinated manner. The individual cells receive stimuli and synchronise their reactions so that the human individual reacts as one whole unit in adapting to her/his surrounding. The group of cells that is responsible for the synchrony of the more complex motivations of action and reaction is the brain. The outcome of the work of the brain is what we call the mind, and it is thus what makes the specific human individual.

A human society is a group of human individuals that co-ordinates the minds of its members into synchronized action. In this way, it adapts to its surrounding maximizing the chances of its survival and contributes to the survival of the human species as a whole.

It is obvious that if the human species is to continue, the individual human cells, the individual human beings, and the individual societies have to be safeguarded. It is not possible to disregard the wellbeing of the cells because there would otherwise be no individuals and no societies and thus no human species. It is not possible to disregard the wellbeing of the

individual because the human cells function in their normal co-ordination only within individuals, and society functions only if it has individuals inside it. Otherwise it becomes empty: a null set. It is not possible to disregard the wellbeing of the society because the human individual and thus also the cells constituting her/him cannot live, let alone develop her/his full potential, in isolation.

The human cells co-ordinate their physiological functions to produce those conditions which are particularly human. They are inter-related in a particular configuration. This is done inside each human individual. That is why, as an outcome of the integration of the functions of human cells, the mind resides in the human individual. Even what society has accumulated as its written or oral compendium of knowledge stimulates human reaction only at the level of the individual. However, the reactions it elicits from the majority of the individuals inside that society are usually similar enough to produce a predictable phenomenon characterized by group creativity, group action and a feeling of group ownership.

This condition gives the human individual an initiating role in what happens at the societal level, or even at the cellular level. This fact introduces a weakness that could result in an imbalance in the system of receiving and evaluating feedback signals to maximally co-ordinate the three components of the hierarchical organizational structure (cellular, individual and societal) of the human species. That is why the individual often gives more weight to her/his own level i.e. to her/his person, and can carry out antisocial acts against other individuals and societies. The fact that not only conscious, but also instinctive reactions also are expressed at the level of the individual only amplifies this imbalance. It is a manifestation of this dilemma that makes society prevent an individual when she/he wants to kill the cells constituting herself/himself (i.e. to commit suicide). When the individual becomes antisocial and wants to kill others or in some other way tries to destroy society, the society again has to act, but this time often not to save the cells in that individual, but to isolate and often kill that individual and thus destroy the cells that constitute her/him in order to protect many other individuals and the cells in them and thus also the society.

The ideal situation would have been one in which the human

consciousness resides in a 'neutral' position away from the organizational hierarchy so that it can be dispassionate about the cell, the individual and the society, and thus objectively maximize adaptation and the chance of survival of the species. But this would require re-creating humanity and, even with genetic engineering and eugenics at our disposal, we do not know how to go about doing it. And I hope that we will never try, as we would then maximize the chances of our extinction. In the context of consciousness, it is only at the level of the individual that we can tinker. Therefore, we must always try to be as impartial to all the three levels (cell, individual, society) of the human species as possible, albeit that we can do so only as individuals.

As the initiator of human action, the human individual cannot be unconscious of her/his condition though she/he may not be aware of the conditions of other individuals. Because of the pain and pleasure that she/he feels, she/he cannot remain unconscious of the detectable conditions and changes at the level of her/his own cells though she/he may not be aware of the conditions of the cells within other individuals. But we very often remain unaware, or even choose to ignore, the conditions at the societal level so long as our respective individual level is not immediately negatively affected.

Considering this human situation, we might suggest that the best position for consciousness would have been the societal level if it is to maximize the survival of the species. This is analogous to the co-ordination of individual instinctive reactions to produce the bee colony centred in the hive, or the ant colony centred in the anthill or nest. Of course this sounds abhorrent to us because we are the individuals that would forgo consciousness.

As already pointed out, we cannot redesign the human species. But, we can use our understanding of the nature of the human situation to find out the nature of the various social experiments which have been tried to overcome this failure in the design of the human species to maximize its survival. Many of these experiments (e.g Fascism, Nazism, Stalinism) focused at the level of society, but ignored the heeding of the signals of pain and dissatisfaction of individuals. Their demise is analogous to the death of an individual whose nervous system fails to function. In the case

of Fascism and Nazism, the ignoring of the signals of pain and dissatisfaction from the individuals outside the group was deliberate. But the institutions that implemented these social experiments were devoid of receptors for even the signals from the individuals supposedly within the group by whom and for whom the experiments were designed. Stalinism was, in theory, all inclusive but it equally lacked receptors of signals of pain and dissatisfaction from individuals and it thus ended up being almost equally oppressive.

A healthy human species with good prospects for continued survival and continuing successful adaptation to the changing environment would thus:

- ◆ In order to optimize survival at the cellular level, ensure availability to the individual of food, medication and appropriate working and living conditions, as well as protection from an unsuitable harmful environment and from drugs that seriously distort the workings of the brain;
- ◆ In order to optimize survival at the individual level, respect the basic human rights and curb all acts of individuals and the society that would infringe upon them; and
- ◆ In order to enhance the chances of survival at the human species level, encourage the co-ordination into constructive single wholes the reactions of individuals in a society so that they can develop sensitive institutions to receive and react to signals of need, pain and dissatisfaction at the individual and societal levels. The individuals as groups will then create societal defence systems that resist domination by other societies through co-operative convergence with them. It must be pointed out, however, that, as a rule, heterogeneity / diversity increases the chances of a species to survive conditions of changing environment, and homogeneity can lead to an evolutionary cul-de-sac. Therefore, even co-operative convergence may not necessarily be always adaptive even if it is harmonious. But cooperative tolerance of diversity certainly is.

4. Globalization and Evolutionary Fitness

Because the unit of the human species in which consciousness resides is the individual, it is abuses of the human individual that leave vivid and lasting impressions in our minds. So long as the individual is alive and well, the fate of the level of the cell is ignored. Fortunately, for the individual to be alive and to feel well, the cells will also have to be functioning optimally, though dying after a short life is the fate of each cell and, also

fortunately, this passes unnoticed at the level of the individual. But the life of a society is very long compared to the life of an individual, and the wellbeing and satisfaction of individuals at a given time may not be an indication that the long-term trend for the society is also that of wellbeing and satisfaction. Within a given society, therefore, the wellbeing of individuals has to be related to the long-term wellbeing of society, and regulated to protect the society from harm and to reduce the chances of it moving towards evolutionary dead-ends.

The desire for maximizing a state of wellbeing by individuals in a specific society often makes those individuals act in concert to change that society to become aggressive towards, and predatory upon, other societies. Each individual's feeling that the maximization is being achieved keeps strengthening the society in its aggression. For a society to act effectively, it has to develop institutions with clearly specified functions translated into activities by the individuals manning the respective institution. A society in an aggressive phase thus creates aggressive institutions. The individuals in that society change after one generation. Even the wishes of the new set of individuals of succeeding generations in that society may change, though usually only gradually. But the institutionalized activities of aggression continue to be implemented more or less mechanically even by peace-loving members of succeeding generations. They are acquired as a norm, and acquired norms are usually not questioned: the individual is born into that culture, and she/he lives in it mostly without questioning it. Very often, initiatives to change such aggressive institutionalized activities dictated by culture are portrayed as anti-patriotic, as seditious, as betrayal of one's own, and the institutions and their aggressive activities thus usually continue unchallenged. The people as individuals in a successful aggressive society are, therefore, usually as trapped in their situation as those in the societies against which the aggression is perpetrated.

Globalization is being ushered into the world through such a historically institutionalized aggression. How did this aggression arise and how is it functioning?

Western Europe has been aggressive and dominant since the 15th century. The whole world now has Western Europeans dispersed in it. In some parts, they have displaced the native populations effectively and they are the majority, e.g. in North America and Australia. All this happened through institutions. Initially, these arose as trading institutions, e.g. the East India Company. Trading institutions soon included humans as

commodities of trade and transformed slavery from a quest for domestic help into a global scourge that uprooted millions of young Africans to provide the labour needed for agricultural and industrial development in other continents. The search for goods and slaves for trade was then militarized and colonialism was created. The direct rule of distant lands through colonial institutions was then transformed into remote control of those lands through the ownership of global institutions of trade, finance, insurance, banking and telecommunications. The giving of nominal independence to those distant lands then became affordable. The human individuals of Western Europe, living both in and outside of Europe, may now not be more aggressive or dominating than other individuals in the rest of the world, but they make these institutions function and are thus now the operators of aggression.

The present day Western Europeans from within Europe as well as from the European Diaspora outside of Europe are thus not the enemies of the South per se. But as operators of these institutions, they are the direct agents of the South's destruction. Should they agree to fight on the side of all the poor of the world to curb and eliminate the aggression from those institutions, they are global friends as individuals; and we in the South should work together with them to change their institutions. Should they defend those institutions, they become our declared enemies and we in the South must fight not only against the institutions which they operate and defend, but also against them personally. This fight becomes a matter of survival, a duty we owe to the cells that constitute us, to the societies we constitute, and to the human species which we must preserve with improved chances of survival continuing beyond the level of our personal lives. But, of course, unless this fight is conducted without resort to arms, there may not be victors, and our species would suffer as a whole. Armed struggle cannot free the world in this era of armaments that can destroy it several times over.

How has the 500-year old European aggression now been institutionalized to bring about globalization?

Western Europe started the process of cultivating aggression by giving undue emphasis to the individual. In the highly seasonal climate of Europe, where year-long survival depends on accumulation during the harvest season, it is not surprising that the ultimate proof of individual prowess is the accumulation of wealth. Western European institutions and laws were thus developed to protect private property. The protection of property

would, at the same time, protect the propertied individual in direct proportion to the amount of his (usually not her) accumulated wealth. The level of the cells and thus also the condition of other individuals did not matter very much, and the soldier, the sailor, the civil servant, the slave and the indentured labourer could be subjected to hardship and pain. Refusal by the poorer and weaker individual to submit was quashed by the threat of execution and/or deportation. Overcoming hostile environments and societies that dared to defend themself

ves thus became possible for Western Europe because the prices were not paid by its wealthy and powerful individuals that decided what should be done, but by its poor and powerless individuals who, if they refused, could be killed off. The Western European society itself was forced to change to suit the individuals who controlled and led it. Other societies submitted to it or else were destroyed. This situation produced a socio-political system in Europe and among the European Diaspora in which individuals competed against one another freely and won depending on the wealth and power at their disposal, unrestrained by community norms. This ended up in idealizing and idolizing individual prowess and eroding the local community's norms. In this way, the individual-centred culture of capitalism emerged.

Given this setting, the protection given to, and the clout that can be exercised by, the propertied individual would increase if propertied individuals ganged up together to have more joint property. Therefore, it became useful to give legal recognition to such groupings of propertied individuals. If recognition were given to groups as such, the most obvious early groupings, i.e. local communities, would have gained prominence. But local communities look after the interests of everybody, rich or poor, even if to varying degrees. The legal protection of local communities would, therefore, have reduced the stature of the propertied individual. The "legal person" was thus invented to make an individual out of a group identified by owning property. In the case of a private limited company, the legal person is a number of named individuals. In the case of a share company, any individual who buys a share becomes a constituent part of the company, his/her importance in the company being directly proportional to the value of the shares he/she owns. This is how multinational corporations were formed and grew up.

There is no legal prohibition against the creation of corporations for purposes which are not for financial gain. But, given the bias in the legal and institutional protection of private property, groupings of people with other aims function at a disadvantage.

Especially if they oppose injustice and want to counterbalance private, and thus also corporate, power, they cannot withstand the clout that money gives to their opponents, and they fail to sustain themselves. They either fade away, or turn to private gain and grow to become the same as corporations. Groupings organized for other purposes thus leave the field to corporations and, as non-governmental organizations, function through grants from the state or from philanthropists. In the prevailing climate of pursuit for gain, therefore, they always remain an afterthought of the society.

In this manner, the profit motive of the unconstrained individual or corporation produced the industrial culture of Western Europe and its Diaspora. The less individually oriented societies all over the world failed to withstand its aggression.

The only serious attempt in the industrial culture to arrest and reverse this individual motivated aggression was that undertaken by the Soviet Union. But the Soviet version of socialism overreacted in its ideology by wanting to completely subjugate the individual to the society. Therefore, it made the fatal mistake of depriving the system it created for the implementation of socialism the organizational sensitivity to signals of want, pain and dissatisfaction produced by the lower organizational level, the individual. The fact that initiative by the human species can be taken only at the level of the individual placed individuals at the helm of even this system of quest for socialism. This absence of a system of sensing want, pain and dissatisfaction from lower down the organizational hierarchy made those individuals at the helm give in to their own personal fancies. Their unrestricted individual fancies drove the Soviet system to an extreme repression of the people and
to the eventual disintegration of the system itself.

When it looked certain that it was disintegrating, some well meaning globally influential individuals tried to use the void being created to reorient the world towards obtaining a greater fairness and justice, and a natural environment optimally suitable for life. The Rio Summit was convened to set the process of reorientation in motion.

But corporate forces also acted to fill in the void created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thatcherism and Reaganism thus subverted the Rio process, and the road was cleared for ushering in the era of global rule by Northern corporations.

Less than 20% of humanity lives in the industrialized North. It owns more than 80% of

global wealth. In the more powerful countries of the industrialized North, virtually no individual can hold a high government office unless he/she is supported by the corporate world. This is because the expenses incurred in elections to public office are so prohibitive that it becomes unaffordable by the individual rich, let alone by the individual poor. Therefore, corporate oligarchy is entrenched in the name of democracy.

In the stiff global competition, Northern corporations, which are all big compared to their Southern counterparts, establish branches in the South and buy up smaller ones everywhere. Corporations thus end up becoming multinational, with their headquarters in the North. Since Northern individuals achieve public office through corporate support, Northern governments cannot help but pursue corporate agendas. Northern corporations thus rule the world.

Looking at these trends, one can make a realistic prediction of things to come. Let us, look at this prediction for developed and developing countries separately, bearing in mind, however, that the distinction between the two sets of countries is not absolute. Some developing countries might escape the poverty trap and end up with conditions similar to those of developed countries. Even fewer industrialized countries might end up in situations similar to those of developing countries.

B. The Manifesto

In the short run, i.e. in a time frame of a decade or two, the present trends towards a global disequilibrium in wealth and power and thus also in the persons and institutions of the human species and accelerating biodiversity loss will become more and more exacerbated. After sidelining it briefly, the powerful countries will tame the United Nations Organization more and more into becoming their global instrument of exercising corporate power. In the medium term, i.e. within half a century or so, reactions to these trends will begin to be significantly expressed by concerned individuals and even institutions. If the positive (corrective) reactions prevail, a new genuinely participatory democratic system with strong local communities that care for both their members and for their environment will emerge. States will become the instruments for serving primarily the local communities in their territories. The United Nations Organization or its successor will then be reclaimed as their forum for participatory global coordination of local community decisions and actions. Otherwise, protracted uncertainties and struggles between democratic and

oligarchic trends will continue, with new democratic social organizations being established within a century or so. However, this democratization process will take place only if cataclysmic conflicts do not destroy life as we now know it.

1. Short and Medium-term Scenarios for Industrialized Countries

In all Northern countries, it will soon become completely impossible for individuals not sponsored by corporations to occupy public office. Indirect rule by corporations will soon be complete.

This will not mean that Northern governments will be weak, even in dealing with corporations. In order to keep the South under control, the collective will of corporations will continue to generate strong Northern governments. What it will mean is that the agendas Northern governments will pursue will be those that corporations want. The United Nations Organization, with its Security Council of selected powerful states, will be used by them as the main global instrument. In particular:

- ◆ Rights will be created internationally to enable multinational corporations to have unquestioned access to natural resources and markets globally;
- ◆ The few big multinational corporations and their share-holders will get richer and richer. Conversely, the number of the Northern poor will grow with the number of share-holders decreasing, but the wealth of the reducing number of share-holders increasing;
- ◆ Some parts of the globe will become economically so poor that they will lose their value as markets even when they continue to be important as sources of raw materials. A new form of 'gunboat diplomacy' in securing these resources will emerge, with mercenaries paid by the multinational corporations protecting the raw material extraction and transportation facilities;
- ◆ Labour will not be allowed to move globally, and a global apartheid system separating North from South, already becoming markedly noticeable in Europe and North America, will be consciously and blatantly instituted by industrialized countries;
- ◆ Even when famines occur and genocides are perpetrated in such impoverished Southern countries, the North will stop reacting. These happenings will become frequent and common place, and the Northern public will learn to accept them. The corporate controlled mass-media will also initially cover such happenings only cursorily, and eventually stop covering them altogether;
- ◆ In spite of the actual improvement in the electronic information flow between North

and South, growing islands of Southern countries reduced to destitution and chaos will be accepted by the North as a norm;

◆ Scientific and technological information will continue to be controlled through globally enforced intellectual property rights (IPRs). But in the next few years, more and more of it will be maintained as confidential information, globally protected from public scrutiny by the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and enforced by armed private agents of multinational corporations which will behave in a manner analogous to the private armies of feudal war lords. Just as kings allowed such armies in the strong feudal regimes, so will laws passed by the corporation dominated parliaments allow the operations of the armed private agents of the multinational corporation oligarchs.

◆ Not only in genetic engineering and nanotechnology, but also in all other fields that could produce marketable products, research and development activities will continually be privatized by multinational corporations and the knowledge generated will increasingly be kept as confidential information.

◆ The WTO will gradually be subjugated to the United Nations Organization through the powers of the Security Council. This may not happen formally, but it will happen at least in practice.

◆ Current knowledge will thus become unavailable to enable teaching and related research to be conducted in universities. Initially, therefore, new graduates employed by multinational corporations will need increasingly longer periods of re-training to become useful employees. Eventually, higher education will become irrelevant and corporations will recruit their trainable employees directly from schools. The medieval type of training by apprenticeship will thus become more and more the norm.

◆ Educational institutions will thus become needed only for literacy.

◆ In the wake of the globalization dominated by the corporate world, such subjects as history, literature, culture etc. will become an irrelevance and drop out of curricula altogether.

◆ Social benefits for the elderly and unemployed will be reduced and may be eliminated.

◆ The empoerished young will initially increase their drug addiction and crime.

◆ Eventually a critical mass of the unemployed poor will be reached in some countries and challenges to the corporate driven system of governance will be formulated and implemented in those countries.

◆ Local communities will organize themselves in town and country to look after their empoerished and marginalized members.

- ◆ The growing uncertainty and despondency will create a general pessimism that will negatively affect stock markets.
- ◆ This will weaken corporate dominance, and strengthen local community organizations.
- ◆ The risk of nuclear holocausts and chemical and biological warfare will increase. The use of genetically engineered disease causing organisms and nanotechnologies, specially designed for agricultural and ethnic warfare, will grow.
- ◆ Global climate change will accelerate.
- ◆ Species extinction will also accelerate further, and a new form of desertification caused by new forms of environmental ravage will set in.

Alternatively:

- ◆ The corporate-led North will use its financial powers constructively, and multinational corporations will invest in all the poor countries of the world not only for immediate profit, but also for long term stability, and global development together with effective environmental management and protection will ensue.

The trouble with this optimistic scenario is that the trends seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which freed capitalism to dominate the world under its own terms, do not tally with it. Poverty for the average person has increased in both the North and the South, and wars and acts of terrorism have surfaced in virtually all the continents. Especially since the uplifting rhetoric of the Rio summit in 1992, the renegeing of commitments by the North, and the increase of poverty and chaos in the South, make it difficult to think that this scenario of optimism is likely to materialize.

2. Short and Medium-term Scenarios for Developing Countries

In all Southern countries, governments will, as in the North, pursue corporate agendas. The gap between governments and the people will grow. Squeezed between corporate and people's power, governments will become weak and unstable. They will become less and less able to satisfy either the corporations or the public. This will provide fertile ground for chaos and misery, but also for rethinking values and challenging the global situation. Local, especially rural, communities will be the organizations in which the disenchanting and impoverished young will find refuge and solace. Many of them, though, will perish through crime, drugs, AIDS and other diseases.

After many people have died from AIDS, the majority of the survivors will resort to traditional values and the local community for survival.

The corporation dominated North will find any such chaos-ridden Southern country not worthy of consideration for trade. With Northern interference removed, the societies will re-establish their global autonomy, and get room for endogenous democratic developments. These will be possible, however, only if the countries are poor in the raw materials which the North wants. Otherwise, mercenaries will keep them always unsettled.

While this is happening to the society, the ineffective Southern governments will continue to function as clumsy mirror-images of the Northern governments, and virtually all the scenarios portrayed earlier for the North will apply for the formal, and especially urban, sector of the South as well.

3. Long-Term Global Scenarios

The likelihood of the long-term scenarios we may now construct becoming realistic cannot be very high. Nevertheless, it would help us keep our future focus in place if we could carry out the exercise albeit only tentatively. Doing that will require further thinking and some debate. Every body reading this is invited to react.

In broad terms, though, we can expect globalization to become more democratic. It will also care for biodiversity. To do this, it will curb individual greed. It will promote local action for social and environmental responsibility. The local community will thus be reborn where it hardly exists, and reform and strengthen where it is still significant. Local communities will interact globally and increasingly support one another in a reticulate rather than hierarchical manner. They will also assume much of the resource and financial management that is now in the realm of corporations. Both the state and the enterprise will become more sensitive locally while interlinking globally. Global human mobility will be unrestricted. Instead of becoming one village ghetto with a few palaces, the world will become millions of interacting villages. It will be one in being hospitable to humans and biodiversity, but myriads in the ways it does so. Enough global coordination will ensue to enable effective action to deal with global phenomena, e.g. climate change, water, energy and diseases.

The alternative is increasing terrorism and chaos which will end up in cataclysms that

will destroy not only human life, but also other forms of biodiversity as we now know them.

4. What Should We Do Now?

We should link up North and South with information so that they synchronize their action to modify their respective societies to move towards the positive developments that are emerging. This could be done as follows:

- ◆ Establish communication between the poor and the concerned individuals as well as the concerned institutions of the North, and their equivalents of the South.
- ◆ Encourage the formation of endogenous chapters of a movement, which we can call Life's Salvation Movement, as a coalition of interested people and organizations in each country.
- ◆ Establish informal, reticulate, non-hierarchically structured, communication channels for co-ordination of action among chapters that feel similarly about similar issues.
- ◆ Provide assistance in information, moral, political and when possible material, terms to any of the country chapters needing them.
- ◆ The aim of a chapter will be to keep evaluating events in its own country, in its neighbouring countries, and globally, and work towards the maximizing of the likelihood of safety of human and other forms of life and the environment by influencing its government, corporations, religious institutions, community institutions, etc.
- ◆ The aim of a chapter will also be to influence its government to stand for the rights of its people in international negotiations and relations.
- ◆ Our only hope for political change is through hastening global social evolution. In this era of instant communication and high potential for extensive and long lasting devastation from chemical, nuclear and biological weapons, quick revolutionary change is unthinkable. We cannot invite chaos in the hope that a new synthesis of geopolitics and a new allignment of forces will bring us out of any violent revolution into a better world. Therefore, the chapters and their sub-chapters must push for change by lobbying and convincing. They must scrupulously obey their respective national laws. Their activities must be locally and globally completely transparent. They must protect themselves from sway by individuals or organizations that espouse tactics that use any deception, force or terrorism. The cost of adventurism is now too great for life on Earth to bear.
- ◆ Non governmental and religious organizations would be appropriate organizations to initiate such chapters or sub-chapters in countries in both North and South. Hopefully, some enlightened governments would also help in initiating them.

With immense gratitude to you all.

Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher

Cc:

- Dr. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary of the CBD
secretariat@biodiv.org
Montreal, Canada
- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister,
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Embassy of Canada,
Addis Ababa

Environmental Protection Authority

E-mail: esid@ethionet.et

Website: www.epa.gov.et

Fax: 251-1-46 48 82/46 48 76

Tel: 251-1-46 50 07

P.O.Box 12760

Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

NOTE: Our e-mail address has been changed from <esid@telecom.net.et> to
<esid@ethionet.et>