

# Timeline

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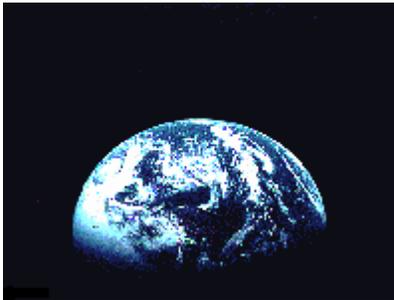
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# Breaking the Chains of Hate

## Review of the book *Forgiveness* by Michael Henderson

Reviewed by Mac Lawrence

*REVENGE: To retaliate, to avenge oneself, to inflict injury in kind or degree, to get even.*

What could be a more natural response when we are hurt or wronged or experience great injustice? Ah, but there is a Chinese saying: "He who opts for revenge must first dig two graves."

So begins the book *Forgiveness* by Michael Henderson, the second of his books on the subject [see *Timeline* Sept./Oct. 1997]. His is one of many new books on repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Notes Henderson: "It is striking how many countries and individuals seem to be ready to face up to past abuses." Pope John Paul II asks forgiveness for the church's moral failures from a long list that includes victims of World War II, blacks, and Native Americans. The prime minister of Japan apologizes to WWII British prisoners, and to South Korea for Japan's 35 years of colonial rule. The Italian president apologizes for invading Ethiopia. The British prime minister apologizes to the Irish for Britain's role in the famine 150 years ago. The president of Argentina apologizes to the British for the Falklands/Malvinas war.

In his book, author Henderson focuses on the vital part forgiveness plays across all human areas, from the personal to the national. He echoes the comment of

Archbishop Tutu: "Without forgiveness there is no future," and adds: "Neither forgiveness nor its inverse, repentance, will alone solve the world's problems or bring peace. But without those two elements, it is hard to see how settlements will prevail over time. Forgiveness knows no national boundaries and has the power to break the chain of hatred and revenge handed down from one generation to the next."

*"He who forgives ends the quarrel."  
African proverb*

For the individual, Henderson declares, forgiveness is good for the soul. He quotes Father Andrija Vrane: "When we think of forgiveness, the fear may arise that evil will remain unpunished. It is as if forgiving might mean to give up the right to punish evil. Despite all of this I have to see what evil does to me; it makes me want to react to evil with evil. Then I see everything with dark glasses of evil. It paralyzes me and alienates me from life. Forgiving means bidding goodbye to evil, in order not to be guided by it any more. A process of reconciliation may take some time as the other side has to recognize its faults also. With forgiveness, however, I don't need to wait and waste time. Forgiveness gives me freedom to love now. When we attain this freedom, we realize that those who have done evil are themselves its victims. In forgiving we do not lose anything, rather we receive a gift."

*"Do not wrong or hate your neighbor;  
for it is not he that you wrong; you  
wrong yourself."*

*Shawnee chant*

Reverend Pixie Hammond, who holds seminars on forgiveness, agrees. “People don’t understand what the word means. They think forgiveness means condoning the other person’s behavior. It does not. It has to do only with oneself. One needs to realize that nobody does anything to me; whether I am angry or not is strictly my choice.”

Henderson warns, however, that forgiveness is not easy. He quotes C. S. Lewis: “Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.” To that, Henderson adds: “The first thing to be said is that, if to forgive may be divine, it is also devilish difficult. The men and women who have found the strength to forgive deserve our respect; those who are not yet prepared to go that far need our understanding. My hope in writing this book is that those who hesitate may be encouraged by the example of forgiveness in its stories, and that others may take fresh heart about the world when they set these stories against the daily headlines reflecting violence and vengeance.”

*“Our enemy is our ultimate teacher.”*  
*The Dalai Lama*

There are stories of former combatants in various wars coming to terms with their hatred of the enemy and of those who tortured them. There are stories of healing relationships in Guatemala, Cambodia, Eritrea, the island of Fiji, the Middle East. One whole chapter is devoted to the story of the National Sorry Day when Australians faced up to their past “dispossession, oppression, and degradation” of the Aboriginal peoples, an act of contrition that a year later led to the “Journey of Healing” dedicated to

overcoming the continuing consequences of the wrongs that took place.

Though Henderson has written two books on the subject, and is often asked to be a speaker, he is not comfortable with his reputation of being an expert on forgiveness, noting that, “I have had the good fortune to be associated with and exposed to hundreds of people who have been working for reconciliation and change. They are men and women from every part of the world and from different faiths whose basic philosophy has been that if you want to bring about change in the world, the best place to start is with yourself. I find myself fascinated by those people who don’t wait for repentance on the part of those who have done them wrong before they forgive; those who are not aware that they should not extend forgiveness to a whole country and go ahead and do it anyway.”

*“Learning to forgive someone who has hurt you may be one of life’s most demanding, yet most meaningful, tasks.”*  
*Huston Smith*

Henderson concludes: “That is, indeed, the challenge of forgiveness—or repentance—for each one of us: to jettison the baggage. Not to weigh up the pros and cons, the expediency or otherwise, but to take time in quiet to see if there is any step, small or large, that we are meant to take, now.”

***Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate***  
 by Michael Henderson  
 Book Partners Wilsonville, OR, 1999.  
 \$14.95



## Kosovo: Re-learning the Lesson of Violence

### An Editorial by the *Timeline* Staff

During the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the *Timeline* staff felt strongly that the bombing should stop. Rather than wait for the next *Timeline* issue to be published, we mailed a letter to each reader and included an editorial by former President Jimmy Carter on steps that should have been taken before the bombing began, and some steps to take that could end it.

In our letter, we said: “The violence by the Milosevic regime against the Albanian Kosovars is appalling, but equally appalling is the violence being committed by NATO. Two wrongs do not make a right. The situation cries out for creative solutions that do not use violence, blood-shed, and bombs.” Our concerns were that the bombing not only was killing people and destroying the infrastructure in Yugoslavia, but would inflame the passions on both sides, solving nothing and making the situation worse. In effect, the war was punishing the innocent in order to express indignation at those who were seen as the guilty.

It is now a year later, and the disastrous results of NATO’s action are obvious. NATO’s “humanitarian intervention,” the stated goal of the military action, never

materialized. Before the bombing, an estimated 230,000 had left their homes in Kosovo during the prior 18 months. During the bombing, the number of the displaced increased dramatically, finally totaling 1.4 million. Since then, enmity between the Albanians and Serbs has led to further bloodshed, threatening the stability of the entire region. Albanians are exacting revenge against Serbs, forcing them from Kosovo and killing many—some 80 percent of Serbs, Romas, and other minorities have already been driven out. Hatred of the peacekeeping force is high, KFOR troops are being stoned, the “disbanded” KLA continues its violence.

Beyond the human catastrophe and the enormous destruction, “the war was a gross error in political judgment,” notes Michael Mandelbaum, in an article in *Foreign Affairs* titled, “A Perfect Failure: NATO’s War Against Yugoslavia.” He writes: “Every war has unanticipated consequences, but in this case virtually all the major political effects were unplanned, unanticipated, and unwelcome.” The war caused strained relationships among a host of countries, and was a particular setback for relations between NATO and China and Russia. Mandelbaum: “The war strengthened the elements in the Chinese government least favored by Washington, and it stirred anti-American sentiment in some sectors of the Chinese population.”

Relations with Russia were injured even more seriously. They soured earlier when NATO broke its promise to Gorbachev not to expand NATO’s military alliance eastward when it extended membership to Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and a reunited Germany. NATO

countered by promising Russia that it would be primarily political, that its military role would be defensive only, and that Russia would participate fully in European security affairs. Bombing Kosovo broke all three promises, and helped shift Russian foreign policy toward greater nationalism and distrust. The bombing itself violated the Geneva Convention, which bars attacks on “objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.” And by interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, the war violated the basic premise on which all international law is based.

As President Carter pointed out in his editorial, there were a number of opportunities to resolve the situation short of war. Problems involving Kosovo had been building for years, with Albanians settling in Kosovo, beginning to outnumber Serbs, demanding more control, and supporting terrorism by the KLA. Many experts believe that if the international community had been involved earlier, the eventual disaster might have been averted. As for NATO’s desire to remove Milosevic from power, the bombing only increased his hold on power—this despite the fact that he was not popular earlier with the Serbs, and was almost ousted by the Serbs in demonstrations in 1996-7. And by branding him a war criminal, NATO assured that Milosevic would remain in Yugoslavia.

Perhaps the ultimate irony is that the terms that ended the bombing gave more concessions to the Serbs than they were offered before the bombing, in the negotiations at Rambouillet with the Serbs and the KLA. What if these

concessions had been made to the Serbs at that point instead of threatening them with military action if they did not accept the Rambouillet Accords? The tragedy is that we will never know.

As we write this, relations are deteriorating between Taiwan and mainland China, between India and Pakistan, in Ireland. The Russians are devastating Chechnya. We are arming Colombia to the teeth, and are still bombing Iraq and imposing debilitating sanctions there. It is natural to wonder what, if anything, can be done to help calm or resolve these situations.

Certainly we can stop arming the world. We can decide to ban land mines. We can lessen our dependence on resources like petroleum, which tends to drive much of our foreign policy. We can have more tolerance and understanding of those whose cultures and concepts are different from ours. We can stop taking sides, stop posing enemies, and stop demonizing individuals and ethnic groups. And we can rule out violence as a way to resolve conflict. As one person observed: “It is far better to sit around a table and talk than to stand around a grave and weep.”

***“It’s wrong to think the bombing campaign ended the war. The confrontation between men goes on. The hatreds are stronger.”***

Bernard Kouchner,  
the top UN official in Kosovo as quoted in  
the *Christian Science Monitor*



## Mas Masumoto: Organic Farmer

### An Interview

*Mas Masumoto, a third-generation Japanese American, is an organic farmer in California's San Joaquin Valley. He is author of two books, Epitaph for a Peach and, more recently, Harvest Son. Masumoto is featured in the most recent video produced by the Foundation, The Living Land.*

Our farm—20 acres of peaches and 60 acres of grapes—has been in the family for a number of generations. My grandparents emigrated from Japan and they were farm workers. My dad bought the farm after World War II and I grew up on this farm, went away for college, but came back afterwards.

Two things brought me back. One was the pull of family. My brother and sister had left the farm, and I was the only one who could answer the question: Did we want the farm to stay in the family? Then there was the pull of the land. I was educated at Berkeley and lived in an urban area, of course. But I always felt this longing to be attached, connected to something like the land, like the soil, that I could feel and have that touch of the earth between my hands and under my fingernails. It was all part of that draw to something that seemed to me to be very, very real. And part of that realism also was that sense of history of my family on the land.

One of the peaches we grow is the Sun Crest. My Dad planted the trees when we were young and they became very important because they were our college

education fund. If we did well with this peach, we three kids would get to go to college. The Sun Crest was a popular peach in the '60s, partly because it was USDA-developed and you didn't have to pay a patent royalty like you have to do today because now most peaches are propagated by nurseries. Back then, we, like many farmers, were poor so it was a peach you could afford. But the Sun Crest peach has two major characteristics that make it a problem today. One is that when it's ripe, it isn't lipstick red like the peaches are in the store today. Also it doesn't have this abnormal shelf-life of two or three months in cold storage which today's peaches have. It was a real peach that needed to be eaten within two or three weeks after you picked it. So now it's considered an "old peach," and only two or three of us are growing it in California.

Most people today want the latest thing, and that includes peaches. But I think our customers—we ship across the nation—have a memory of what a good peach tastes like and are willing to pay a little bit more for it. What I try to do with my peaches is to grow them so that they're tree ripe, ready to eat. When you eat a luscious peach, it enriches all your senses. First, you see this amber glow to a ripe piece of fruit. When you bring it to your face you can smell that peach perfume. When you bite into it the juices just explode in your mouth and dribble down your cheeks and dangle on your chin. And on your tongue the flavors have this richness that has a depth to it.

Peaches that are bred for cold-storage shelf-life, peaches that are bred for their color, they lack life. When you bite into one, it's as if you could be eating an

apple, you could be eating cardboard, you could be eating anything. Peaches that don't have that human quality to it, they're just a commodity, they're literally interchangeable and you don't realize you're eating a peach because when you bite into one your mind doesn't say "peach," it just says "keep chewing and try to swallow." Those kinds of fruits have lost that personality, they've lost that sensorial connection. I sometimes go out and talk to different groups of people and it dawns on me, not everyone knows what a good peach tastes like! Not everyone knows what a juicy grape tastes like. If they don't have that collective memory, how will they understand the work that I'm doing? How will they begin to understand that the soils that I work with, the land that I treat well and live on, they have meaning to me, have a sense of history?

### **On Going Organic**

When we were young and my father was farming, we were pretty close to being organic, mainly because we couldn't afford a lot of chemical treatments. My dad gave us shovels instead of using herbicides and this was our organic way of farming. But as time evolved, our farm followed the course of most farms and started using more and more chemicals. After I came back from college and started to farm, I worked with my dad, side by side, and talked to him about farming a more natural way—a way that uses fewer chemicals, a way that uses more natural means of farming. In the last 15 years, we've slowly shifted the farm over to an organic farm where we use natural means of controlling pests, and natural fertilizers and compost.

I always try to work with nature. It's easy to say that, but in practice it can be a challenge. For example, compost and organic fertilizers work slowly. They take their time to enrich the ground and for the trees and the vines to take them up. I think that's naturally how peaches should grow and grapes should grow. Synthetic fertilizers tend to be almost like steroids that pump up trees real fast, but I like the slow growth.

For pests, we use biological controls. They're as simple as having good bugs in the field to eat the bad bugs. Good bugs don't just arrive, we have to provide a habitat for them. So that's why I'll plant cover crops—peas and vetches and clovers—which provide this rich undergrowth of greenery for ladybugs and lacewings to come and make their homes. While they're making their home here, they'll eat some of the bad bugs we have. We also use natural pest controls called pheromones which are basically a scent of a female pest, such as the oriental fruit moth. We put the female scent out in the field, so when the male tries to mate with the female, he can't find the female. We get a sexually frustrated male oriental fruit moth who never mates and we never have the worm pest.

The unnatural method of pest control would be using chemicals which tend to kill not only the pest you're aiming for, but a lot of other things in the field. In farming, it's important to allow as much life as possible to grow in the land, on the trees, in the soils, because that creates natural buffers. The more life you have in a field, the more enriching that land becomes and the more defenses you have for pests. For example, many

farmers spray their trees with fungicides to kill the brown rot which attacks peaches and other fruits. But in the organic community, we've found that if you have lots of organic life in the field, those niches the brown rot would try to find on a fruit may be literally covered with some other living organism. Also our peaches tend to have more fuzz than the new peaches. You keep thinking, "Why do peaches have fuzz?" and I think it is a natural barrier to brown rot.

Today, many farmers see these natural pest controls, the organic methods, as a type of experiment. But more and more farmers are adopting some of the methods that we're using, partly because they work, but also partly, I think, because agriculture as a whole is becoming more consumer aware, and consumers are driving a lot of these changes. When consumers demand food that's safer, agriculture will respond. So I see a wonderful shift in that way. I don't think of myself as an organic farmer separate from the rest of agriculture. We're all part of a larger system. I just may be doing it slightly differently than others. I never consider my methods better than my neighbors, they're just different.

It's important that we change the way we grow food because in many ways our farms have become factories as opposed to something that has life in them. Peaches have become just simply a commodity. We have been losing our connection with the foods we grow. But if we pay attention to flavors and tastes, we can realize that we aren't just eating a commodity, we're actually eating a peach or a grape or a raisin that has life to it. We need to reintroduce the human

element into that whole food chain, to personalize produce, to see the farmer behind it, to understand that this is all part of a human act that has life to it as opposed to something that comes out of a factory.

### **On Imported Produce**

When I go into a store and see all these imported fruits and vegetables, I'm bothered because we're looking at fruits and vegetables as a commodity that we can buy year round. Peaches aren't supposed to be grown year round. They only grow during the summer, and grapes in late summer. As a result, when we see this produce the year round, in a way we're fooling ourselves into thinking these things are man-made and come out of a factory. And if we think it comes out of a factory, we could have everything we want manufactured into it. It would automatically be pristine, automatically be the right designer color to match our table cloth or our flatware. It would be something that's unnatural. That's what bothers me when I see out-of-season produce in the store.

What I like seeing are stores that go with the seasons, that feature and promote seasonal fruits and vegetables. Because what it's telling me is that that store and those people who shop at the store understand the ebbs and flows of seasons. They understand the regionality of food, that in this particular area of the nation, peaches ripen at this time and this is the best time to eat that peach.

### **On the Living Soil**

Soil is not just a matter of physical elements, it's a living organism. If you

grab a handful of rich soil, it's like taking a wonderful peach. You can smell the aroma, the life in that soil. You can feel it, the texture of the soil in your hand. And you can literally taste it. I say literally because as a farmer I have often worked in fields where dust kicks up and it coats my face and I lick my lips often and I can taste the dust. That soil has life to it because it has living organisms in it. It also has history to it. This isn't just land that we bought and we just planted stuff. It's land that my dad farmed; it's land that my grandparents worked. Dirt and soil remember. The land has a lifeline that you measure in generations, decades, centuries. The land that I farm obviously took centuries to form into what it is now.

### **On the Loss of Farmland**

When urban sprawl starts spreading to farmland, it hurts me. Because you have topsoil that's irreplaceable being covered with asphalt. You can't simply take my farm, move it out to the desert, plunk it down, and make a new farm. It doesn't work that way. Good rich topsoil is a limited resource—no different than an old growth forest, no different than an endangered species.

I sometimes wonder if the people who live in those subdivisions understand the rich resource their house is built upon. Most subdivisions become sterile places where they don't want people touching the land, getting soil underneath their fingernails, getting dirt into the house. The irony is, of course, that that soil has life in it. And that's the very thing I would think you want in a house—life within a house.

It's difficult for a farmer not to sell out to a subdivision and a developer, and I have no argument with a farmer who does. The deeper issue is how do we value farms, how do we value farmers, and how do we value the very land that they live on? Is it something that's reduced simply to an economic element, or is it something that's much broader than that, that has life in it, that has a certain sacredness in it, and has a history?

### **Spring**

As we sit here now, spring is just awakening on the land. If you see the grasses, they are growing and they love this first warmth of spring and they push up very quickly. Planted in the grasses are wildflowers. Wildflowers are very delicate. They're not real showy. But they're hidden there as if they were magical surprises that are going to occur within the next few weeks. The trees are awakening from their dormant sleep. We've had a cold winter, which is good. Trees like to go into a deep sleep. Then they wake up refreshed. When you have a very warm winter, the trees never sleep well and they wake up grouchy and grumpy.

Within a few weeks, the first things that appear on peach trees are not leaves, but blossoms. The blossoms open in a popcorn stage and gradually with their petals you get a block of solid pink that is just gorgeous out in the fields. In about three weeks, you'll see the grapes awaken from their winter slumber. Within days you'll see at the end of the vines where we had pruned them, little water spouts forming and literally drips coming as the vine awakens from its

winter sleep. Fluids start flowing through it and the vines bleed water.

The next things that occur on a grape are that the buds start swelling and form this wonderful green bud that gently pushes out and opens in the sunlight. That's what occurs in this magical time of spring. It's a time of hope, for farmers see this life occurring and know that another year is renewed.



## Trying to Measure Nations' Sustainability

By Donella Meadows

Every year at the peak of the alpine ski season, the world's movers and shakers, the heads of the largest corporations and wealthiest governments, head for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. This year an event occurred there that was largely unreported but possibly historic. The attendees were presented with a ranking of the world's nations according to environmental sustainability.

The search for sustainability measures is hot right now. The United Nations has a mandate to produce them. Many nations and states and cities are developing their own. Academic groups argue endlessly about them. The search is based on a darn good question: How long can we keep this up? To what extent is our frantic economic activity eating into the

planet's resource base, its waste-absorbing capacity, its life-support systems?

It's great that this question is being asked. It's like the moment when a young spendthrift who has inherited a fortune finally wonders, "Hey, is this money going to last?" Or like the long-ago breakthrough when some bright young accountant first realized the difference between capital and income.

You would think that that concept, so basic to every business and household, would have been applied long ago to national and world accounts. But it never has been. We have been mesmerized by the measure called GDP or GNP, which counts only spending. That's about as useful as a dashboard that tells us our speed but not how much gas is in the tank. We have never kept good track of our fundamental forms of capital: the natural systems that give us vital streams of materials and energy and clean water and air, or the social systems—families, communities, all kinds of organizations—that produce, raise, educate, maintain, heal, inspire, and fulfill human beings.

It's hard to imagine that folks who call themselves capitalists have done such bad capital accounting for so long. But we have. As a consequence we pride ourselves when the GDP goes up, while forests, soils, families, and communities go down. Like maturing wastrels, we're finally beginning to notice that our wealth is shrinking and to ask questions that can be answered only by new types of measurement.

That we don't yet know how to do sustainability accounting is demonstrated by the apologetic tone of the report just delivered at Davos and by the silliness of

the rankings. “A number of serious limitations in the available data relevant to environmental sustainability drastically limit the ability of the world community to monitor the most basic pollution and natural resource trends,” say the authors (mostly from Columbia and Yale) in academic report-speak. “The methods used are experimental and should not be construed as definitive statements about precise levels of environmental sustainability.”

In short, the numbers are dubious, and the rankings are tentative. We can take with a grain of salt that the five “most sustainable” nations are Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden and that the five “least sustainable” are Zimbabwe, Egypt, El Salvador, Philippines, Vietnam. And that the United States comes in 16th among the 56 nations listed.

What’s most glaringly wrong with this list is that it may tell us where these nations are relative to each other, but not where they are relative to sustainability. Norway—which imports virtually all of its food, which has fished out its rich offshore cod stocks, whose income and machines depend on oil deposits that will run out in a few decades and that, while they last, are changing the climate—is nowhere close to sustainable. Maybe no more so than Egypt, whose burgeoning population crowds the narrow zone of polluted, depleted soil and water along the Nile. Switzerland, a source of toxic chemicals and nuclear waste and luxurious consumption based almost entirely on imports, has no call to pride itself on being more sustainable than the Philippines, which has decimated its forests and fisheries while enriching a

corrupt upper class and impoverishing virtually everyone else.

I wouldn’t bet that any of these nations can maintain its current way of life for the next 100 years, or 50, or 30. Having spent considerable time in Oslo and Zurich, having friends in Manila and Cairo, I wouldn’t say that any of these ways of life contains much wisdom about what life is for.

I don’t want to be too hard on the Davos environmental sustainability list. I’m delighted that it exists and that it was delivered to people in high places. I hope there will be more such lists, growing in sophistication, accuracy, and connection to what is important in the world. I just don’t want people in high places to think that the Davos numbers give us any idea of how quickly we are spending down irreplaceable wealth or achieving real human development.

We can learn at least as much about sustainability by turning our eyes away from numbers and noticing the soil washing down the streams, the clear-cuts where forests once stood, the changing climate, the smell of city air, the places on Earth too contaminated to live in or too desperate to be safe in, and the hectic emptiness of our lives. Some day we may have numbers to measure these blatant signals of unsustainability. In the meantime, we can admit what we already know.

*Donella H. Meadows, a systems analyst, author, director of the Sustainability Institute, and adjunct professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College, writes a syndicated article each week to “present a global view, a connected view, a long-term view, an environmental and compassionate view.” Meadows can be*

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## The Precautionary Principle

### A Report by Sook Holdridge

“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context, the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.”

*The Precautionary Principle,  
1998 Wingspread Statement*

Our Foundation for Global Community group has been discussing the Precautionary principle since my wife Lou introduced it as part of a review on a conference on cancer prevention she attended. Our daughter died of breast cancer at age 33, so this issue has been very close to us. By the end of the two-day conference, Lou felt overwhelmed by the amount of evidence shared by experts showing the link—but never claiming full proof—between cancer and the environment. Researchers reported that 80% of cancers may have environmental causation and expressed concern that fewer than 10% of the 85,000 chemicals in use have been tested for safety, and 2,000 to 3,000 are added each year. The more our group discussed it, the more the Precautionary Principle made sense.

The precautionary concept was adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in the declaration known as “Agenda 21.” In January 1998, 32 scientists, lawyers, policy makers, and environmentalists from around the world met at Wingspread, headquarters of the Johnson Foundation in Racine, WI, to refine the statement of the Precautionary Principle and the basis for it.

Several countries have taken steps at the national level to implement the principle. Australia has adopted the precautionary approach in its EPA charter. New Zealand has its proposal on the table. The United Kingdom has embraced it theoretically, though with suspicions about its threat to economic growth. Canada is discussing adopting a version similar to Australia’s. Germany has led a “best available technology” approach to precaution with economic feasibility as a moderating factor. Sweden promotes “The Natural Step” program.

However, the United States has been characterized as “resistant.” “We have a growth agenda,” said the chairman of the National Chamber of Commerce in 1997. We are committed to “take the burden of government intrusion off the backs of American entrepreneurs...and remove barriers to the global development of our enterprise system.” About the same time these words were spoken, the U.S. Senate voted 96 to 0 to do nothing about the Kyoto recommendations for reducing greenhouse gases—mostly because the Senate took the position that our economy might be “hurt.”

They see precaution as costly and a hindrance to growth. But this is

shortsighted. The long-term costs of deteriorating natural systems and public health are more often far greater than precautionary costs incurred now. Economy and ecology need not be separate issues; when precaution is an integral part of the way an economy functions, it can stimulate the development of better, safer, cheaper, and more sustainable technologies. Growing popular support for this approach partly explains the recent protests against actions by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

There are numerous successful models. A New Zealand fabric company set out to design a product with zero environmental hazards. The selection filter was: No mutagens, no carcinogens, no heavy metals, no persistent toxins, no bioaccumulative substances and no endocrine disruptors.” They looked at 8,000 chemicals and chose 38 that were completely safe. The result? The fabric produced is safely edible.

Why can't an economy work this way?

It takes strong public resolve to take the higher road—to put more sanity in “success” and more precaution where it counts. If institutions won't take the lead, the public will have to do it. The stakes are high. We are one family on this small planet and this is the only home we have or ever will have. We have a shared purpose: to continue seeking a high quality of life for everyone without falling into environmental decimation and possible extinction. In that endeavor, those not yet born need our best effort.

The only question is, will the resolve be broad enough and soon enough?

Time may be short. Speaking on public radio, Dean Abrahamson, professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota, said, “We may no longer be able to enjoy a meaningful quality of life—perhaps by the next 20 or 30 years—unless we start now to reverse environmental degradation.”

### **How Individuals Can Make a Difference**

- Question prevailing ideas—question the Gross Domestic Product as our measure of well-being; question the economics of growth which destroys nature's life-support systems; and question how the politics concerning precaution gets done or doesn't get done.
- Learn more. Search “Precautionary Principle” on the Internet.
- Inform others and encourage them to get the word out.
- Avoid the use of toxic chemicals and pesticides.
- Don't accept the argument that scientific proof is needed to take precautionary action. Argue for precaution without full proof, if that is what your conscience is telling you.
- Ask your political leaders where they stand on the precautionary principle. If they don't know about it, educate them, or else build coalitions supporting new leaders.

- Look at what's happening in your own community. For example, my wife and I joined a small group questioning the chemical spraying of our public parks. The decision came down to simple common sense. The spray included 2,4-D which was a probable, not a proven, carcinogen. The mothers of young children did not want to take the chance. Their voices were heard, and in the end, our city council made the decision to stop.

### **Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle**

The release and use of toxic substances, the exploitation of resources, and physical alterations of the environment have had substantial unintended consequences affecting human health and the environment. Some of these concerns are high rates of learning deficiencies, asthma, cancer, birth defects, and species extinctions; along with global climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, and worldwide contamination with toxic substances and nuclear materials.

We believe existing environmental regulations and other decisions, particularly those based on risk assessment, have failed to protect adequately human health and the environment—the larger system of which humans are but a part.

We believe there is compelling evidence that damage to humans and the world-wide environment is of such magnitude and seriousness that new principles for conducting human activities are necessary.

While we realize that human activities may involve hazards, people must proceed more carefully than has been the case in recent history. Corporations, government entities, organizations, communities, scientists, and other individuals must adopt a precautionary approach to all human endeavors.

Therefore, it is necessary to implement the Precautionary Principle. When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.

The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed, and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action.

*Sook Holdridge is a member of the Foundation for Global Community group in Minnesota.*

**In a major policy reversal, the Clinton administration announced steps to "significantly reduce" and possibly outlaw nationwide the controversial gasoline additive MTBE, a chemical once backed as a way to reduce smog but now implicated for polluting wells and lakes from coast to coast.**

*San Jose Mercury News, San Jose, CA*



## Lest We Forget

### Excerpts from “Making It Home,”

a story by Wendell Berry

He came from killing. He had felt the ground shaken by men and what they did. Where he was coming from, they thought about killing day after day, and feared it, and did it. And out of the unending, unrelenting great noise and tumult of the killing went little deaths that belonged to people one by one. Some had feared it and had died. Some had died without fearing it, lacking the time. They had fallen around him until he was amazed that he stood—men who in a little while had become his buddies, most of them younger than he, just boys.

The fighting had been like work, only a lot of people got killed and a lot of things got destroyed. It was not work that made much of anything. You and your people intended to go your way, if you could. And you wanted to stop the other people from going their way, if you could. And whatever interfered you destroyed. You had a thing on your mind that you wanted, or wanted to get to, and anything at all that stood in your way, you had the right to destroy. If what was in the way were women and little children, you would not even know it, and it was all the same. When your power is in a big gun, you don't have any small intentions. Whatever you want to hit, you want to make dust out of it. Farms, houses, whole towns—things that people had made well and cared for a long time—you made nothing of.

He had seen tatters of human flesh hanging in the limbs of trees along with pieces of machines. He had seen bodies without heads, arms and legs without bodies, strewn around indifferently as chips. He had seen the bodies of men hanging upside down from a tank turret, lifeless as dolls.

He had seen attackers coming on, climbing over the bodies of those who had fallen ahead of them. A man who, in one moment, had been a helper, a friend, in the next moment was only a low mound of something in the way, and you stepped over him or stepped on him and came ahead.

Once while they were manning their gun and under fire themselves, old Eckstrom got mad, and he said, “I wish I had those sons of bitches lined up where I could shoot every damned one of them.” And Art said, “Them fellers over there are doing about the same work we are, 'pears like to me.”

The fighting went on, the great tearing apart. People and everything else were torn into pieces. Everything was only pieces put together that were ready to fly apart, and nothing was whole. You got to where you could not look at a man without knowing how little it would take to kill him. For a man was nothing but just a little morsel of soft flesh and brittle bone inside of some clothes. And you could not look at a house or a schoolhouse or a church without knowing how, rightly hit, it would just shake down inside itself into a pile of stones and ashes. There was nothing you could look at that was whole—man or beast or house or tree—that had the right to stay whole very long. There was

nothing above the ground that was whole but you had the measure of it and could separate its pieces and bring it down. You moved always in a landscape of death, wreckage, cinders, and snow.

It pleased him to think that the government owed him nothing, that he needed nothing from it, and he was on his own. But the government seemed to think that it owed him praise. It wanted to speak of what he and the others had done as heroic and glorious. Now that the war was coming to an end, the government wanted to speak of their glorious victories. The government was made up of people who thought about fighting, not of those who did it. The men sitting behind desks—they spent other men to buy ground, and then they ruined the ground they had and more men to get the ground beyond. If they were on the right side, they did it the same as them that were on the wrong side.

They talk about victory as if they know all them dead boys was glad to die. The dead boys ain't never been asked how glad they was. If they had it to do again, might be they wouldn't do it, or might be they would. But they ain't been asked.

“Making It Home,” is from the book *Fidelity: Five Stories* by Wendell Berry, Pantheon Books, New York and San Francisco, 1992. *Reprinted with permission.*



## Latvian Peace Forum

*Our thanks to Hans and Ann Zulliger in Zurich for e-mailing us this report.*

We reported recently on an international peace forum held in Germany by our good friends and co-workers in Europe who are still organized under the name Beyond War. Not only was the forum a success, its emphasis on youth inspired a group of Latvian university prep students and teachers to carry on the idea in their own country.

The one-day multilingual Latvian Peace Forum was held December 4 in Valmiera, a city northeast of Riga. Students and teachers from the Valmiera Gymnasium, plus guests from the community, from other schools, and from NGO groups, took part. The forum's primary agenda—building dialog and nonviolent conflict resolution—reflects the situation in Latvia, a Baltic nation which became independent in 1991 and faces the challenge of making democracy and new economic structures work for a country with a large (40 percent) Russian population.

Meeting in small groups, the participants focused on the six Principles of the Peace Forum (familiar to anyone involved in Beyond War), adding another two the Valmiera group felt fit the Latvian situation and were appropriate to the academic setting in which the conference was held.

## PRINCIPLES OF THE PEACE FORUM

1. I take responsibility for my personal decisions and will act on them.
2. I will resolve conflict without using violence.
3. I will reach out to others in a loving spirit.
4. I will not preoccupy myself with an enemy.
5. I will work together with others for a world without war.
6. I will maintain an attitude of good will.
7. Education is the vehicle for change.
8. Knowledge is the result of experience.



## Blips on the Timeline

*The term “blip” is often used to describe a point of light on a radar screen. Gathered with the assistance of Research Director Jackie Mathes, here are some recent blips which indicate positive changes toward a global community.*

## Outstanding Eco-City

Waitakere, New Zealand, population 176,000, is turning itself into an “eco-city.” Says Mayor Bob Harvey, “We’re not saints, we’re just practical.” Since 1992, Waitakere has created fingers of green space through urban areas to link them with coast and forest; built bridges over urban streams instead of choking them; planted native trees; cut water use when water supplies dip; fostered urban villages—clusters of jobs, services, and recreation so people can walk to work or coffee houses or public transportation. Business is a partner, not an opponent in the effort. Waitakere is also the first city in New Zealand to be given “Safe City” status by the World Health Organization. “Cities are breeding environmental disaster,” said Harvey, “but there is nothing in the nature of city living that makes this inevitable.”

## Winds of Change

Due to major expansions of wind power in Germany, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Italy, the amount of electricity generated by wind turbines in Europe rose by 30 percent in 1999, beating the industry’s own targets. The European Wind Energy Association says that wind capacity now exceeds 8900 megawatts, 900 megawatts more than it was anticipating, and that wind is now on target for providing about 10 percent of Europe’s electricity by 2020. The cost of wind power has decreased substantially in the last 15 years from around 38 cents per kilowatt-hour in the 1980s to between 3.2 and 6 cents today, and costs are expected to continue to drop. The country with the most advanced wind energy industry is Denmark, where

10 percent of the nation's electricity already comes from wind, and the goal is to fuel 50 percent of energy needs from renewable sources, including wind, by 2030.

### **A Town Recovers**

Only a year ago, the future of Morrilton, Arkansas, was bleak. Its two big employers, Levi Strauss and Arrow Automotive, had moved overseas and one sixth of the town was left unemployed. Some 200 of the town's 6,500 residents met in the high school gym to commiserate and try to solve the crisis. Rather than simply trying to recruit another manual-labor company, they decided to learn new skills. The local community college agreed to offer courses in computer technology. The town's leaders called various industries in the state and asked them to remember Morrilton when it came time to relocate or expand. They promoted their town as forward-looking, with citizens willing to learn any new trade. Already, ICT, a telecommunications company, is coming to Morrilton, bringing 620 jobs in the next three years, half the number lost when Arrow and Levi Strauss left. "This little town refused to give up," said a resident. The executive director of the Arkansas Department of Economic Development agreed, saying, "Morrilton has become a model transition community."

### **New Hydrogen Source**

Scientists collaborating at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado, University of California at Berkeley, and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee,

announced that they have discovered a way to alter the process of photosynthesis in common green algae to produce hydrogen which can be used to power automobiles. Hydrogen powers fuel cells, a type of clean-burning power source that many experts believe is the fuel of the future for cars and home generators. The by-product is water, rather than carbon monoxide and other pollutants. Up to now, getting hydrogen hasn't been easy or efficient, but Berkeley biologist Tasios Melis stumbled on what he calls a "switch" that turns algae from making oxygen to making hydrogen.

### **Suggestions Invited**

Thanks to Marjorie Atkinson, Seaside, CA, for "New Hydrogen Source."

We are always on the lookout for interesting subjects for *Blips on the Timeline*. Readers are invited to send articles or clippings indicating positive change to Jackie Mathes at the Foundation. If we use your suggestion, we'll automatically extend your subscription for a year.



### **Seen any good movies lately?**

*Here are reviews of some recent movies, condensed from Jane Horowitz's syndicated newspaper column, "Family Filmgoer."*

## Films rated PG-13

**“The Closer You Get”**: Strong sexual innuendo; crude humor; infidelity, divorce subplot; beer drinking; cigarettes.

**“Drowning Mona”**: Sexual innuendo; nonexplicit adulterous sexual situations; profanity; slapstick, violence.

**“Here on Earth”**: Understated sexual situations; sexual innuendo; graphic verbal recollection of a mother's suicide; cancer death; occasional profanity.

**“Whatever It Takes”**: Contains highly suggestive sexuality, including a prom night scene with a male in a G-string, tied to a bed. There are also bare behinds, skimpy swimwear, and teen characters who drink and smoke.

**“The Next Best Thing”**: Sexual innuendo; profanity; homophobic slurs; smoking, drinking.

**“Price of Glory”**: Shooting death; boxing mayhem; occasional profanity; sexual innuendo, drinking.

**“Hanging Up”**: Much profanity; mild sexual innuendo; divorce theme, subsequent loss of parental love; drunken grandfather. Not for preteens.

**“Judy Berlin”**: Rare profanity. More for thoughtful high school students.

**“Skulls”**: Shootings, car chases, fights, attempted suicide, body strung up; mild profanity; drinking; sexual innuendo; steamy kissing scene. Not for preteens

## Films rated R

**“What Planet Are You From?”**: Explicit verbal, visual sexual innuendo; nudity; profanity; drinking, smoking. Older high school students.

**“Titus”**: Violence, graphic and stylized; severed hands, heads; explicit sexuality; implied sexual assault, incest; nudity. High school students.

**“Wonder Boys”**: Much marijuana, cigarettes, liquor, profanity; sexual innuendo; themes of adultery, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, abortion, sexuality; shooting death of a dog. High school students.

**“Reindeer Games”**: Point-blank shootouts, stabbings, bone-crunching fights, all moderately bloody; sexual situations, nudity; sexual innuendo; strong profanity, ethnic slurs. High school students.

**“Romeo Must Die”**: Bloody, point-blank shootings; head-banging, high-kicking martial arts balletics; marijuana; drinking; profanity; sexual innuendo. Older teens.

**“3 Strikes”**: Strong profanity, crude language; sexual innuendo; mild sexual situations; marijuana, drinking; toilet humor; comic violence; tasteless, homophobic humor. Older high school students.



Excerpts From “The Dream that Must Be Interpreted” by Rumi

*A man goes to sleep in the town  
where he has always lived, and he  
dreams he’s living in another town.*

*In the dream, he doesn’t remember the  
town he’s sleeping in his bed in.  
He believes the reality of the dream  
town.*

*The world is that kind of sleep.  
The dust of many crumbled cities  
settles over us like a forgetful doze,  
but we are older than those cities.*

*We began as a mineral.  
We emerged into plant life  
and into the animal state,  
and then into being human,  
and always we have forgotten our former  
states, except in early spring when we  
slightly recall being green again.*

*That's how a young person turns  
toward a teacher. That's how a baby  
leans toward the breast,  
without knowing the secret of its desire,  
yet turning instinctively.*

***H**umankind is being led  
along an evolving course,  
through this migration of intelligences,  
and though we seem to be sleeping,  
there is an inner wakefulness  
that directs the dream,  
and that will eventually startle us back  
to the truth of who we are.*



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