

IS THERE A COVID-19 SILVER LINING?

OUTCRY

**URGENT ALARMS FROM OUR PLANET
AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT THEM**

J. MORRIS HICKS

Engineer. Business Executive. Author. Speaker.

WITH

STUART H. SCOTT

Founder & Executive Director, scientistswarning.org

**“THE WORLD IS COMPLETELY DELUSIONAL AND
GOING TO HELL IN A HANDBASKET AS FAST AS
HUMANLY POSSIBLE. THE ONLY RELEVANT
QUESTION IS: HOW DO WE MAKE THE CRASH AS
SOFT A LANDING AS POSSIBLE FOR SOME KIND OF
CONTINUATION OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION?”**

JAMES CAMERON

FOREWORD BY MOTHER NATURE

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Foreword by Mother Nature

This message is addressed to the billions of humans who reside in the developed nations of planet Earth.

You may wonder why I am not sending this message to all humans who live here. It's because you in the developed world are the ones who have done most of the disruption of my efforts to sustain you—while the remaining three or four billion people have done most of the suffering as a result of your reckless behavior.

A little background. Our planet became part of the Milky Way Galaxy over four billion years ago and the first forms of life emerged here a few hundred million years later. During those four billion years of life on our planet, millions of species of plant, bird, insect, fish, reptile and mammal have come and gone.

And it seems like only yesterday that you humans arrived—in fact, it has been about 300,000 years—a mere blink of the eye in geological time. So, let's put your *Johnny-come-lately* status in perspective. Imagine that all of the last four billion years (of life on Earth) could be crammed into just one year. What portion of that single *imagined* year has your species been a part of Earth's biodiversity?

Amazingly, you humans emerged as a species in just the last thirty-nine minutes of the last hour of that *imagined* year. Yet in just those few short moments, what a mess you have made—running roughshod over millions of other species in the wild—while stealing their natural habitat to establish your residences, farms, factories, shopping centers, warehouses, theme parks, bridges, tunnels, airports, golf courses, schools, concert halls, sports arenas, prisons, freeways, zoos, cemeteries, and on and on.

You seem oblivious to the damage you are inflicting as your reckless behavior keeps getting exponentially worse. In just the last two seconds of that *imagined year* mentioned earlier, your population has exploded eightfold—going from one billion in the year 1800 to almost eight billion in 2020. And each time your population doubles, your consumption of manufactured goods quadruples—as more people in the developing world are able to buy stuff that they don't really need for the first time.

Sadly, there appears to be no end to your madness as you continue to swell your numbers by well over one million people every week—while at the same time, you keep squandering my overly-stressed natural resources to maximize your

steadily increasing consumption of stuff. Then, most of that *stuff* ends up in landfills within a matter of months, adding insult to injury regarding your abuse of my hospitality.

Just since 2006, when the United Nations issued a huge report, *Livestock's Long Shadow*, chronicling your unsustainable agricultural practices, you've added over one billion new mouths to feed, caused additional erosion of hundreds of billions of tons of topsoil and destroyed another billion acres of rainforest.

What's the matter with you people? You seem to be intent on destroying every element of the natural world that has preceded you—leaving me with no other choice but to concentrate primarily on protecting all the other natural species with which you share the planet—the creatures that you seem so intent on destroying.

As a result of your failed stewardship of this planet, things are likely to become very painful for you in the near future and for that I am terribly sorry. But frankly I have run out of patience with you and your selfish ways. Quite simply, you've become very problematic tenants who are now in serious danger of being evicted. Consider this your first warning.

As you may know, there is a chance that artificial intelligence empowered robotic cyborgs may someday take over the stewardship of this planet since you humans have failed so miserably. Perhaps they could do a much better job than you have done, yet for some reason, the whole idea makes me nervous.

So due to my uneasy feeling about the cyborgs and despite all of your failures, I am still in your corner and am hoping that you humans will come together, restore order and learn to live in complete harmony with all of nature—for a long, long time to come.

With tough love, Your Mother

PS: The rest of this book will outline how you can earn your way back into my good graces. It won't be easy, and you will quite possibly fail, but at least you have been warned and you do still have a chance to make things right. My friends, the authors, will do their best to show you the way in this timely book which was published (e-book format only) without killing any of my trees.

Introduction

“Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.”

– Chief Seattle, 1854

When we started writing this book in the autumn of 2019, no one had ever heard of the Coronavirus. [That news didn't break](#) until the last day of that year, when the China office of the World Health Organization first got reports “of a previously-unknown virus behind a number of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in Eastern China with a population of over 11 million.” We all know what has happened since then – and we will never forget it – unless our species becomes a victim of the Sixth Mass Extinction. That’s a topic that we will explore later in the book.

On the cover, we alluded to a possible *silver lining* of the Coronavirus and Covid-19. If there is a silver lining, we may not feel its beneficial effects for many decades. That’s when historians may look back by mid-century and record that the Earth-shattering wake-up call we received in early 2020 – ultimately jolted us into coming to grips with correcting our grossly unsustainable relationship with the biosphere that gives us life.

[Tom Friedman’s column in the NY Times on 3-17-20](#) suggested that this unprecedented event will more than likely define our entire lives – with history recording it as being much more significant than 9-11 and other disasters of the past. He stated: “There is the world B.C. – Before Corona – and the world A.C. – After Corona. We have not even begun to fully grasp what the A.C. world will look like.” We will get back to this crucial topic later in the book – as we first wish to address the Outcry from nature that was happening long before the Coronavirus.

As the title suggests, this book is all about what Mother Nature is trying to tell us about how our civilization is rapidly destroying her ability to keep us alive and well. Her OUTCRY is abundantly evident in climate-change related phenomena like declining insect, bird and fish populations, rising global temperatures, storms, fires, species extinction, melting ice at the poles, and dead zones in the oceans – to name just a few. The title also suggests an OUTCRY from a number of "big picture" scientists who have connected the dots between human behavior and the deterioration of nature's ability to keep us alive.

Following the OUTCRY in Part One of the book, Part Two focuses on how we can change our living arrangements enough to slow, stop or reverse the damage we have already inflicted. In other words, what can be done soon enough to prevent the collapse of our civilization and the extinction of the human species? Some scientists have

suggested that we must give back half of the Earth to nature such that she would have enough space to continue providing us with the habitat services that we need to keep on living. The problem is that there is still no global conversation regarding a plan for how we might do that and I fear that uncoordinated, willy-nilly efforts to tackle such a mind-boggling mission will never achieve success.

As an engineer and corporate executive for most of my career, I have learned that no complex issue can be resolved effectively without a plan. And in order to develop that plan, we must begin with a “global conversation” about what is essential to our survival: the urgent need to reinvent our civilization. In order to help spark that *conversation*, I began in September of 2018 with a vision of my own of how we might learn to live in harmony with nature on the only planet in the known universe capable of keeping us alive.

That vision has evolved a bit since then and currently looks like this: a very comfortable and futuristic, coast-to-coast living corridor (twenty-five miles wide) in the USA – a magical place where only green lifestyle options exist. Running from Seattle to Boston, this envisioned corridor would traverse the northernmost states of Montana and North Dakota and would accommodate up to three hundred million people in an ultra-comfortable living arrangement that would be 70% less densely populated than Manhattan.

The early residents would move there on a “by invitation only” basis for the first few million people, and the entire corridor would feature an environmentally sensitive economy. It would have a form of governance that deals first and foremost with the sustainability needs of the natural world. With a 3,000-mile, HyperLoop system spanning the entire length of the corridor, it would ultimately eliminate over 80% of all travel by cars, trucks and domestic airlines in the United States – while providing a superb form of highly efficient, comfortable and convenient travel with breathtaking views near ground level at speeds up to 760 mph.

As alluded to earlier, the primary goal of the above vision is to spark a crucial global *conversation* about how an ultra-sustainable habitat could be developed in the USA and thus serve as a model for the rest of the world. We’re talking about a spectacular new living corridor where all residents will enjoy free access to food, housing, clothing, transportation and the best healthcare. This new transcontinental corridor would also feature a totally new economy that rewards less consumption of physical stuff. How we might be able to turn that vision into reality before 2030 is the focus of this book.

The primary question as we develop that model is: "How green is green enough?" Since we can't be sure of the answer, we must totally re-design every aspect of our civilization, and even then, it may not be enough to save us. Some scientists have concluded that we have waited too long to make much of a difference. Perhaps those scientists haven't been thinking outside the box enough when it comes to what we humans can accomplish when we throw the old, ineffective, playbook out the window.

Accepting defeat is not an option – as we simply cannot let our children down. We must also think about the billions of children who will follow them. As Dr. Wilson says, “*We have enough intelligence, goodwill, generosity, and enterprise to turn Earth into a paradise both for ourselves and for the biosphere that gave us birth.*”

So, let’s get busy and just do it. Hopefully, this book will provide readers with some of the knowledge and inspiration needed to help spark that crucial *conversation* regarding a complete reinvention of our civilization. And if we do this right, I am confident that Mother Nature will be delighted to see us survive and thrive indefinitely on this very special planet.

“The one process now going on, that will take millions of years to correct, is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.”

– E.O. Wilson

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About the Authors

Epilog – An Evolving Vision of Survival

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