

ABSTRACT

Building a Green Society – A Vision for the Future

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The world today is grappling with a crisis of unprecedented proportions that impacts both the human and the natural environments. The financial world has been struck by an economic meltdown, massive loss of jobs and income, unavailability of credit, and an overall decline in confidence and economic activity. At the same time, we are witnessing a constant stream of wars and conflicts over national interests, natural resources, ideology and religion. These conflicts destroy lives and create millions of refugees. On the environmental front, major issues include climate change, a declining resource base, pollution of the air, water and soil, and the loss of species and habitats. These crises must not be viewed separately. They are closely linked and are the outcome of a system of values that emphasizes economic advancement by individuals and societies over the protection and preservation of life on our planet. The elements of *Biopolicy* can provide us with a roadmap for building such a new society. The transition to a *Green Society* begins with *bio-education*, an interdisciplinary approach to teaching. The purpose and responsibility of bio-education is to uplift the spirit of humanity and to reverse the crisis in values that has resulted in serious environmental deterioration.

Our cities must become aesthetically pleasing places to live without pollution and blight. *Bio-architecture* provides us with an approach to demonstrate the application of biological patterns and natural materials to architecture and design. Living things can be considered in architectural and structural terms. This opens new possibilities in restructuring human settlements in accordance with environmentally-sound principles, and introduces the notion of a *biopolis* as an optimal strategy for urban planning. It is based on the application of clean energy sources, environmentally friendly materials, and the creation of a self-sufficient, aesthetically pleasing urban environment with clean transport and minimal waste generation. Converting our metropolises into *green cities* will involve the architectural, engineering and construction sectors and will produce many jobs and *green salaries* such as installing solar energy systems, insulating buildings, planting green spaces, tending rooftop gardens and urban agricultural plots, and many others. This approach would reduce harmful emissions, help to limit global warming, while also providing economic sustenance to address unemployment and the economic crisis.

We live in an age of rapid technological change. New technologies are continually being introduced in every area. Often these technologies are applied before we fully understand what their impacts are on humans and the environment. A *bio-assessment of technology* would ensure that technological and economic progress supports bios and the environment and would bridge the gap between technology and societal values.

The pursuit of narrow self-interest at both the individual and national levels has resulted in a global economic and environmental crisis which threatens peace and human well-being. Climate change is accelerating, melting polar ice and rising seas threaten entire island nations and coastal areas. The desertification of areas where agriculture is vital is increasing poverty. Plant and animal species are disappearing from the earth at unprecedented rates. Overcoming this crisis will require an unprecedented level of international cooperation. Nations and individuals must redirect their efforts away from conflict and the unbridled pursuit of wealth towards a comprehensive approach that respects human diversity and the wonder of life on earth. *Bios* – life – is the most precious gift on our planet and the bond that connects all living beings. A new structure of society, where the preservation of *bios* is valued over material gain, and peace and harmony replace discord and destruction is needed to enable us to overcome the current crises. We must build a *Green Society* and lead humanity to a brighter future. A bios-promoting vision that places the ethics of bios at the heart of societal structure can provide the necessary framework to end strife and achieve a world in which the gift of bios is truly appreciated.