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A SEARCH FOR GLOBAL ETHICS

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INTRODUCTION

When astronauts first photographed the earth in the 1960's they showed a beautiful but fragile oasis, orbiting in the immense darkness of space. We know that our planet is hospitable to myriad forms of plant and animal life for this is the environment in which we, humanity, live and flourish.

Humankind has always used and gathered the fruits and resources of the earth. But since industrialisation began two centuries ago use has become abuse, as we exploit the planet at an ever accelerating and increasingly destructive rate.

A scientifically based consensus agrees that planet Earth is a global environment that needs careful management if its health is to be kept in equilibrium and therefore sustained into the new millennium.

We cannot continue to be indifferent to the health of the subtly interacting global systems such as the oceans and their currents and the envelope of gases we call the atmosphere.

As we increase the consumption of non-renewable resources, destroy habitats and species, foul the atmosphere and the seas and oceans, we contribute to changes in climate. All that is around us, water, air soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life and space are to be valued and conserved.

Therefore we need to be guided by a vision; one based on moral principles and values, when confronting the problems and issues of the new millennium. Such is the theme of the 1999 UNIS/UN Conference, "Facing the New Millennium: A search for Global Ethics".

SOME DEFINITIONS OF ETHICS:

Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines the word ethics as:

1) the discipline dealing with what is good and bad or right and wrong or with moral duty and obligation.

2) a. A group of moral principles or set of values.
   b. A particular theory or system.
   c. The principles of conduct governing an individual or profession.

3) character or the ideals of character manifested by a race or people.

Many theories have been proposed to define ethics and their use in society. John Locke and John Stuart Mill explained ethics as "a set of values derived from personal experience."

Plato claimed that human activities strive to follow a path of absolute and international good.

Jeremy Bentham founded the utilitarian theory which says that ethical actions are those that cause the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.

THE ROLE OF A DOCTOR

This question, the source of heated debate across the world, is not a new one. In the late nineteenth century, the permisibility of the practice of mercy killing, or euthanasia, was already a controversial topic in Great Britain and the United States. Many physicians, newly armed with the ability to diagnose incurability with accuracy, and having morphine, were convinced that they could and should end certain patients' pain - and lives. However, the great majority of doctors, in keeping with the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity, were ardently opposed to induced death, a legacy that extends to the present.

By the mid 1900's, sustaining life by technical means had grown to be common. Along with it came the thought that euthanasia is in "defiance of nature" and against the "merciful release" of death. Such ideas were drowned out as attempts to prolong life grew more and more technologically complex. Within the last few decades, an overwhelming number of life-prolonging medical treatments, including kidney dialysis, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, organ transplantation, respirator support, and provision of food and water by artificial means have become common in hospitals. Because of all the new options, doctors began to feel it was their duty to do anything possible to sustain life, rather than to just let the patient die. Even in cases of dire prognosis, heroic treatments were frequently continued until the patient's organ systems deteriorated, extensive pain was experienced, or someone (either a family member of the patient or a colleague of the doctor) intervened.

As a reaction to these undignified and often expensive attempts to prolong human life, a movement emphasising a patient's right to die began. It wanted to free terminally ill patients from having to endure life-sustaining measures as standard treatment.

The issues behind induced death have remained relatively consistent throughout time. Arguments in favour of legalising euthanasia include the idea of personal autonomy, a person's wish for a peaceful death, the opportunity to free patients from a painful disease, the need to protect well-meaning doctors from homicidal charges, and the virtue of mercy. An argument against euthanasia's legalisation is that it undermines the historic healing role of the doctor. It supposes that terminally sick patients can make clear judgements. It may give rise to involuntary euthanasia for vulnerable people who are severely physically and emotionally compromised, but not the terminally ill, while Jewish and Christian traditions are opposed to euthanasia.

Public opinion in the US has recently shifted to being in favour of legalised euthanasia. A handful of states have some form of law that allows induced death, and several others are on their way to legalisation. Conversely, in most countries other than the US, there are strict laws against it. In the Netherlands, for example, it is against the law to take another 's life, even upon the person's serious and explicit request. Violators of that law can be imprisoned for up to twelve years. However, the Dutch made it possible for doctors to end the lives of incurably sick and suffering patients. A nation-wide study found that 54 percent of Dutch physicians had in fact performed euthanasia and that the lives of 1.8 percent of Dutch citizens were ended by lethal drugs upon request. Physicians can escape state prosecution if they act in accordamce with the established guidelines of Holland's medical institutions.

These guidelines hold that the patient must be incurably sick, must be experiencing unbearable suffering, and must clearly and persistently be requesting that their life be ended. This acceptance of active euthanasia rests on the secular assumption that humans are responsible for their own lives - and deaths.

In coming to grips with sustaining, taking, or not prolonging life, medicine has drawn on both its own ethical traditions and society's broader ethical and religious traditions. It is necessary for us, in a global society, to develop an ethical framework concerning life-sustaining treatment around which an international consensus may be formed.

THE AFTERMATH OF APARTHEID

The present, social, economic, and political setting in which the people of South Africa find themselves has been shaped by both the apartheid policy and the political reforms of recent years.

Apartheid was characterised by exclusion and division. The result of these inequalities has significantly limited the lives of the majority of the population. In order for there to be improvements in the lives of today's children, who are the "major repository of South Africa's potential human capital and for the future" (Nelson Mandela), the democratically elected Government of National Unity has begun to try to overcome the problems caused by the opportunities denied in the past to the Black majority of South Africans.

In 1994, after the democratic election of the GNU, South Africa emerged from three centuries of racially based minority rule, including a final forty years of virulent ideological apartheid. By systematically practising racially based discrimination for four decades, the minority white population accumulated most of the resources of the country. Though apartheid has been legally abolished, South Africa still suffers (although not violently) in its aftermath.

The socioeconomic and political system of apartheid, or "separate development" was the culmination of processes of colonisation and settlement in which Europeans subordinated the indigenous population and gained control of much of the land. The early Dutch Boer and British rule, by different means and in different regions, laid the foundations for racial discrimination and exploitation of South Africa's resources by the White population. Its stated aim was to separate the development of the races in the population through the institution of racial segregation in most aspects of life. The election of the

National Party (which was predominantly comprised of Afrikaners or Boers) in 1948 extended racial discrimination further in the control and ownership of resources throughout the economy. The population was then classified into four racial categories, namely Whites, Coloreds (mixed ethnicity), Indians (descendants of Indian indentured servants), and the indigenous African people. The movement of African people was strictly regulated and their permanent residence was confined to designated ethnic 'homelands.' These homelands served as reservoirs of labour for the commercial farms, mines, and industrial centres of white South Africa. In these homelands, traditional leadership structures were to some extent maintained.

Due to growing resistance and the increase in the strength of the Mass Democratic Movement from the late 1970's to 80's as well as an economic crisis worsened by international pressures, the Apartheid Government of the Prime Minister F.W. de Klerk was forced to begin the process of dismantling the Apartheid regime. In February of 1990, the Government announced that they were planning for a peaceful political settlement. The liberation movements which were previously banned were now made legal and political activity was free from restrictions. Political Prisoners (such as Nelson Mandela himself) were released and the process of the return of political exiles was initiated.

In 1991, the Interim Measures for the Local Government Act was passed, which allowed local communities to negotiate their own models of non-racial local Government until something along the lines of a new Constitution was created. In the same year, the Child Care Amendment Act was passed allowing for non-racial adoptions to take place. White schools were then allowed to admit pupils of other races. The Internal Security Act allowed free political activity to exist again. Hospitals were also desegregated. At the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, multiparty negotiations for a new constitution took place. This convention, along with talks between the Government and political parties resulted in the Multi-Party Negotiation in April of 1993, which led to an Interim Constitution. Due to these meetings, South Africa was able to have its first fully democratic election on April 27th, 1994. With the exception of the members of the extreme Afrikaner Right, all parties participated.

In May 1996, a full constitution was completed. It addressed the "executive structure to succeed the Government of National Unity, the Bill of Rights, and the powers of the Provinces." All traces of the Apartheid regime were abolished after this constitution was erected. However, it was realized that "racial segregation and inequality will remain facts of South African life." One cannot expect South Africa to fully recover soon from the suffering the nation and its people as a whole had to endure over the past century. However, the children of today will be the first to live a life free of the influence of Apartheid. It is this generation that will become tomorrow's rulers. As the millennium approaches, the people will reflect on the dramatic changes that have occurred in their country. Hopefully, today's children will create a far better tomorrow.

POPULATION CONTROL IN CHINA

The People's Republic of China compromises one fifth of the world's population. Population Control is a serious problem that China has been trying to address. The Chinese communist government has implemented policies for restricting population growth. Some of these policies have come under fire from human rights organisations for violation of ethics.

The Chinese government has adopted a family planning policy since 1979 which mandates that each family has one child only. Obviously this is not an easy policy for and the Chinese have used many ways of enforcing this rule. One way is by national proclamation, stating one child is all any couple should have. The government also used advertising with billboards which state "One is enough." They strongly encourage the use of contraceptives and advocate fewer, and healthier births. It is claimed that the government also advocates abortions when the 'one is enough' rule is broken. Sometimes women are forced to have abortions. Many women and families are wary of this.

The ethics of China's methods of population control have been criticised. China has defended its policies as necessary for its survival and continued economic growth. But on the other hand, one must look at how the Chinese have approached this problem and whether they have infringed upon human rights. It seems to many that the implementation of the 'one is enough' rule produces very unethical practices, especially that of forcing women to have abortions. China does not want to allow the possibility of two children in a family. The government has been trying to induce more people to adopt family planning, having one child by promising that if they do have one child, he/she will be taken care of and its education and medical care will be paid for and provided by the Chinese government.

This one child program has produced some adverse effects. Many people want to carry on their family name, and to do so, they need to have a boy. Sometimes, if they learn they will have a girl, they would rather have an abortion and try again to get a boy. Sometimes, the girl is born and killed almost immediately. Infanticide is a problem stemming from these family planning policies, though Chinese culture, which favours boys, is partly responsible. There is now a shortage of women in the country, actually nullifying the attempts to carry on the family name. Without women, the males have no hope of marriage or of carrying on the family name.

Overpopulation in China is not as dire as ithas been. Yes, the population has been growing, but the rate of growth has slowed since the 1970s. Following the proclamation of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949, the nation's population exploded. Annual population growth exceeded 2 percent for most of the years between 1949 and 1974. Beginning in the mid-1970s, though, China abruptly shifted gears and fertility declined. The annual population growth rate has remained around 1.5 percent since the mid-1970s. This pattern of events is important mainly for this reason — the one-child policy wasn't adopted by China until 1979, yet China's fertility decline occurred between 1970 and 1979 when live births fell from 34 per 1,000 people to 18 per 1,000 people. Since the introduction of the one-child policy in 1979, there has been no large drop in fertility and in fact China experienced a slight increase, to around 21 births per 1,000 people in the 1980s. People have resisted the one-child program and the government can't seem to make these people think differently.

Some of China's policies have worked, e.g., advocating contraceptive use, but it may be time for China to re-examine its policies on family planning. Some of these policies actually go beyond the scope of ethics,and humanity. It needs a worldwide effort to see how to address the problems of population growth within a humane and ethical framework

ETHICS OF THE MEDIA: CENSORSHIP

"There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all."

-Oscar Wilde, Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891)

Modern media Censorship began during the 20th century. Previous forms of Censorship date back much farther, but dealt mostly with written literature and art. In the 1800's there was an increase in offensive content in books. Many authors were criticised for writing about inappropriate subjects or actions. Pornography continued to gain popularity, although many people believed that such descriptions of lewd behaviour should be banned. However whorehouses and pornographic material continued to thrive.

In the USA, many people believe that not being allowed to write about such subjects was infringing on their 1st amendment rights, the freedom of speech and press guaranteed in the Constitution. The debate over what is proper and what isn't, has continued for many years. In this century, the issue of censorship in movies and on television became a new concern.

With the invention of the camera, pornography found a new medium in which it could be depicted. Many films containing violence and coarse language began to appear as well. Concerned members of society could no longer accept this inappropriate material. As a result of this many lawsuits were filed against stores, film companies and writers.

All this commotion resulted in a new censorship plan in the U.S.A. containing such articles as:

1. No pornography stores in a ten-mile radius of any child setting. (School, park....)

2. X-rated films are not be viewed by people under 21.

Many other such laws were created but all deal with similar problems. Books however remained an exception to the rule. Writers could express themselves, but all books must first be viewed and evaluated to make sure that they are suitable for children.

Censorship laws developed differently in other countries. In Argentina, during the late 1800's, the Congress passed the Freedom of Speech Law. But later, in the 1900's, they revised the law, banning certain books and movies.

In Australia, a similar freedom of speech law was passed, but there is also a rating system for movies. No people under the age of 21 are able to see films that contain pornographic situations, harsh violence or drug abuse.

Almost every place in the world has a freedom of speech law, so why is it revoked in some situations? People need to have the choice to watch or read whatever they wish. Society must continue to grapple with this ethical issue as computers expand exponentially beyond print and into the world of video and internet

HEALTH CRISIS: WOMEN AT RISK

AIDS is currently the leading cause of death for women aged 20 to 40 in major cities in the Americas, Western Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa. Urban women are at tremendous risk because of prostitution, rape, poverty, poor health care and lack of contraceptive services and "safe sex" education. These factors have minimised women's power to control their own bodies, making them highly susceptible to contaminants and disease, specifically HIV, which they end up passing on to their children and partners.

Women especially in the Developing World not only have reduced access to resources that might make their lives longer and easier, but are sometimes treated as resources themselves, to be used and exploited when it suits the purposes of the powerful. What disadvantaged women need and want is rarely considered in the calculation of how resources are defined, allocated, and used. As a result, not only women but also the planet and its other inhabitants suffer from this far-from-benign neglect. Because of this neglect, many women are forced into the sex trade.

In Thailand, 75% of all Thai men visit prostitutes on a regular basis. 20% of Thailand's prostitution takes place with foreign men visiting Thailand. Though prostitution is illegal in Thailand, police turn a blind eye to it and accept pay-offs for not raiding brothels. There are over two million women and children in prostitution in Thailand, of whom 800,000 are children aged 15 or under. 80% of these children are girls. Because of the HIV scare, girls are being forced into prostitution at younger ages. Today it is not uncommon for girls to be sold into the sex trade as young as nine or ten. Many young girls are sold by their parents into prostitution. Parents take "loans" out on the girls and the girls must "work" it off at a 100% interest rate. When the "loans" are almost paid off, the brothels give the parents another loan. Some children are kidnapped and deceived into prostitution. Thai statistics show that one out of every two women and children in the prostitution industry are HIV positive. In particular, 87% of all women and children in prostitution in the Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces are HIV positive. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that by the year 2000 there will be 12 million HIV positive persons in Thailand.

Because many drug users engage in prostitution to support their habits, drug laws can also affect HIV risk for this community. In Canada, the proposed new federal drug legislation, recently passed third reading in the House of Commons and is now before the Senate for final consideration. If passed, it would criminalize possession of "containers" for drugs, and this would include hypodermic syringes. The new law would discourage users from carrying their own needles, with the result that they would share needles, exposing themselves to HIV, hepatitis and other blood borne diseases.

Also in the US, a large percentage of male prostitutes are drug users, who need the extra money earned by prostitution to buy drugs. It has been suggested that male prostitutes are at high risk of becoming infected by their clients due to several factors – for example, their willingness to have sex without a condom. Evidently, these male prostitutes will also increase the risk of infecting others.

There needs to be far more legal, moral, and social censure of prostitutes because of the advent of HIV/AIDS. As has been the case throughout history prostitutes are seen as the "vectors of disease." Female prostitutes in particular are perceived as the bridge between an HIV infected "underworld" and the general population. Though few measures reduce a prostitute's risk of contracting HIV, research has indicated that punitive measures to control the sex-trade will further wear down prostitutes' ability to negotiate safe-sex and further alienate them from public health-initiatives. As a result, HIV risks will be increased rather than reduced.

The approach taken by those who seek law reforms is to combine removal of criminal penalties against those who work as prostitutes with efforts to empower those who work in the business, to reduce prostitution, and save young people from exploitation. All women need to be convinced that prostitution law reform is their concern: The real purpose of laws which punish prostitutes is to reinforce traditional values about sex by upholding the double standard, that punishes the victim but not the victimiser. Women need to stand up against this process, and recognise that they are affected by laws which criminalize those who sell sexual services. The old 'double standard' has to be abandoned in favour of an ethic which treats the system rather than the victim.

CHILD LABOUR: FINDING A SOLUTION

Child Labour is a problem that has been facing the world for hundreds of years. In the past 100 years it has come under attack for being unethical. Though many laws have been passed throughout the world they have yet to protect many of the youth of the world. Some governments have been slow to enforce the new rules, often for economic reasons. The situation is not getting better. India is the largest example of a nation plagued by the problem of child labour. It is estimated that there are between 60 and 115 million working children in India, the highest number in the world (*Human Rights Watch, 1996*)

Child Labour has been defined as the employment of children in work that may interfere with their education and endanger their health. Child labour pushes the young into an adult role before they are ready. Many children are earning much-needed money for their families to live on. The United Nations proclaimed the "Declaration of the Rights of the Child" in 1959 which is an extension of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is designed to protect the rights of children. The United Nations felt that it was needed because the child, "By reason of his/her physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after the birth."

There are tens of millions of children involved in child labour all over the world, India has the highest rate of child labour. The major difficulty in counting the exact number in India can be attributed to the Indian government itself. Human Rights Watch reported in 1996 that the Indian government was "negligent in its refusal to collect and analyse current and relevant data regarding the incidence of child labour." As of 1996, official figures continue to be based on 1981 census figures.

Since India's independence from Britain in 1947, that government has been clearly against Child Labour. In Article 24 of India's constitution it is clearly stated that, "No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or employed in any hazardous employment." India's goal has always been to protect its children as is evident in their constitution. In 1986 India instituted the Child Labour Act. The main focus of this act was to "prohibit the employment of children who have not completed their 14th year in specified hazardous occupations and processes." (Global March against Child Labour)

In August of 1994 the Prime Minister of India proposed to implement the Child Labour Programme. This would eliminate two million children from having to work in hazardous industries as defined in the Child Labour Act of 1986, by the year 2000. The programme would run on incentives and the children would quit their work and enter non-formal school with a 100-rupee payment and a free meal everyday. The source for the funds has yet to be determined. Over eight and half billion dollars is needed for the programme and it will be difficult to budget.

All the policies that the Indian government has in place are in accordance with the constitution and they support the elimination of Child Labour; but still Child Labour exists. The major reason for this is that there is no provision for enforcement of the laws. It is believed that even if some enforcement existed it might not be effective, due to the many other problems facing India, such as education and poverty.

Child Labour in India is a source of family income for poor families. The children are a major factor in maintaining the family's economic level both by their labour in sweatshops and their work in the home. The sweatshop organisers also exploit child workers. They capitalise on their youth and pay them less than adults.

The poverty rate in India is very high. The combination of poverty and a poor social security network produce the bonded child labour system. Poor families are unable to get government loans and other types of credit. This leads these families to the local moneylenders. For an average of two thousand rupees the parents exchange their children for the money. The wages the children make do not even cover the interest and thus they must keep working. They are only freed once a lump sum of the loan has been paid, but this is almost impossible for poor families. Even when these children are released, many times the parents need a loan again and thus the child is back to working again.

The education system in India is in dire need of repair and improvement. Inade-quate schools, too few schools and even the expense of school all lead to child labour. Poverty forces high drop out rates and no matter how good the schools are, school survival rates and literacy rates will remain low. In December of 1998 a UNICEF survey predicted that illiteracy will grow in the next century because only 1 in 4 children in the poorest nations are now in school; more than half denied education are girls.

The parents' attitude to education also contributes to child labour. Many parents believe that children should work in order to develop skills to be used in the job market, instead of taking advantage of a formal education.

The problem of child labour still persists and the entire world has to work together to find a solution. The economy, education and the government all play a role in child labour, especially in India. All three of these problems have to change before Child Labour is eliminated. The lack of income and poor access to schools is extremely harmful to the children. At this point there are no plans for a better credit structure or the building of more schools. The government has been good about setting up policies against child labour but without enforcement they are useless. Until these problems are dealt with child labour will continue. It is unethical and immoral to have children doing the work of adults.

THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

What is being done to solve the urgent dilemma of land and cultural rights for indigenous peoples around the world? Will the global community recognise the long-neglected needs of the estimated 300 million indigenous peoples? They live in regions as different as the Amazon and the Arctic Circle. When they lived in isolation they were free to be different in their cultures, religions, and patterns of economic and social organisation. The contemporary dilemma is whether they will be forced onto the industrial bandwagon, and thus lose their land, their way of life, and maybe even their lives.

There are as many as 4,000 indigenous cultures—some of them on the verge of extinction, while others battle to maintain their ancestral identity.

"The attitude of Christendom at the time of [colonial] discoveries was that they had the divine right to extend their dominion over the entire world. We, the Indigenous Peoples of the world were designated 'heathens' and 'pagans' and 'infidels' and therefore, nonexistent as far as ownership of land was concerned. This destructive doctrine continues to generate intolerance of Indigenous Religions at the end of the twentieth century. The Christian attitude towards the Indigenous Peoples was developed into a doctrine called 'The Law of Nations' by European Nations and the doctrine, 'Terra Nullius' (empty lands) was the vehicle by which Christian Nations took the aboriginal territories of Native Peoples around the world." This statement comes from an unpublished testimony at the United Nations, dated January of 1998 made by an indigenous person on the pressing issue of Indigenous Rights concerning land and natural resources.

Has anything changed since colonial times? What rights do the Indigenous Peoples of the world have today, and which of those rights are actually *recognised* and then *applied?* In December 1948 the UN General Assembly adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

which affirmed the inherent dignity of all members of the human family. Later, increasing numbers of voices were raised about the predicament of indigenous peoples. The UN Economic and Social Council requested the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, to prepare a study on the problem of "Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations." This new project, beginning in 1970, was a pivotal element in the fight for the rights of indigenous peoples. In 1982, as the study neared completion, the Economic and Social Council created the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

The question at hand is not so much the existence of the rights of the indigenous peoples, as the acceptance and application of those rights in this world *now*. Human rights are inherent (as the Universal Declaration affirms). But where land is concerned, they are only recognised by the ILO Convention 169, and this treaty has been accepted by fewer than ten countries. To indigenous peoples, the concept of "belonging to Mother Earth" and all that it entails is a matter of life and death. Their struggle is urgent.

The UN has supported the aspirations of indigenous peoples. And what are those aspirations, you may wonder. The indigenous peoples want the full respect of their already recognised human rights, and, more specifically, we can outline the following points:

The Right to Self-determination—By virtue of this right, indigenous peoples can, "freely determine their political status and institutions and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

The Right to Land and Natural Resources—The draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that, they "...have the right to own, develop, control and use the lands and territories including the total environment of the lands, air, water, coastal seas, sea-ice, flora and fauna and other resources which have been traditionally occupied or otherwise used."

The Right to Preserve and Develop Indigenous Culture—This is also dealt with in twelve of the forty-five articles of the Declaration which state that indigenous peoples have the right to assert their cultural identity and practice their traditions, including religion, languages, and arts as well as the right to maintain and develop their traditional cultural structures and institutions. Furthermore, it professes that the indigenous peoples have the right "not to be subjected to ethnocide and cultural genocide including prevention of...any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories and resources."

The above three points cannot be separated, for world-wide, as well as in the special case of indigenous peoples, political systems are closely linked with culture and religion, which are then in turn directly connected to location—that is, land. What many countries and global corporations don't realise is, that it is not sufficient to allow, for example, a given people the right to practice religious ceremonies, without the right to live on and use their lands and spaces in traditional ways. Likewise, it is not possible to allow a given indigenous people the right to political independence if they are not to have the right to speak their customary languages. All of these aspects of indigenous life are intertwined, so the world must understand how crucial it is that they are all respected, if the way of life of indigenous peoples is to survive. Success should be defined by those people's themselves.

There is an increasing number of successful stories of land settlements, of laws recognising and protecting indigenous languages and cultures and of successful initiatives of indigenous peoples, nationally or through co-operation among indigenous peoples. An example of such an initiative is the recent creation, both by and for indigenous peoples, of the International Training Center of Indigenous Peoples in Greenland which offers fellowships for intensive leadership training around a core curriculum of human rights. The most important improvements in the movement lately has been the participation of members of indigenous societies in their own fight, alongside activists from around the world. Now, a mechanism needs to be developed nationally and internationally, following the Greenland example of co-operation, to help both states and indigenous peoples solve disputes, especially those about land and resources. The challenge is to create what the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, calls "a culture of prevention."

Alternative Medicines: A Return to Old Ways?

Alternative or traditional medicines have been around much longer than orthodox scientific medicines. They seem to be making a comeback, not only in Asian countries, where many holistic remedies such as naturopathy, acupuncture, herbalism, and homeopathy, originated in earlier times, but also in Western countries such as America and Europe. It seems that wherever one reads, personalities and people in the public eye are raving about discovering the wonders of acupuncture or yoga. Why is this so? Why have many people turned back to the "old ways"? It wasn't long ago that people were hailing modern medicines such as antibiotics as "miracle drugs" able to cure all diseases.

Many people, especially in the latter half of the Twentieth Century have become disillusioned with scientific medicine, partly because it is often too expensive for the average person to use, and because many people feel that too many doctors prescribe drugs without thoroughly examining the patient or exploring other treatments. Still others complain that scientific methods of treatment are too impersonal. So it is no surprise that many are seeking other remedies.

When one hears about alternative medicines the picture that comes to mind is of an exotic person administering potions, roots, or other mysterious concoctions.

However, it is rare that the average person actually knows what alternative medicines are. *The World Book Encyclopedia* definition is: "medicines that use remedies and methods of treatment outside modern Western medicine." Of those treatments there are many different kinds, some more accepted by Western society, some less so. Acupuncture, the ancient Chinese method of relieving certain kinds of pain through needles inserted into specific places in the body is a well established form of treatment that has standard training and licensing of its practitioners. Homeopathy however, is a less accepted treatment that has been criticised because its scientific value has not been proven. Originating in the late 1700's by a German physician, it is a medical practice based on the principle "let like cure like." (Ex. Treat a rash with poison ivy because poison ivy causes rashes.)

Some doctors complain that these alternatives offer no easy short-cut cures.

They believe that people too readily accept these unorthodox methods, and that if coupled with doctor prescribed medicines, can actually cause harm to the patient. Many also claim that alternative methods are not scientifically proven, and often don't work. Drawing the line between respected alternative medicines and quack remedies is sometimes difficult.

On the other hand, one can argue that Western doctors are so opposed to alternative methods because they threaten to take patients away from them. Some people also claim that traditional remedies actually work better than modern medical methods. An article in *Redbook* describes the story of Becky Campbell who, after experiencing no relief using antibiotics for her recurring sinus and respiratory problems, turned to a naturopathic physician. After continued use of herbal medicines she noticed that the infections occurred less frequently, and at the time of the interview she had not had an attack in eight months, an "unprecedented reprieve". Anything that has lasted for such a long time and has positive results cannot be ignored. In some parts of the world, people have not yet accepted scientific medicines, and continue to use the treatments their forebears did.

Many in the scientific community have scorned treatments such as faith healing, although individual cases have shown their value. A recent article in the New York Times cited the placebo effect, a term used to describe a condition when a patient is given a 'medicine' he or she believes to be real but is only a "sugar pill" and the patient's health improves on its own. Doctors have only recently begun to realise this has a greater effect than was previously thought.

This growing issue draws attention to the problem of whether or not to try to make a compromise between scientific and alternative medicines. Should there be a rule of what mixture should be used, or might be useful? While many modern scientifically trained physicians are opposed to alternative medicines, others are trying to reconcile the two types of treatments. Some insurance companies are even covering natural remedies in their plan.

Alternative medicines have always had a place in society, therefore it is necessary to examine them objectively in order to decide whether some are indeed effective, and so to create, for the millennium, a synthesis of medical knowledge from traditional science and the scientifically researched and developed.

THE POST-SOCIALIST EASTERN EUROPE

The year 1999 marks the tenth anniversary since the dividing line between the East and West Berlin, The Wall—fell. The collapse of all Communist regimes in 1989-91 opened a new chapter in the history of Eastern Europe. During the following decade the nations of the region experienced many common and overlapping ethical problems, deriving from democratisation, nationalism, and organised crime. The term "Eastern Europe" usually refers to the countries in Europe that were subjected to Soviet influence during the Cold War, as opposed to the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) bloc. Those countries implemented planned, or socialist, economic policies. As of now, the region consists of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, the eastern part of the unified Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, the European part of the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, many more ethnic groups than nation-states exist in the area.

It is generally agreed that the system practised by the socialist regimes before the late 1980s did not qualify as democracy: one-party states, elections which offered no choice among candidates, and the absence of opportunity to exercise elementary human and civil rights. Democratisation—the process of transition from an authoritarian system—began in the early 1980s when the Polish labour federation Solidarity called for a referendum on the continuation of Communist rule. After economic conditions had rapidly deteriorated, relatively peaceful revolutions and succeeding free elections installed multiparty governments in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania in 1989-90. In 1991 East Germany was absorbed into the Federal Republic of Germany, and later in 1991 the USSR collapsed.

Since then, Eastern Europe has certainly moved toward adopting the ethics of representative democracy. Relatively free elections have been held . There were parliamentary elections in Hungary in 1994 and presidential elections in the Czech Republic in 1993. Many groups, such as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, criticise the existing governments. In most cases those who lost elections gave up power peacefully, for instance, Dimitrov's government in Bulgaria in 1992.

However, it would be naive not to mention various problems that the Eastern European states have encountered in the process of democratisation. The Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991 without reference to the central Soviet government, the Constitution, or Soviet citizens, which is not consistent with democratic ethics. Furthermore, elections may be free, but they are often said to be unfair. As an example, the publication of the communist newspaper Pravda was obstructed in the run up to the 1993 parliamentary elections in Russia. In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania a large percentage of the population, mostly the Russian-speaking minority, face obstacles in obtaining citizenship and in exercising their civil rights because they lack a required knowledge of the official language.

The main threat to democracy, however, is often attributed to nationalistic passions. The decline of the Communist ideology unleashed separatist forces that contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia and led to civil conflicts in Yugoslavia, Moldova, and Chechnya (Russia).

After the Communist dictatorship had ended, politicians exploited ethnic differences to hold on to their power, as groups within the six republics of the Yugoslav federation tried to assert their identity and achieve self-determination. As a result, the war between Serbia and the ethnic Serbs on one side and the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia on the other killed more than 250,000 people between 1991-95. As of the end of 1998, the main concern in the region is Kosovo's (a province in Serbia where mostly ethnic Albanians reside) move to autonomy or secession. The violence has continued past the October 12 agreement made by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to reduce federal Yugoslav forces in the province. All these actions bear little resemblance to democratic ethics, with respect for human rights.

In 1991, when Moldova declared independence from the USSR, the leaders of the Trans-Dniester region, where Russians and Ukrainians make up more than half of the population, declared independence from Moldova. Fighting soon broke out with the authorisation of Moldova's President Mircea Snegur. The separatists, aided by Russian Cossacks and the Russian 14th Army, consolidated control over the region. In the 1993-97 negotiations Moldova granted a large degree of autonomy for Trans-Dniester. This more or less mutually acceptable settlement may be viewed as a practical application of democratic standards.

The Muslim region of Chechnya in southern Russia had confrontations with the central government for a long time before the Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev declared independence in 1991. A full-scale war between the Russian military and the heavily armed rebels erupted in 1994-96, killing an estimated 40,000 people. Russia's reputation as a democracy was damaged, although President Boris Yeltsin seized a chance to restore it by signing a peace treaty in 1997. On the other hand, the newly autonomous Chechen government is trying to implement fundamentalist Islamic values in the republic but still cannot reduce a high incidence of crime and kidnapping.

Not only in Chechnya, but throughout the rest of Russia and Eastern Europe organised crime and corruption of the government officials present a real threat to democratic values. International criminal groups are often found operating throughout the region, which serves as a bridge for delivering narcotics from Asia to Western Europe. Many politicians, such as Ivan Kostov of the Bulgarian United Democratic Forces, promised to battle organised crime, but officials themselves are often charged with corruption. For example, Estonia's Interior Minister Edgar Savisaar was fired in 1995 for the illegal recording of phone conversations between himself, the prime minister, and an opposition leader. In Russia, so-called "oligarchs," such as Boris Berezovsky, are said to combine financial and political power, which is unethical and hinders democratic development.

The nations of Eastern Europe have a long way to go before their democratic future is secure. Various solutions can be offered, including a Commonwealth of Independent States (a loose structure formed by the former Soviet republics) to quell tensions among its members; higher involvement of the East in the European Council, and perhaps gradual integration into the European Union. Despite its present problems, some parts of Eastern Europe have made progress in implementing the new democratic ethics, and there has to be a way for responsible leaders to continue this process. But the problems inherent in constructing viable democratic nations at the same time as the nations of western Europe are pursuing a federal experiment are very considerable.

INDIA'S NEW WORKING CLASS

The ethical problems of child labour stem from the simple financial goal of maximising profits while minimising costs. A growing number of children in developing countries are being exploited and forced into labour, often working twelve hour shifts at less than fifty cents an hour. Powerful corporations who have deemed quick production in mass quantities necessary operate their factories in these countries. An example of a country where child labour is a reality is India. It is a developing country, has a high poverty rate and a lack of access to education for all children. Parents often rely on their children to bring in a large part of the family income. Child labour is, for poor families, a large source of income, because there are no other alternatives; for in India there is no kind of welfare system or easy access to credit for poor people. Children's work is considered essential to maintain the economic level of households. UNICEF estimates that the current number of child labourers under the age of fourteen, in India, ranges from seventy-five to ninety million.

The 1981 Census of India divided child labour into nine industrial divisions. The divisions are the following:

I. Cultivation
II. Agricultural Labour
III. Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Plantation

IV. Mining and Quarrying
V. Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs
VI. Construction
VII. Trade and Commerce
VIII. Transport, Storage, and Communication
IX. Other services

The majority of rural child workers, 84.29% of them are employed in cultivation and agricultural labour (division I and II). Urban child labourers are distributed differently; 39.16% of them are involved in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs. Although more children are involved in agriculturally related jobs, most children involved in manufacturing are bonded labourers. Bonded labour is the phenomenon of children working in conditions of servitude in order to pay off a debt. It is estimated that one million children are bonded labourers.

There is a direct connection between India's high poverty rate (thirty-seven percent of the urban population and thirty-nine percent of the rural population) and child labour. Many families need money to survive; and their children are a source of additional income. An in depth study conducted by the International Labour Organisation Bureau of Statistics concluded that "Children's work was considered essential to maintaining the economic level of households, either in the form of work for wages, of help in household enterprises or of household chores in order to free adult household members for economic activity elsewhere." The study also found that a child's income could constitute up to 37% of the total family income, making children an essential key to a family's survival. Another obstacle families face comes from the lack of a social welfare system, as well as difficulty in obtaining credit. Extreme poverty, combined with the lack of a social security system can bring about the harshest type of child bonded labour. Local moneylenders exploit the lack of bank loans, governmental loans or other credit. Since the earnings of a bonded child are less than the interest accumulated on their loans, they are forced to work until their parents pay a lump sum to the moneylender. This payment is usually impossible to make. If the bonded child is released, the conditions of poverty that were prevalent before bondage will cause families to once again turn to the moneylenders and the process will repeat itself. In such situations, parents abandon their moral and ethical values, selling their children for the hope of a better future and the chance to feed the rest of their family. The children in turn feel cheap and used, almost as if they've been abandoned by their parents, and that the monetary value they bring, exceeds their value as people.

It has also become evident that child labourers are being exploited due to the low wages they receive. When children and adults engage in the same task, children's earnings are consistently lower. The conditions under which the children are forced to work are also atrocious. Most children work seven days a week, often past midnight, in small, crowed, filthy factories with little to eat or drink.

Poverty is not the only major cause of child labour; lack of education contributes to this problem as well. Some schools are simply inadequate, and the expense of education leaves some children with little else to do but work. India's education system is unable to provide basic literacy for many of the population. Therefore, the inadequate condition of the education system is a powerful influence on the supply of child labour. The overall literacy rate of 40.8% lags behind other developing countries, and the primary school dropout rate is 62.0%, which means that a large portion of the children are receiving no education. Few students are even reaching fifth or sixth grade. Parents withdraw their children form school and deposit them on the labour market because of the pressing need for the child's earnings as well as the perceived minimal advantage of schooling. Poverty contributes to the high dropout rates, and, thus, no matter how good schools are, school survival rates and literacy rates will still remain low. Stemming from both poverty and lack of education comes child labour. With nowhere else to turn, parents often forfeit their children's education for extra, needed income. It has been observed that "the overall condition of the education system can be a powerful influence on the supply of child labour" (Grootaert and Kanubar 1995, 193).

Child labour is a significant problem around the world, but more so in developing countries. The child work participation rates are higher in India than in other developing countries. The main factors that contribute to the rise of child labour are poverty and lack of education. Governments should focus on giving assistance to the poor before attacking child labour. If poverty is addressed, then the need for child labour will automatically be diminished. However, assistance can only be offered if people are aware of the problem. Thus, the first step must be in providing information. Involvement will come as a result of the increased knowledge which will have to happen in the new millennium.

EQUALITY AND CAST

The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Today, many of us take this statement for granted. We may not even know about a document declaring that we are all born free and equal in dignity and rights. But in some countries, such as India, this article could soon change the way of life and opportunities for millions of people.

The caste system divides the Hindu people of India into social classes. It is a source of differing emotions, actions and behaviour patterns among different people for a plethora of reasons and non-reasons. When the Portuguese arrived in India in 1498, they found what was to them, a perplexing system of social stratification and discrimination prevailing amongst the people of India. The word "caste" comes from the Portuguese word "casta" which means "breed" or "lineage." Unable to explain this system to their rulers in Portugal, the first Portuguese seafarers to India called it "casta." Here, people were not born free and equal in dignity and rights. The highest caste was the Brahmin—the priests and powerhouses of knowledge. Then came the Kshatriyas, to which the warriors and tribal priests belonged. The lowest castes were the Vaishyas—farmers and merchants—and Sudras, or servants. The mentality was that the level the Hindu is born into is the level the Hindu will stay in for the rest of his or her life.

Today, the caste system is no longer governmental policy or law, meaning that Indians are not forced to be divided into castes. India's politicians say the caste system gives the poor little chance to improve their traditional social standing. The Hindus in India still use the caste system even though it is not necessary, but the stratification is beginning to change and is becoming less powerful and important. The system has begun to change because of the spread of education and the growth of modern urban industrial life, so the caste system is slowly beginning to decay. People of all religions and castes live and work side by side, often oblivious and without regard for the other persons' religious beliefs or caste. There are pockets of religious bigotry and intolerance but they are almost always politically driven. And while they are painful and get widespread attention, they are an aberration from the norm of life.

Many people want to get rid of the caste system in India. It is slowly coming true. When that happens, people will have a fairer chance to do and to be what they want, without their caste title to hold them back. When people are equal, there will no longer be a caste system—and the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be truly conformed to, for it will have penetrated into the Indian social system.

CIRCUMPOLAR PEOPLES

Many of us may not know much about the Arctic. However, it is a huge territory populated by approximately 130,000 Inuit, or indigenous people-other people often call them Eskimos. They live in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia. These areas use different economic and political systems, but the problems they experience are the same.

Inuit are a marine- and land-based people who still rely upon beluga, narwhal, bowhead, whale, seal, walrus, caribou, and many other animal species and the habitat upon which they depend, to support their age-old hunting, fishing, trapping and food gathering economy. Their culture and traditional life styles are closely adapted to the natural rhythms of the climate and the environment. Inuit believe that aboriginal self determination and sustainable development are the key issues for their well being. To promote sustainable development in their homelands, Inuit want agreements dealing with land ownership, wildlife harvesting, resource management, revenue sharing, economic development, self government and other issues with the various national governments.

Some aspects of Inuit life are somewhat contradictory. The surest guarantee for long term environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic is to have the Inuit who hunt, fish, trap, and gather -take care of their homeland-and pass down inherited ecological knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next. To continue doing such things they must use and sell animal products on the world market. Yet European nations and the USA have erected barriers to trade in their animal products that prevent them from harvesting these natural resources. The effect of the 1991 European ban on importation of wild furs and the US "Marine Mammal Protection Act" hampers the Inuit way of life. Such government policies reflect the strident demands of animal rights groups in developed countries. There is some irony in this issue for countries with little or no wilderness to protect at home implement policies that divorce the Inuit from the land they successfully protect, conserve, and manage. Bowing to this pressure may be good politics at home, but it is not good for the Inuit or the arctic environment. A practical way for states to help the Arctic environment is to support the Inuit, not radical environmentalists, and to open markets to Inuit animal products.

Another aspect to examine is that of the environment. Inuit eat a great deal of meat, particularly from marine mammals. The environment is their garden or grocery store. As a matter of fact, they hunt so they may eat. However, medical reports say that many Inuit have high levels of PCBs, DDTs and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in their blood and fatty tissues, five to ten times greater than the national average in Canada or the USA. In June 1997, the ministers, from eight Arctic nations met in Norway to consider an 800-page assessment of contaminants in the Arctic. The scientific evidence is: POPs are transported from tropical and temperate lands to the Arctic territory , where they bioaccumulate and bioconcentrate, particularly in the marine food chain. Inuit urge negotiators to conclude, as quickly as possible, a formal protocol to limit contaminants under the Convention on POPs and Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP).

Climate change is another issue. Perhaps the most obvious long term threat to the Inuit and the Arctic is global warming brought about by human "enhancement" of greenhouse gas emissions. Science suggests that for any given warming of the planet's surface, the expected change of the temperature in much of the Arctic is 2 to 2.5 times the global average. Already Inuit have had to adjust their hunting patterns because of changes in the seasonal ice regime and distribution and size of open water in winter. But they will not be able to adapt to the predicted long-term results in the Arctic of global climate change.

Conserving Arctic wildlife and wildlife habitat is of central importance too. Inuit know how the Arctic environment is changing, and they can share traditional ecological knowledge with the global community. We will benefit from what they know. Broader cooperative approaches are required, in order to strike an ethical balance between animal rights activists in developed countries and the needs of the Inuit in the circumpolar world.

GENDER EQUALITY

Women should not be treated differently from men! Unfortunately, women and girls in many countries do not get the same treatment and respect that men do. This could be due to many factors such as the deep seated religious beliefs of a society, or age old prejudices that have yet to be changed. Whatever the reason, there is still quite a lot of work to be done in many countries, to better the social standing and conditions of women.

In some countries discrimination does not always start at womanhood or even childhood, but even before a girl is born. In such countries families may decide to get sex selective abortions, giving a child no chance at life, just because the foetus is female. If the mother does not get an abortion she will often kill the baby after it is born, either by refusing to feed it, or physically murdering it. In a study of one population in South Asia 51% of 640 families questioned said they had killed a baby girl within one week of birth. An estimated one hundred million fewer women alive at the present than expected. In Southern Asia the mortality rate is affected greatly by the deaths of girls due to neglect. In three South Asian countries alone approximately one million girls die each year from gender neglect. These girls are killed because they are not male. The proverbial theory in some cultures is that a boy is better because he can carry the family, perpetuate the line, perform requisite rites and assist the parents in their old age, whereas women need dowries, which is a great expense and after their marriage they belong to their husband's family.

Even if a girl is spared her life as a child, there are other hazards that await her as she grows up, for instance, malnutrition and poor dietary practices. In some cultures boys are usually given the best of the food available, women and girls are expected to eat smaller portions than males. This does not mean they need smaller portions. This kind of dietary practice causes iron and protein deficiency, which can be very dangerous for growing girls and pregnant women. In some countries girls are breast-fed for a shorter time than their brothers are, or sometimes not at all. Depriving an infant girl of breast milk takes away valuable nutrients that are necessary for her growth and well being. A study done in India showed that 51% of boys were breast-fed while only 30% of girls were.

Forcing a girl into marriage at an early age, is also a very dangerous practice. It is not only bad mentally but also physically, especially if she is going to bear a child. Girls as young as 12 are forced to give birth. At such a young age this is dangerous and can cause death to both mother and child. Teenagers account for 25% of the 500,000 female deaths every year due to pregnancy and childbirth. The maternal death rate for girls under 15 is five times greater then that of 20 to 25 year olds, according to a study done in Bangladesh. Giving birth at an early age also increases the risk of the baby dying significantly. The baby of a teenage mother is twice as likely to die in the first year than it would be if it were born to an older woman. Iron deficiency (due to a poor diet) in the mother can also affect her own survival rate during pregnancy and delivery. In Africa iron deficiency affects between 75 to 95% of girls 15 or older and in India, up to 70% of girls between 6 and 14 suffer from it.

Many girls never get the chance of going to school, and remain illiterate for all of their lives. Two thirds of the 1 billion illiterate people in the world are women.

Many cultures believe that they should send their sons to school and keep their daughters at home, to teach them to do household chores and to look after the children. Lack of money is not the only reason. The theory of many families is that if they educate their daughters they will get ideas and be disobedient and unsuitable for their traditional tasks. Not being educated properly is one of the reasons why women do not speak out about the injustices that are committed against them. Without proper education for girls how will this state of affairs change? There are 81 million girls who do not have any access to primary school education compared with 32 million boys (49 million less). In Bangladesh the ratio of illiterate to literate women is 3:1 and almost two thirds of school age girls do not even begin primary school.

However, education of females in Bangladesh and other countries has begun to increase. In Bangladesh, over the span of twenty years female primary school attendance increased by 12%. As for secondary schools and universities, statistics reveal that there was a 6.6% increase in secondary school attendance for girls and a 9.5% increase in attendance at universities.

Conditions are improving for women around the world but it is not yet possible to say that men and women are equal in all societies. For as long as cultures deny girls the right to be educated, to be equally nurtured, and most of all the right to live, there will be very little progress. Without education women will not be able to compete for work outside the home. Women in many societies are classified as housewives. In some countries girls spend as much as 80% more time doing domestic tasks than boys do. This should not be so, women should have an equal standing with men, in all countries and should be treated with the same respect and given equal access to education and job opportunities.

These issues remain to be dealt with in the new millennium.

THE GAIA THESIS

The Gaia thesis was first proposed by the British scientist James Lovelock in the mid-1970's. Today, Dr. Lynn Margulis of the University of Massachusetts

in Boston is a strong proponent of this idea. This controversial theory holds that the Earth atmosphere, oceans and climate are regulated and maintained by the process of life itself, in a homeostatic equilibrium which makes the Earth a pleasant and hospitable environment for so many forms of life. According to this idea the Earth itself "deploys feedback mechanisms to maintain an environment hospitable to life." Lovelock called this process Gaia, after the Greek Earth goddess, the mother of the Titans.

It is believed by proponents of the Gaia theory, that humanity, the most intelligent life form on this planet and the Earth, which sustains all life, have a unique relationship. Therefore, humans need to recognise and accept this unique relationship and must develop practices that will sustain our life-supporting environment. Since all life is composed of the minerals and elements of the Earth, Gaia proponents conclude that humans are Gaia's children.

How are we supposed to treat the Earth, or Gaia? We must realise that humans actually are not helping this Earth to maintain its life sustaining healthy equilibrium. Therefore the Gaia thesis advocates ways of interacting with our environment without damaging it. Humans now face a choice; to either continue on our ecologically destructive means, until crisis results or to weigh the consequences of the impact that we are making upon the Earth, our sustaining and hospitable home.

THE NILE

The Nile River is located in Africa and covers seven thousand years of known human history. It was in the valley of the Nile that the history of civilisation began and where the Egyptians built their culture. The ancient Egyptian civilisation flourished and grew because of the waters of the Nile, and without it there would have been no Egypt. In Egypt 60 million people rely almost exclusively on the Nile for its drinking water. It is estimated that Egypt will have at least 100 million people within thirty-five years.

The Nile is the world's longest river and is about 4,200 miles long. It begins north of Jinja and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile is separated into two rivers. The White Nile begins at Malakal and joins the other branch, the Blue Nile, at Khartoum.

Many people rely on irrigation for agriculture to feed the growing populations. Of all the fresh water in the world, 73% is used for irrigation. And, unfortunately, three fifths of all irrigation water is wasted due to inefficient and environmentally harmful techniques. The creation of the Aswan High dam transformed the river into a large irrigation ditch. When it was built the designers were looking for new sources of wealth, power and irrigation but the dam caused ecological degradation. The Aswan High Dam is made up of silt, sand, clay and rock. It reaches 364 feet into the air and extends out 12,565 feet. The construction of the Aswan High dam enabled the formation of Lake Nasser, the world's largest artificial lake. When it was being built doubts were expressed at the wisdom of creating the world's largest man-made lake in one of the hottest, sunniest places on earth, at a site where the shallowness of the lake would add to the ratio of evaporation to storage capacity. The High Dam is the most important mechanism that Egyptians have for management of the Nile. And it is also a landmark in their history. The Aswan High Dam was not only an irrigation project but was also a political one because it became a symbol of Egyptian energy and planning.

The Aswan High Dam conserved the yearly water storage Egypt needed, provided 50% of electricity for industry, and it stands as a symbol to the world of Egypt's determination to modernise. The Aswan High Dam increased available arable land and raised Egypt's agricultural income by 200%. The dam protects people from the annual River Nile inundation which allows them to save excess water for a later time. By preserving the excess water the possibility of drought decreases. Egypt no longer faces the danger of high floods, which results in the expansion of agricultural acreage. The High Dam permits a 20% more intensive use of the previously irrigated land and has allowed 5-10% more land to be brought under irrigation. The dam increases the availability of water, which has increased crop yields. It also generates a considerable portion of Egypt's electrical power. However, the High Dam has not only brought good results to Egypt as a whole but it has also caused unavoidable problems along with positive improvements.

The Aswan High Dam has created many problems. Big dams create big lakes, which can provide new fishing industries but it also means that many people have to leave their homes. The creation of Lake Nasser forced local farmers and their families to resettle on irrigated land somewhere else. Half of the water flowing to the dam is lost through evaporation and seepage. This loss was much higher than anticipated. The soil downstream from the dam is not as fertile as it once was. Silt helped make the soil fertile but the irrigation water from the dam has no silt, so artificial fertilisers have to be used. The High Dam has also increased coastal erosion in the Nile Delta, which began shrinking before the High Dam was built. The dam has increased the rate of shrinking as more and more silt remains behind the dam. The Aswan High Dam has also had unforeseen effects on the hydrological systems around the dam, destroying valuable ecological niches, interrupting the flow of the aquifers, and seriously damaging nutrient and sediment balances. The High Dam has never provided as much electricity as anticipated. Its possible output is 10 billion kilowatt-hours per year but in fact it has never generated more than 7 billion kilowatt-hours per year. The High Dam will probably never produce electricity to its full capacity.

Egypt has always been completely dependent on the river Nile. The High Dam was built with the best intentions but the unanticipated negative results highlight the problems to be faced in the new millennium, world-wide, in the use and allocation of the

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The demand for energy has risen all over the world, as global industrialistion proceeds. Developed nations consume at least ten times the energy per

person as in developing countries. In the mid-nineties, the total amount of energy used in North America, Europe, Russia, and Japan was about two thirds of the world's total. To satisfy the rising need for energy world-wide, the use of renewable energy sources has been introduced and applied. Solar technologies are capable of generating energy as reliably and cheaply as conventional fuels. With a sustained government-industry commitment to solar power, solar energy could become a competitor to coal, oil and natural gas. This would allow developing countries to use a source of energy that does not contribute to global warming and is not harmful to the environment. This would also be of benefit to developed countries that might export these technologies. However, regional variations in economics and availability of sunlight may challenge the possibility of solar energy use everywhere.

In the 1970's when oil and natural gas were expensive the U.S. Federal Government encouraged the development of clean, renewable energy, with broad public support. Since the drop in oil and natural gas prices many incentives to the use of renewable energy sources because Solar technology, can provide non-polluting and cheap fuels, as well as electricity regardless of the cost of fossil fuels which may rise again. This leaves no questions of whether it is safe or feasible to use renewable energy sources, especially since their use has been approved and encouraged world-wide, and specifically in such developed and advanced nations as the United States.

With the success of such technologies as water heating systems and individual photovoltaic panels (solar cells that convert solar energy directly into electricity) in rural homes, solar technology has already demonstrated its commercial capacity. Solar energy is now more expensive than fossil fuel energy but its price is likely to drop further, as it has since 1980, with the introduction of advanced technologies.

With public support for its use, solar energy can supply a considerable part of the future energy needs. It is beneficial to the environment and the economy, and its use is convenient for the conservation of energy especially in an age where it is such an indispensable requirement.

The cost of fossil derived energy has fluctuated greatly in the last twenty years. Solar energy must be developed for there is no guarantee that the current low priceof fossil fuels will continue, and prudence over global warming cautions us to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

world's water supply.

ANNIHILATION OF THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

Tropical rainforests are definitely the richest habitat on Earth. As many as 30 million species of plants and animals and about 70% of all life forms on our planet, live in tropical rainforests. At least two thirds of Earth's plant species, including many exotic and exquisite flowers and plants with medicinal value grow in the rainforests of our world. One single pond in the Amazon Rainforest of Brazil can carry a greater variety of fish than are found in all of Europe's rivers. A single rainforest reserve in Peru is home to a greater variety of birds than the entire United States. One single tree in Peru was found to accommodate 43 different species of ants, a total that just about equals the entire ant species in the British Isles. We haven't yet discovered all the different species of animals, insects and plants in the tropical rainforest and at the current rate of destruction we never will. Day by day, they are being foolishly and viciously destroyed. Scientists calculate that we are losing over 137 species of plants, animals and insects every single day because of rainforest destruction.

The Earth's rainforests are being destroyed at a rate of 2.57 acres per second. This is equivalent to two American football fields. This means that 150 acres per minute, 214,000 acres per day (an area larger than New York City) and 78 million acres per year (an area larger than Poland) are burned and demolished. In Brazil alone, 5.4 million acres per year are destroyed. Only twenty years ago, rainforests covered about 14% of the earth's land. Today, rainforests cover less than 6%. This destruction is so fast that all of the world's rainforests will be destroyed in just a few decades, that is in the new millennium. In 1500, six to nine million native people resided in the Brazilian rainforest, but in the 1992, less than 200,000 remain. Scientists estimate an average of 137 species of life forms are driven into extinction every day, or even more frightening, 50,000 different species each year.

The Amazon region is one of the Earth's greatest rainforests. If it were a country, it would be the ninth largest in the world. The Amazon river runs 3,900 miles from the Andes to the sea, and is longer than any river excluding the Nile. The vast Amazon basin covers more than two and a half million square miles, more than any other rainforest on our planet. The Amazon has been described as the "Lungs of our Planet" because it provides more of the world's oxygen by recycling the carbon dioxide, than any other one area. It is estimated that over 20% of our planet's oxygen is produced in this area.

More than twenty percent of the Amazon Rainforest is already destroyed and much more is severely threatened as deforestation continues to escalate. Statistics reported in 1996 that the Amazon showed a 34% increase in deforestation since 1992. A new report by a congressional committee says the Amazon is vanishing at a rate of 20,000 square miles a year which is more than three times the rate of 1994. If nothing is done, the entire Amazon, the largest rainforest in the world and home to so many animals and precious plant life will be gone within 50 years.

The reasons for rainforest destruction are economic. Rainforests are being destroyed world-wide for the profits they supply - mostly resources like timber and for agriculture.

Commercial logging is the largest cause of rainforest deforestation. Traders are destroying the Amazon Rainforest and the rest of the rainforests of the world because "they can't see the forest for the trees." Logging tropical hardwoods produces

big profits. Several species of tropical hardwoods are imported by developed counties, including America, just to build coffins which are then buried or burned.

Massive deforestation brings with it many frightening consequences - air and water pollution, soil erosion, malaria epidemics, the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, the eviction of Indigenous people, and the loss of biodiversity through extinction of plants and animals. Less Rainforests means less rain, less oxygen for us to breathe, and a contribution to global warming of the planet.

The rainforests act as a giant filter for the atmosphere by taking in greenhouse gases such as CO_2 and breathing out oxygen. Alone, the Amazon rainforests contain at least 20% of the world's CO_2. As rainforests are gradually destroyed, the quality of the air we breathe, may be affected. By destroying these rainforests, we would release about four fifths of this dangerous gas into our atmosphere. In addition, these greenhouse gases will be trapped in the air and increase the greenhouse effect, which raises the temperatures all around the world which can cause the ice caps to melt. When ice caps melt, the sea level rises and cause major flooding around the planet.

Rainforests are part of the global weather system. Destroying them alters the hydrological cycle. This would cause, drought, flooding, and soil erosion in areas where such events were previously rare. The cutting of forests also changes the reflectivity of the earth's surface, which in turn alters wind and ocean current patterns, and changes rainfall distribution.

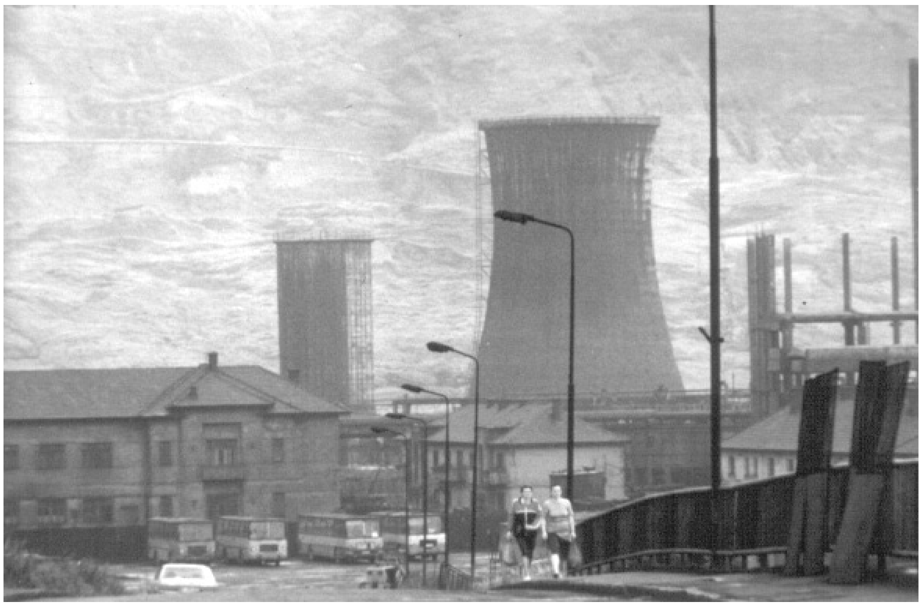
At the current rate of destruction, the Amazon rainforest itself could be totally wiped out in fifty years. With it will be lost untold treasures and resources available only within these unique environments. Concern for the future must force us to weigh the ethics of short term profit and gain of Tropical forest destruction against the multiple loss that result.

THE ATOMIC THREAT

Nuclear energy has, since it's conception, been a double edged sword that mankind has never truly learned how to control. To tap into the power that is based on the bonds between and inside atoms led to the use of the atomic bomb to end World War II and to the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, horrifying examples of the destructive power of the atom. Its use both in war and peace poses profound ethical problems for all of us. However it is a powerful energy source in a world with diminishing resources, but it is also a force of destruction with no parallel.

When the nuclear bomb was first authorised by president Franklin D. Roosevelt in the "Manhattan Project", an expert team of physicists led by J. Robert Oppenheimer starting in 1942, developed it with the intent of putting the U.S. ahead of all other possible possessors during World War II, especially Russia and Germany. Four years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, on August 6 1945, the Americans dropped their first atomic bomb, named Little Boy, on Hiroshima. The 'Little Boy' generated an enormous amount of energy in terms of air pressure and heat. In addition, it generated a significant amount of radiation that subsequently caused devastating human injuries. The strong wind generated by the bomb's explosion destroyed houses and buildings within a 1.5 mile radius. The powerful destructive force of the wind was thankfully short-term, but as the wind died down, the radiation generated by the bomb caused long-term problems to those who came in contact with it. A large number of people died within the first few months after the use of the bomb and many more died in the following years. Some people, instead of dying, developed genetic problems causing various forms of cancer and the birth of deformed babies, if they had babies at all. This one bomb killed an estimated 200,000 people.

This display of immense power, instead of simply turning the U.S. into the single most powerful country in the world, started a nuclear arms race between the U.S. and Russia, with the winner being the power which could create the most powerful and deadly weapons. This led the U.S. and the USSR to the brink of nuclear war during the Cuba Missile Crisis in 1962 when the world faced the one war that would truly end all wars. Thankfully, Kennedy and Khruschev used restraint and sound judgement and tensions lessened. However the fact remains that in that crisis, we faced a danger powerful enough to wipe us off the face of the earth; and we survived it by a hair's breadth.



Another catastrophe caused by the use of nuclear energy was the melt down of the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl, in the Ukraine in March 1986. Although it was initially announced that only 3% of the reactor core was released during the accident, the count was later raised to an estimated 80%. The radiation that was released during the melt-down killed between 7,000 and 10,000 volunteers and was equivalent to the explosion of 1,000 Hiroshima bombs. The melt down itself was horribly destructive, causing a huge area of land to be rendered unusable and thousands of lives to be lost, but the way the incident was dealt with after the event caused even more problems. Instead of sending teams of well trained and properly equipped people to go in and clean up the mess caused by the melt down, ill-prepared men with insufficient protection were sent to take care of the situation. These untrained men were unable to completely curtail the spread of radiation. As a result, an estimated 20 million people were exposed to the radioactivity that was released at Chernobyl, during the melt down, as a result of the sloppy cleanup. The radioactivity released was carried around the world by upper atmosphere wind. Not all people touched by the radiation felt it's effects, but a large number of those people who were not properly shielded from the radiation of the plant were later diagnosed with various forms of cancer. There was a doubling of birth defects among those living in the vicinity of the plant and approximately 800,000 children were put at risk of developing leukaemia. Although the immediate threat of Chernobyl is indeed over, it will take an estimated 200 years for the areas contaminated by the melt down to be relatively free of the effects of the incident.

Although Chernobyl and other nuclear disasters such as Three Mile Island in 1977 were horrible, they highlighted the ethical problems of nuclear energy for "a nuclear accident anywhere is a nuclear accident everywhere." Today, many advances in nuclear technology have allowed for better containment and regulation methods to be developed for the core reactors, decreasing the risk of accidents such as melt-downs and fires inside nuclear plants. These new safety protocols are being placed in existing and new nuclear power facilities to protect those working in and around the plant. However, there still exist Chernobyl type plants in use in eastern Europe. The nearly 100 tons of finished plutonium produced by the United States before its nuclear warhead production programme was abruptly shut down are now being taken care of. In Eastern Washington State, at the Hanford Site, cleaning up the 26 tons of unfinished material has become a top priority assignment. When the radioactive material is properly stored in lead lined canisters, these canisters are then transported into plutonium vaults where each one is given it's own shelf so as to prevent high concentrations of radioactivity to build up which could cause a fire or a melt-down. Unfortunately, plutonium was not the only radioactive material left when weapons production ended. Next to the old production sites, water storage basins hold 300 tons of weapons-grade fuel and 1,800 tons of ordinary reactor fuel. New doors have been installed around these storage basins to prevent the pools from breaching in case of natural catastrophe.

So far we've seen a rather grim image of nuclear energy, however, we must not forget the advantages that manipulating the atom has brought us. Thanks to more and more advanced technology cancer patients now have a new chance (although not yet a sure one) of being rid of their disease. By aiming gamma rays so that they pass through a cancerous section, it is hoped that the abnormal growth cells will die off whereas those healthy cells that are damaged will repair themselves, hence ridding the patient of their cancer. This treatment is still one where the patient faces some odds, but as this treatment is used more and more often, it becomes better understood. Those people submitting themselves to this treatment now are helping later patients by giving doctors and scientists more information to work with. This is very similar to the progression of our understanding of the containment and channelling of the power of the atom in nuclear power plants.

Although the power of the atom has proved itself to be possibly the most destructive force known to human-kind, it has also proved to be an immense source of productive power. In it's early stages it was unstable and misunderstood at best, now as we continue to work with it and better learn it's workings, we find more and more positive and non destructive ways to use it. We have at least learnt that if we do not wish to find ourselves at the brink of another nuclear war, we must deal with nuclear power in the most careful way. Setting up international bans against the creation and use of nuclear weapons and beginning disarmament of current nuclear weapons is but the first step in our slow learning process. Hopefully, we will learn how to properly use nuclear energy within an ethical framework of short and long term consequences.

OZONE LAYER PROTECTION POLICIES

The ozone layer, earth's atmosphere, also known as the ozone belt, is at an altitude of about nineteen to twenty-five miles in the part of the atmosphere known as the stratosphere. This is where the concentration of ozone gas is the highest. The reaction of ultraviolet light on oxygen forms ozone; molecules of oxygen assimilate radiation from the sun and split into separate atoms which then form again as ozone gas. The ozone layer protects life on earth as it filters out unhealthy ultraviolet radiation (UV-B) and prevents it from reaching the surface of the earth.

The first signs of the ozone layer being in danger were revealed in the seventies. Soon after the measurements of ozone concentration were found to be extremely low, scientists began intense research efforts to detect the reason for ozone depletion. It was found that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons were the main destroyers of ozone. These chemicals are used chiefly as propellants, coolants and for foam plastics. However, it was not until 1985 when the "ozone hole" in the Antarctic region was discovered that people became aware of the problem. By 1992 the ozone hole was reported to have grown to the size of the North American continent. In other words, it had doubled in size since its discovery in 1985.

As the ozone layer serves to protect life on earth, its destruction would naturally be very harmful. Right now increasing ultraviolet radiation on the earth's surface is the dreaded effect of the ozone layer's depletion. People are giving special attention to the growing danger of developing skin cancer. "Scientists estimated that a 1 percent increase in UV-B would result in a 2% increase in skin cancer among light-skinned people." In addition, more exposure to UV-B damages the body's immune system and increases the occurrence of eye diseases. UV-B radiation also threatens crops, forest species and aquatic organisms living close to the surface of the sea.

What, one may ask, has been done to stop ozone depletion? In 1985, the Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer was agreed upon in Vienna. In this convention the twenty nations that signed it agreed to take "appropriate measures . . . to protect human health and the environment against adverse effects resulting or likely to result from human activities which modify or are likely to modify the Ozone Layer." The primary point of the convention was to advocate research, and collaboration among countries and exchange of data.

Nevertheless, for more than ten years after the discovery of CFCs' harmful effect on the ozone layer nothing much was done to reduce use of the dangerous chemicals. Ozone-depleting chemicals are produced and used mainly in the wealthy industrial countries. Because of this, there was a disinclination on the part of Northern industrial and political leaders to ban the chemicals completely. However, in September 1987, twenty-four governments signed the Montreal Protocol aiming for a 50% reduction in CFC production by 1999 instead. Following this agreement, it was discovered that the ozone belt was thinning much faster than expected and that less harmful chemicals could be produced easily and at less cost than industry leaders had expected. Thus, in London in 1990 the signatories of the treaty agreed to cut off production of the most damaging chemicals by the year 2000. It was also agreed to establish an Ozone Fund which would encourage developing countries to abandon CFCs. Finally, in November 1992 the London Protocol was negotiated again in Copenhagen following knowledge of the drastically worsened ozone data. The Protocol requires all Parties to prohibit the export and import of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) from and to non-parties. The contracting states (which had grown to eighty-seven countries) also agreed to phase out CFCs by 1996, halons by 1994, and hydrochlorofluorocarbons by 2030, while developing countries must complete their phaseout by 2010. For methyl bromide, a hitherto unmonitored ozone-depleting pesticide, the developed nations agreed to freeze production at 1991 levels and stop all use by 2010. Developing nations must freeze consumption by 2002 at 1995-98 levels. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

is helping 49 countries activate programmes to phase out CFCs, halons and ODS.
What has been achieved from these international policies? The policies have managed to contain the depletion rate of the ozone layer, but not enough to completely eliminate it. Since 1979 the amount of total ozone has decreased over the majority of the planet and the concentration of CFCs continues to multiply by 4% a year as they linger in the atmosphere for 60 to 100 years. Moreover, five times as much ozone-depleting material is still being released into the atmosphere than can be disintegrated. There is also strong evidence now that damage to the ozone layer is due to chlorine and bromine containing industrial chemicals. Further losses of ozone must be expected since stratospheric abundance of these chemicals will increase until 2000.

The establishment of the agreements from Montreal to Copenhagen make it possible to modify policies according to scientific findings. The agreements are also major steps towards resolving this worldwide environmental problem (Large changes will nonetheless be slow in coming). If the Montreal Protocol is further reinforced to restrict emissions of chlorine and bromine-containing compounds, and if all nations sign the protocol and fully observe its stipulations and if no further surprises unfold, the damage done to Earth's protective ozone shield may be reversed within approximately 100 years.

There is, however, the issue of "double standards" in the application of restrictive policies under the conventions. As pointed out earlier, the problem was caused in the process of industrial growth over a long period of time. The containment policies advocate the use of technology, which is neither available nor cost-friendly to the developing countries which are trying to seek economic growth by industrialisation. Due to these international policies, developing nations find it more and more difficult to achieve growth without violating the conventions. They claim that they are being punished for the misdeeds of others. Secondly, there is the concern that future generations will be exposed to problems that are being caused by earlier generations. All these examples point to ethical issues of a very serious problem affecting the entire planet.

CUT NOW, SAVE THE FUTURE

The earth's climate is the result of complex interactions among the atmosphere, the oceans, the landmasses, and living organisms, which are all, warmed daily by the sun's enormous energy. This heat would radiate back into space if not for the atmosphere, which relies on a delicate balance of heat-trapping gases. These gases include water vapour, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane to act as a natural "greenhouse", keeping in just the right amount of the sun's energy to support life.

For the past 150 years, though, the atmospheric concentrations of these gases, particularly carbon dioxide, has been rising. As a result, more heat is being trapped than previously, which in turn is causing the global temperature to rise. Climate scientists have linked the increased levels of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere to human activities, in particular the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas for heating and electricity as well as gasoline for transportation), deforestation, cattle ranching, and rice farming.

Scientists still cannot predict the exact impact on the earth's climate of these rising levels of heat-trapping gases over the next century. But there is an agreement among most climate scientists about what is likely to occur. Sophisticated climate models suggest that the planet will warm over the next century at a more rapid rate than ever before recorded. *The New York Times* of December 18, 1998, stated that 7 out of the 10 warmest recorded years have occurred since 1990. The current best estimate from the Intergovernmental Panel is that if carbon dioxide concentrations double over pre-industrial levels, global average surface temperatures will rise between 1 C and 3.5 C. According to the Panel's range of possible scenarios, an atmospheric doubling of carbon dioxide could occur as early as 2050. Future results from this kind of warming will most likely include:

1) Damage to human health
2) Severe stress on forests, wetlands, and other natural habitats
3) Dislocation of agriculture and commerce
4) Expansion of the earth's deserts
5) Melting of polar ice caps and consequent rise in the sea level
6) More extreme weather events.

Now one can see why nations should take steps in an effort to cut their gas emissions. At the Kyoto world summit 160 nations gathered to negotiate an international treaty to control emissions of greenhouse gases. Nations were required on average to reduce emissions 50% from 1990 levels by between 2008 and 2012.
This step at Kyoto was a small but positive first step. These reductions will not affect anyone in our lifetimes. That is, one will not be able to realise the difference in the quality of the air. However, this was a first step. Critics of this meeting claim that the quality of life will fall due to the job loss involved with reaching the emission reduction goal. However they are only thinking of the near future. One must not only think ahead one hundred years, one must think one thousand or two thousand years ahead. Scientists claim that human beings have been releasing potentially harmful amounts of emission levels for only the past 150 years. If this is true how is the human race going to survive for another one thousand years?

To make life comfortable in the future, nations have to start cutting gas emissions now because if they continue to delay the reductions, the job losses and the effects on the economy will be greater. People will most certainly lose their jobs in efforts to cut emissions because industries will have to close down because they can not survive without producing products that require releasing emissions. Hence, jobs will be lost. However, is this not an acceptable trade-off to improve and to sustain life in the future?

One can compare the deterioration of the environment with a heavy wagon on a slightly inclined hill. It is easier to stop the wagon rolling off when it starts to roll than when it has reached its maximum speed and is rolling fast. The same thing is happening to the destruction of our environment. We must make efforts to stop it now rather than struggling without effect when the process has speed up in the new millennium.

ARE WE REALLY RUNNING OUT OF ENERGY?

In the 1970s, there were extreme shortages of energy, and the media announced that the world was running out of supply. How valid is the statement? The truth is we have more than enough energy that we can obtain from alternative sources.

The three main fossil fuels are coal, oil and natural gas. In power plants, they are burned to boil water, and the resulting steam turns a turbine that generates electricity. They are not renewable and will eventually run out. They will exist only so deep under the surface that it will be too costly and extraction will use too much energy. Of these three fossil fuels, only coal will remain for a long time. However, there are alternatives to fossil fuels to heat water to generate power. Some examples are the sun's thermal energy, controlled combustion or fermentation of biomass (organic material such as wood, garbage and agricultural goods), nuclear energy (the heat generated when the nucleus of a uranium 235 atom splits into two), and geothermal energy (obtaining heat from deep within the earth). Other options that don't directly involve heat include wind power and hydropower. Many of these solutions are reusable and do not contribute to the pollution problem.

There are many small sources existing that we simply ignore. For example, many of the abundant waterfalls can be used to generate power at a cheaper cost than fossil fuels. Another source are the countless smoke stacks in large cities as the kinetic energy of any rising gas is usable energy and thus can be converted to electricity. It takes trained employees to monitor, clean and refuel a fossil fuel power plant; on the other hand, a farmer and some helpers with relatively no experience can install a turbine and generator instead of having to constantly buy electricity from a local plant.

Small energy sources that can be easily run by employees with little knowledge can be the solution to some energy problems in Third World countries. In Nepal, there is a Tibetan refugee camp where there is a hole in the ground lined with brick and filled with manure and human waste drawn from public latrines. A steel wheel covers the hole, and when it is spun, the waste is agitated and bio-gas, mostly methane is produced. Enough power is generated to light the camp for the entire night.

Perhaps the most efficient and economical way, to create energy wisely, is with bio-mass. There are several ways to use bio-mass to convert it into electricity. The example of the owner of Millbrook Dairy Farm shows a couple of methods of obtaining energy from bio-mass. Inside the barn, two hundred cows provide milk, and at the same time, naturally produce manure which is kept under controlled conditions and is constantly monitored by a computer. It produces methane gas, which is lighter than air and thus rises. The methane goes up a pipe and spins an engine generator and produces electricity. Since only half of the electricity can be used in the farm, the excess is sold to a utility company. The waste heat from the generator is used to heat the water that cleans the cows and floor. The methane can then be burned to boil water and the steam can turn another turbine. The manure is then used as a fertilizer that helps grow the grain that feeds the cow. Imagine if every farm in the country used the same methods; we could then eliminate the need for many fossil fuel power plants.

We may be running short of fossil fuels, but we have vast amounts of usable energy that can be obtained at low cost. We are not running out of energy, we are only running out of conventional sources of energy. We tend to take energy availability for granted but concern for the future must make us think carefully and ethically about energy. Sources and their consumption in the new millennium.

OUR CHOICE: PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION OR RENEWAL

As we approach the new millennium, a main priority of the world must become the preservation, conservation and renewal of our natural resources. All life on Earth depends ultimately upon green plants and clean water. All life is inter-dependent. It is impossible to stop all utilisation of our natural resources—we can't stop using paper, metals from the ground, or abruptly switch from fossil fuels to alternatives. Change, to be effective, must be realistic. The challenges are great, but many countries are finally realising that short-term economic gain does not outweigh preservation of a sustainable environment for future generations.

In 1997 American economists and ecologists joined forces to determine the monetary value of the world's environmental resources. One study estimated the amount of nature's resources at $33 trillion—a sum about twice that of the global economy. As superficial as this figure may be, it forces even the greedy to come to the conclusion that we must save our resources. The global conference on energy and the environment held in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997 focused on world-wide energy use and climate change. The goal was to negotiate binding commitments, by the 159 countries attending, for reducing future emissions of greenhouse gases. It is supposed to be ratified by March 1999. Industrialised countries are required to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases—carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and three synthetic gases—by an average of 5.2% from 1990 levels by 2008-12; less developed countries were not included.

The immense problems to achieve these goals cannot be minimised. The economic consequences, in the United States, for example, to six key energy-intensive industries—chemical, steel, aluminium, oil refining, paper products and cement—are being looked at by the Senate, which has not yet agreed to the protocol.

The challenge: The world must shift its dependence on poisoning the planet into Earth-friendly alternatives. Steel manufacturers, for example, expressed a commitment to reduce carbon dioxide levels below the amount called for by the Kyoto participants. United States appliance manufacturers stepped up production of more energy-efficient machines. And most surprising of all, car manufacturers across the world, in 1997, announced plans to develop affordable cars with increased fuel efficiency; this, after decades of the manufacturers swearing that such cars were uneconomical to build. Japan's Toyota Motor Corp. led the way with a sedan called Prius that travels more than 65 miles on a gallon of gasoline and that emits half as much carbon dioxide as standard cars; it uses both electric power and gas, demonstrating the growing trend for cleaner automobile technology.

Scientists are continually finding that using our natural resources to help mitigate our environmental problems produces more effective measures than synthesising artificial methods. Organisations in Sweden, the Ukraine and the United States have been experimenting with the utilisation of specific types of plants to remediate contaminated ecosystems. Known as phytoremediation, this process is based on the premise that plants are able to help stabilise soil and reduce the likelihood that contaminants will become airborne; it is considerably less expensive than conventional cleanup methods. Another example can be found in the biological treatment of waste. A popular method is to use naturally found bacteria, which will break down toxic products, such as crude oil, into products with either significantly less toxicity or none.

The world is looking at new technologies for fuel, as well. For example, the world's largest solar thermal electric generating plant, in California, was operational beginning in 1997. Geothermal energy, the result of tapping into the heat that is stored in the Earth, is making progress, too. The most promising alternative renewable resource, however, is wind energy. The world-wide installed capacity of more than 7,000 MW represents tens of thousands of individual wind turbines, enough to supply electricity to millions of homes. These turbines are being utilised all over the world, from India to Germany and Denmark. According to the United Nations Population Division, there will be 9.4 billion humans by the year 2050, a medium-growth increase from our current population of 6 billion. A report by an international team of scientists, in the July 25, 1997, issue of Science Magazine, suggested that we need to carefully examine soil fertility and our use of fertilisers and pesticides or face unhealthy crop yields by killing off the organic matter that is so important to healthy soil. Without better conservation measures, at least 1.4 million sq. km (540,000 sq. mi.) of land will lose most good quality soil over the next two decades.

Another exploitation of resources that causes much debate is deforestation. Unfortunately, little or no progress is seen here, and the consequences are grave.

Although the industry leaders argue that logging and the mass-tapping of rubber are of the utmost importance to many nations' economic well being, we must also understand that there are substantial negative results to this destructive utilisation of our natural resources. The loss of forests is also believed to be a cause of global warming and the rise in sea levels. According to global climatologists, 1997 was the warmest year of the 20th century. Forest fires in the Amazon and Indonesia destroyed vast areas of the world's tropical rain forests in 1997. Right now, at least 12% of the Amazon's forest has been destroyed, and we can only guess what the real loss is.

Extinction of species is occurring all over the planet. In the United States, alone, nearly one-third of the 20,329 species of animals and plants are at risk of extinction. Animals living in rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands are especially threatened, as are plants in general. Some progress is taking place: Forest songbird populations remained intact overall across the United States between 1966 and 1996. And several species thought to be extinct were newly identified, among them a river shark in Borneo and a wild pig in Laos and Cambodia. It seems that if we apply ourselves, we can save the planet.

Our planet has faced this conflict between conserving our resources while still allowing for economic growth for almost two centuries now. Maximising profits does not always have to be at odds with a healthy planet. For the sake of us all, every government and company must embrace the credo of preservation, conservation and renewal and work hard to accomplish the sustainability of a green planet.

THE ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

The financial crisis in Asia erupted in mid 1997 causing a decline in the value of the currencies of a number of Asian countries and seriously disrupting their economic activities. The effects of the crisis were also felt by international markets that suffered fluctuations and uncertainty. To alleviate the problem the International Monetary Fund (IMF) responded by loaning large amounts of money to the most affected countries - Indonesia, Korea, and Thailand - and intensifying its consultations with its fellow members. The aid provided has sparked off a great debate regarding the benefits and consequences of the IMF's intervention.

The crisis surprisingly came after a long period of outstanding economic growth in Asia. While economists may debate the exact causes for this crisis, it is likely that it did not stem from macro-economic imbalances but rather that it was the result of weaknesses in financial systems, improper management at the micro-level and corruption in the public sector. Inadequate financial sector supervision, poor assessment of financial risk, and the maintenance of fixed exchange rates led banks and corporations to borrow large amounts of international capital. Over time, this inflow of foreign capital was used to finance poor quality investments. The failure of these investments resulted in those corporations and banks being forced to default in their foreign borrowings. This was the immediate cause of the Asian crisis.

Thailand, the epicentre of the crisis, was hit in May 1997 and in a short time the baht, the Thai currency, had been seriously devalued making it even more difficult for Thai corporations to meet their international liabilities. The crisis went on to spread to other economies in the region such as Korea, Hong Kong , Indonesia, and Malaysia. By mid-year 1998 the Russian economy was also in turmoil and the ruble was greatly devalued. Shortly thereafter the Brazilian economy faltered and it was feared that the Asian contagion might spread to other Latin American countries as well.

The IMF responded immediately to the fast growing crisis and provided direct aid to the most affected countries - Indonesia, Korea, and Thailand. It arranged programs of economic stabilisation and reform that could restore confidence to the regions. In December 1997, a record loan of $20.9 billion was given to Korea as part of a major international support financial package. Indonesia and Thailand also received very large loans of $11.2 billion and 4.0 billion, respectively. The IMF, as part of its reform programs, has temporarily tightened the monetary policies of the affected economies to stop exchange rate depreciation, focused on fixing weaknesses in the financial systems and removing features of the economy that would impede economic growth, assisting in reopening lines of external financing, and maintaining a sound fiscal policy.

There is a great deal of controversy surrounding the question of the benefits of the aid provided by the IMF. Proponents of the IMF support its efforts and claim it has helped in ameliorating the Asian crisis. According to statistics Asian exchange rates have strengthened and the Indonesian rupiah has risen significantly from the low it reached in June 1998. In Korea and Thailand interest rates have declined markedly, almost to pre-crisis level and it is predicted that these two countries have the strongest chance of recovering from the crisis. Indonesia has also experienced improvements but not to the extent of Korea and Thailand. This is because Indonesia has been hindered by severe political turmoil that was a result of its economic crises.

Critics of the IMF, who are chiefly economic conservatives, deem it an institution that exists to subsidise economic development in poorer nations and that its economic stabilisation program tends to interfere with free market economics. On the other hand leaders in the developing countries, such as the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, criticise the IMF and the World Bank for imposing economic policies which are ill-suited to the needs of developing economies. It is clear that the IMF is being criticised from both ends of the economic spectrum.

The main question critics of the IMF have is whether or not it is ethical to interfere with the internal affairs of a country. By employing outside forces it detracts from finding a solution within the system. Many people feel that the best policies for a country can only be provided by the government of that specific country. There is also scepticism as to what price the Asian countries will be paying for outside intervention. It is common that when a less powerful country gets aid from a powerful country the result is some degree of economic dependency. Thus, critics question the motives behind the aid provided.

Another point of ethical criticism regarding the IMF's interventions is its contradiction of the values of free choice and free market. When the IMF intervenes in a country's internal market, it could interfere with the growth of the nation's output and also with privately owned businesses. Critics are concerned about whether the IMF's intervention is ethical with regards to trading patterns within a country.

Critics and supporters of the IMF alike, agree that there is currently no good alternative organisation. Thus the choice is either abolition of an international reserve organization or amendments to the original IMF charter.

The Asian crisis is far from over and estimates show that if the situation does not change it will halve the world's economic growth for 1998, decreasing it from 4% to 2%. The economic forecast does not show any relief ahead. The IMF may have to change its policies in order to halt the downward economic.

BUSINESS ETHICS AND CULTURE

Business ethics in America as compared with business ethics in Asia, are two entirely different concepts. These concepts are initiated by the difference between American and Asian views of educated people. Americans believe that an educated person is someone who is trained in an academic setting, away from home, and is able to speak the English language fluently. On the other hand, Asians believe that an educated person is someone who has been schooled in the traditional sense, meaning that he or she is fluent in his or her native language and is knowledgeable of local customs, tradition and protocol, and therefore is able to apply this knowledge to business and life.

Asians are inclined to follow the idea that they are able to conduct themselves on the basis of changeable circumstances as opposed to basic truths and the rule of law, as the Americans do. Therefore they have different values and behave differently in their personal, business and political relationships. Most Asian businesses tend to use Chinese examples and follow Confucian ethics, which emphasizes humanity, benevolence, and righteousness, along with etiquette and ceremonial rituals; these are the basis for most Asian business relationships.

Two examples of how Asian business ethics are reflected in a country are of Japan and China. As Dr. Kazutaka Watanabe, a noted Japanese authority on liberal arts, said in the early 1960s, we Japanese do not have principles, we have policies. Rather than basing their views of correct and incorrect business on the western standard, the Japanese developed a system of doing business based on form and a process called "odoho", which was the official certification of morality. The doh system took precedence over human rights and other ethical concepts; based on the five commandments for business and success: "shitsuke", or training, "seiri", or orderliness, meaning everything in its prescribed place, "seiton", or neatness, "seiketsu", or cleanliness and finally "seisou", or sweeping up dust. Following the creation of the "doh" , yet another Japanese ethical system was created the "inseki jinin", or take responsibility and resign. This system means that in terms of business, all matters had to occur with fairness, equality and justice. If there was some incorrect link in a business, to avoid full responsibility for unprincipled behaviour, there would simply be a public showing of the sacrifice of leaders in that business. This "inseki jinin" system led to many scandals in the early 1990s that are now causing Japanese corporations and government pressure to create codes of ethics designed to change the nature of public and private behaviour. Since Japanese business behaviour and practices are a direct reflection of traditional core culture, such changes will lead to fundamental changes in culture.

The basis of Chinese business is the 'danwei', meaning the workplace, but it is much more than just a workplace. Without a danwei a person just isn't a person; it's how a person is identified and controlled. The basis for Chinese philosophy, religion, science, astrology and divination is the fact the universe is held together by two forces, the yin and the yang, the negative and the positive. This principle affects the way in which the Chinese make decisions concerning business.

American business ethics is based on four central principles. Individuals must be able to co-operate with the demands and advancement of their business. They should accept the intrinsic positive outcomes of the companies, meaning the quality of its performance, to strive towards excellence in terms of product and to continue to improve the business. These principles are based on the concepts of learning, leadership, collaboration, quality, reengineering and strategic thinking show that American businesses involve a wide range of capabilities.

Modern American business practices stem from the era of the Robber Barons. This era at the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century, known as the Gilded Age caused the advancement and the development of modern business in American and throughout the world. Modern American business has been altered since its major beginnings but it still has it's roots in the entrepreneurs of the Gilded Age.

The major difference between American and Asian business ethics is the fact that American businesses are based on and conform to, a very strict set of laws allowing the formation and the existence of a business while Asian businesses, also have rules, their rules conform to tradition.

THE EURO

In March 1979, the European Monetary System (EMS) was established as a first step toward achieving a European monetary union better known as the EMU. The EMS was set up to ensure that Europe would be as free as possible from sudden currency fluctuations while at the same time maintaining economic convergence. Although the initial plan was for the EMU to come into play in 1980, this overly optimistic goal was not reached. More recently, it was decided by the parliaments of the Member States and ratified in the Maastricht Treaty (1992) for the EMU to come into play in 1999 at the latest. The most important component of the EMU will be the single currency, known as the Euro, which will become part of peoples' everyday lives as of 1st January 2002. Legally though, the Euro has been a currency as from 1st January 1999 when it will be used in financial markets and so on. The time period of 1999-2002 will be a transitional phase during which companies will have a choice of either using their national currencies or the Euro.

For every European country to be able to adopt the single currency, they had to meet certain criteria based on inflation, exchange and interest rates, public expenditure and foreign debt. Greece, for example, was not able to meet these criteria and therefore will not be participating in the first stage of EMU. Sweden, the United Kingdom and Denmark do meet the criteria but have decided to adopt a "wait and see" approach to the Economic and Monetary Union. The other eleven European Union members adopted the Euro on January 1 1999.

In order to ensure that the Euro remains a stable currency, there is a European Central Bank, based in Frankfurt, Germany. It will be an independent central bank, free of political control, which will be solely responsible for monetary policy and setting the interest rates for Europe.

Although the Euro has the advantage of creating a stronger single market and a hopefully stronger economy, it also has its disadvantages. At the present time, the average unemployment rate in Europe is 10%, which is already quite high, but this percentage could fluctuate. Having the European Central Bank control the interest rates for the whole of Europe, will make it harder for companies to create new jobs when times are hard and the interest rates are high. The Central Bank has the power to change the rates as it sees fit for the benefit of the whole of Europe's economy, regardless of specific economic / social problems in some of the 15 member nations.

Another downside is that of fiscal policies because government expenditure is limited. There will be a limit for the whole EMU area which any one country cannot exceed. Therefore, if a government in one country wants to spend more money, it will not be allowed to, which could in turn, create problems inside the individual country. Another question is who will speak on behalf of the EMU? Eleven countries will take part in EMU but who will be the one communicating with the rest of the world on behalf of the Euro area? This still remains an obstacle and has not yet been decided by the member states participating in EMU. It is of course a problem that concerns the locus of political power among the 15 members. What effects will the single currency have on the people and what ethical problems will it cause? A national currency is associated with a country's independence as well as its culture and heritage. It makes the country different from the others. A federal Europe is a fine idea, but if the people feel that their nation's identity has been taken from them, then it will cause deep seated resentment and problems of adjustment. For the Euro to work, all people must believe in its advantages. Also, what happens to the people who put their savings into banks when their currency was strong? Will their money be devalued?

The biggest problem of all though will be the relationships between the countries who adopt the single currency and those who do not. Instead of having a unified Europe, the divisions will be more prominent. Eleven out of fifteen member states are adopting the Euro but what will happen to the other four? They may wish to join later on but, by then, the barrier between those who have the Euro and those who do not may be too difficult to overcome. And what about those countries in Central and Eastern Europe who are queuing up to join the EU? Will the introduction of the Euro make it even more difficult for them to adapt their systems to that of the EU? Another problem is the state of affairs in the island of Ireland: Northern Ireland will not be part of the Euro area straight away whereas the rest of the island will be. Having achieved some kind of peace, the adoption or non-adoption of the Euro could become another source of potential conflict creating barriers to trade on the island of Ireland thus perpetuating the division.

There are many questions that still need to be answered. The Euro could be the answer to a lot of Europe's problems but it could also be her downfall. Instead of making Europe's economy stronger, it could ruin it altogether. Only the new millennium will tell.

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

The IMF evolved out of the Bretton Woods Conference, which took place in 1944. This conference was set up to lay the groundwork for a new international monetary system after World War II. After the First World War, the world's financial stability was shaken and the Great Depression brought further economic failure. The International Monetary Fund was set up to help make a new exchange rate system feasible and workable. This was the major function of the IMF until 1971 when its role changed to that of assisting less developed countries with their debt problems. Currently it is involved in attempting to alleviate the global financial crisis in Asia, Russia, and Brazil.

The IMF continually exchanges views with national authorities about the policies of these countries. The IMF recommends various policies to the governments of developing nations such as lowering inflation, suggestions on productive government spending and more efficient tax systems. At least once a year the IMF provides an assessment for those countries that are being monitored and addresses any economic difficulties which may exist, therefore trying to prevent national and global crisis. People do not focus on this vital function because as we all have heard "The key to solving a problem is to stop it before it starts" or in laymen's terms "prevention is the best cure." IMF's No. 2 man Mr. Stanley Fischer said in his October 30th New York Times interview "…it's our job to convince people to do things that we believe are good for them. Even if those things are politically unpopular – and they usually are."

Having just negotiated bailouts for Thailand and Korea from the reserve provided by the developed nations, the IMF is more recently faced with a crisis of devaluation of the Japanese Yen. A major culprit in Japan's crisis is its banking system. Currently, Japan is grappling with the problem of how to deal with $1.4 trillion in bad loans from banks without creating a financial panic. Prime Minister Obuchi is keeping audit information confidential so no one really knows the extent of the crisis. It is apparent that loans were being authorised without proper collateral and background checks being substantiated. Political cronyism is a problem in Japan and influenced banking practices. Many banks may be insolvent and some will close down in the near future. As the major economic power in Asia, and number two in the world, it is essential to the world economy that Japan regains a solid banking system and revises its public policy. Michel Camdessus, managing director of the IMF, said "In this world of globalisation there is great risk of capital flows drying up or reversing, thereby precipitating a crisis, when investors, domestic or foreign, abruptly lose confidence". Some of the guidelines Camdessus makes to all members of the IMF are:

1) Reductions in unproductive government spending.
2) Higher spending on primary health care and education; and adequate social protection for the poor, the unemployed, and other vulnerable groups.
3) The creation of a more level playing field for private sector activity, by increasing openness, stepping up privatisation, dismantling monopolies and setting up simpler, more transparent regulatory systems.
4) Stronger banking systems that protect depositors, especially small savers, and reduce risks for shareholders and creditors by enforcing strict prudential standards and information disclosure requirements.
5) Tax systems that are effective, efficient, equitable and as simple as possible; and

6) Greater transparency and accountability in government and corporate affairs. The IMF was founded out of solid principles and experience. In order for us to make a better world, the developed and developing have to work together, and that means making sure other countries, not just our own, have a chance to succeed. Therefore enlightened self-interest should lead us to an ethical commitment to financial and economic well being and success for all nations.

CORPORATE BUSINESS IN THE U.S. AND ASIA

Ethics are a very important factor in all aspects of life. Business and industry is no exception. We looked at two cultures; the United States and Asia, and we observed their ethical patterns.

Many qualified professionals have never had any training in ethics, and sometimes just don't recognise certain types of ethical conflicts. Some basic ethical issues include lying, bribery, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping.

An example of an ethical issue is when the pizza chain "Domino's" installed an identification system of its customers. This prevented "prank" or false orders. But when a manager decided to reward a frequent buyer with a gift (a man who ordered a pizza every weekday), the man was furious and shocked that his eating habits were recorded. Clearly, it wasn't the manager's intent to have this effect on one of his best customers; but, he never considered the fact that his actions could have been seen as an invasion of privacy.

In another situation, an African-American man who had graduated in the top of his class from Brown University applied for an advertising job at a very successful firm. He got the job for he had impressive credentials. But he was put on a project for fried chicken. He felt very offended due to the stereotypes affiliated with African-Americans and fried chicken, and when he went to his boss, his boss said he thought he would be successful in this particular topic. This blatant prejudice upset the man and he immediately quit his job.

There needs to be a change in business ethics. The US government decided to appropriately train businesses in ethics which unfortunately ended up by being a preachy repetition of themes of "Don't Do Bad Things, Be Good" which was not helpful. Now, this training has been enhanced to focus on case-by-case analysis, discussions and interaction, and where the need for individuals to learn and to understand ethical choices for themselves is stressed. "Stimulate each person to think for himself or herself." – taken from "In the Pursuit of Ethics" by O.C. Ferell and Smith Collins.

South East Asia has been the fastest growing economic region for the past ten to fifteen years with an average growth of eight percent. It appears that the miracle of South East Asia's economic progress is the miracle of the overseas Chinese commercial success. They represent six percent of the population but control more than seventy percent of the region's corporate wealth. The role of overseas Chinese business is enormous in the success of South East Asia.

The factors which have made them so exceptionally successful are property owning, trusting relationships and their political connections. It is the important network of relations which constitute the core of their success. The connections create a mutual presumption of trust which becomes the basis for doing business.

The companies run overseas by Chinese are family-controlled and decision making tends to be very centralised. Due to this, staff training isn't an issue but there's less room for individual initiative. Most of all, investment decisions are often based on connections and networks. Relatives draw the family's attention to investment opportunities, a sharp difference with western companies which tend to invest according to the results of their research departments.

Lately, due to the upheaval in the Asian economy, many Asian leaders have been criticised and their positive contributions have been brushed aside. For example, Suharto's birthday wasn't even celebrated last June due to his surrender of a 32-year control over the world's fourth most populous nation, Indonesia. Angry protesters demanded he be tried for corruption and Suharto hasn't spoken publicly since his resignation on May 21, 1998.

It will be interesting to see whether the business practices in South East Asia and in Asia in general are compatible with Western practices. However, the Chinese send their children to European and American universities which has made them more sensitive to the Western way of doing business. Furthermore, non-ethnic Chinese will inevitably have a growing role to play in the development of their economies which should reduce the part of ethnic Chinese's influence in the future.

However for all businesses, practised ethical issues remain important and must always be factored into the decisions of companies whether in Asia, Europe or North America.

A UNIFIED EUROPE?

The designers of Europe's monetary union seem confident that no catastrophic surprises lurk among the legalities or the practicalities of the new system. Eleven of the EU's 15 countries sank their national currencies into the Euro on January 1st, 1999—but citizens in the 11 countries noticed little change overnight. Notes and coins in national designs, denominated in national currencies, will continue to circulate for at least three years. These will become substitutes for the Euro, their value fixed against it. Countries will not introduce new Euro notes and coins generally until 2002, although some have already been minting coins in anticipation.

A successful launching of the Euro accelerates the general process of European political integration. The more a common currency encourages convergence among European economies, the less distinction there may be among national economic interests. And the less distinction there is among national economic interests, the more reason there will be for EU countries to move towards common foreign and security policies.

The Euro has shifted, as of January of 1999, financial power from the individual countries to a new single European Central Bank. This should strengthen political institutions such as the European Parliament at the expense of the individual member governments. In the Maastricht Treaty, which created the European Monetary Union, these developments were anticipated. The treaty urges a political union that will have responsibility for foreign and defence policies as well as for economic and social policies.

Hitherto, most EU member states have been reluctant to pool their sovereignty into a common foreign or defence policy. But European impotence and disunity in the face of successive crises in the Balkans have brought about a change of mood.

Replacing all of the national currencies of Europe with Euros will also have a huge psychological effect. There is not a significant country in the world that does not have its own currency. When Europeans carry Euros in their pockets, they are bound to feel that power has shifted from their national capitals to the political institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg.

There are problems in the creation of a common currency. Since the end of World War II, the proponents of European political union have dreamed that a federal state would eliminate the conflicts that produced past wars. Unfortunately, the Euro and the political union that could follow might lead to new and magnified conflicts about policy and power sharing. Such conflicts might occur not only among the nations using the Euro, but also with the European countries which will not be using it, as the EU tries to politically manage the new system.

The end of the cold war eliminated what had been the primary reason for European countries to co-operate with one another and with the United States. The monetary union may create political conflicts and economic instability in Europe. Moreover, some Europeans may respond to the probable conflicts by seeking a common enemy as a source of political solidarity.

Since some Europeans have been heard to say that a political union is needed as a counterweight to the global influence of the United States, Americans should start to take the Euro seriously.

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CONCLUSION

The authors of this Working Paper have examined some of the critical issues and problems that the global community will confront in the new millennium.

In creating this document the editors have come to the realization that the sustainability of the multiple and interelated systems that support and enhance life on this planet are imperilled.

It will fall to our generation to devise a set of moralprinciples and values and to apply them in creative and innovative ways to ensure the social and ecological viability of our world.

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