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**Speaking Out:
One Voice from the Wilderness**
Steve Earl Salmony

One voice from the wilderness is too weak to be listened to. My voice, for example, is not clear enough, strong enough, loud enough or adequately established so as to be heard. How can any person in a position of influence among our most wealthy and powerful leaders possibly be expected to receive a 'best available science message' until we and others who are similarly situated speak out, as if with one voice, about what could be somehow real, according to the best available science and 'lights' we possess?

Declining fertility rates virtually everywhere on Earth need not blind us to the undeniable, ongoing annual increases of absolute global human population numbers. Human numbers have exploded by more than 5 billion on earth in the past three score and ten years. This population growth 'trajectory' is patently unsustainable on a planet with the size, finite resources and

frangible ecology of Earth. Please consider how the growth of human numbers worldwide is caused by the spectacular production and distribution of food for human consumption. With each passing year more people are being fed and more people are going hungry.

For years we have been encouraged to "think globally." Let us hope that it is not too late to begin "acting globally." There is no time to waste because untethered overproduction, overconsumption and overpopulation activities of the human species are on the verge of causing a global ecological wreckage of the planet we inhabit by turning Earth's land surface into mountains of human detritus and its seas into sewers.

As things stand, the leading self-righteous elders in the world, on our watch, are charting a course to the future that will wreak havoc on what is surely sacred and normalize what is plainly profane...come what may. And these self-proclaimed 'masters of the universe' erroneously believe that they can have some faraway island or mega-yacht to which an escape from the global ecological wreckage would be possible. More evidence of immaculate hubris, I suppose.

Those few with power would like the status quo to remain as is; whereas, the many, too many, without power want necessary change and a "course correction" while a 'window of opportunity' remains open. Note to us all: the window is closing steadily in our time. When unbridled production, consumption and propagation activities of the human species are occurring synergistically, expanding rampantly and effectively overspreading earth, perhaps this moment in space-time is an occasion to do something that is different and somehow right... for a change.

No one knows what is possible once we begin somehow to do things differently from the ways that we are doing things now here on our planet. At the moment we know that science has overcome greed; that greed has vanquished fairness and equity; that ignorance and stupidity have almost obliterated common sense and reason; that hubris has virtually annihilated humanness. Like it or not, ready or not, we are presented with enormous challenges.

Let us hope that our most able responses to the human-induced and -driven existential ecological threats looming ominously before humanity do not come too late to make a difference that makes a difference. There is much to do. Human limits, global planetary limitations and time constraints are the factors to which we are called upon to respond ably with all deliberate speed.

If only the world worked the way we want it to! That all-too-human creatures of Earth were

actually self-proclaimed 'masters of the universe' in more ways than "name only." By evading extant scientific knowledge about our distinctly human creatureliness and the biophysical limitations of the planet we inhabit; by widely sharing and consensually validating utterly false, hubristic thinking regarding our seemingly god-like super-human capabilities and Earth as a maternal presence –imagined as an eternally expressive teat; by denying that earth is relatively small and finite with a frangible environment, it may be that the human community is not able to evade the consequences of our patently unsustainable behavior. Can we rise above our apparent incapacity to respond ably or not? Can we do so in a short time-frame so we avoid insurmountable "doomsday scenarios"?

Note the exquisite talents demonstrated by the savants among us or the teachers, poets, artists from whom there emanates universally shared, humane values, principles and practices for living or the leaders who have not sold out their souls for the poisoned fruits of power, gluttony, greed, wrath, pride, envy and effortless ease. The global challenges presented to our generation of elders are likely different from the threats to human well-being that had to be confronted by our ancestors. But that does not mean, even for a moment, that their challenges were either more or less difficult from the ones we face.

If our ancestors had not acknowledged, addressed and overcome the challenges before them, I dare say that we would not be here now. It does not appear that our generation of elders has so much as begun to struggle in a meaningful way with the global challenges before us. We collectively have been running away from our responsibilities and duties to the family of humanity and Earth's well-being in general.

Our children and their children after them will say that we have failed them. Their true statement, perhaps spoken someday soon as a refrain, is not acceptable and cannot become our enduring legacy to life on this planet and to the planet, itself. We cannot luxuriate in our willful ignorance and self-serving hysterical blindness any longer.

The moment to step up, take hold, and move forward courageously is at hand. The time has come to accept the challenges already dimly visible in the offing.

Let us speak out as if we are a million voices because so many of us remaining electively mute make us complicit in the destruction of Earth and life as we know it. Are better, more responsible courses of action available to us? If so, other ways of going forward need to be discovered, discussed and implemented, fast.

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