

**A report on practical steps for achieving the goals
stated in the Fuji Declaration in the sphere of
MEDIA**

Executive Summary
based on findings of research team led by Bente Milton

by Dr. Ervin Laszlo

Obstacles

As we have seen, obstacles in the way of taking practical steps to achieve the goal stated in the Fuji Declaration are created by the still old-paradigm orientation of the principal actors in the economy and in politics. These obstacles are addressed and partially overcome in the evolution of the purposes and operative principles of leading-edge business companies. The obstacles are nearly removed in the world of the media, where classical top-down models are not only challenged but are rendered obsolete by the latest developments.

Evolution in the media

New developments in the media offer participation for the great majority of people on the planet. Internet access in 2012 was estimated at 33 percent of the world population or 2.3 billion people, and is forecast to grow to 66 percent by 2030, encompassing 5.1 billion people. The practical significance of this trend is that two-thirds of the people on the planet will have the opportunity to communicate their ideas and concerns on the Internet, constituting a global platform for discussing what is wrong with the world and what could be done to remedy it.

Optimistic assessments of the potential of the current “communication revolution” foresee that Internet access by the of the majority of the world’s peoples will bring about a crystallization of ideas and values that lead to the creation of a new civilization, possibly even a civilization “that unfolds the full potential of the human spirit in service to the human family and the web of life.” For this, however, it is necessary first, that the majority of the new communicators (“prosumers” rather than “consumers) be exposed to the relevant goals and ideas, and second, that they embrace those goals and ideas with sufficient dedication to undertake practical steps toward their realization.

This is not an automatic and self-evident outcome; it depends in large measure on the nature of the goals and ideas circulating in the channels of information, and on the effectiveness of their presentation. Goals and ideas that hold out the promise of a better civilization are likely to appeal to many of the new users, as they are predominantly young people with the majority stemming from the hitherto excluded or underrepresented poor countries. However, the chaos of rapid transformation in the world—a revolution not just in the media but in nearly all spheres of society—means that a great many messages are circulating at the same time, and it is probable

that many if not most of them do not involve practicable ideas for a new civilization and are not likely to win the active adherence of a significant mass of the “prosumers.”

There is a need to introduce ideas into the stream of messages in the world that have both a real potential for inspiring the creation of a new civilization, and are attractive enough to empower practical steps to create that civilization. Introducing such ideas does not call for formal classrooms, nor for formal presentations. They can be embedded in documentaries of wide appeal, such as “docu-dramas,” in fables for children and for grown-ups, in sci-fi adventures and in visionary explorations of the future. They can be conveyed by computer games and can be placed at the center of debate in social networks. The notion of a living universe is one such idea, and so is the interconnection of all things with all other things and the quasi-miraculous coherence of nature and of our own body. These are very different ideas, and they point to a very different world, than the idea of the universe and the human being as a soulless machine, functioning or breaking down independently of the fate of the other machines around it.

Marshall McLuhan’s theory that “the media is the message” does not hold. The same media can convey a vast array of messages, of which the great majority is not likely to lead to positive civilization-creating outcomes nor does it inspire practical steps in that direction. As our research study on the new media states, “having the technical ability to communicate with ourselves does not mean we will automatically do so. The question remains open as to whether we have the collective maturity to consciously seize this precious opportunity.” The opportunity to have our voice heard on global channels of communication is now given and it is precious, but making use of it is not only a question of collective maturity, but of the nature of the goals and the ideas that are communicated, and of the effectiveness of their communication.

Conclusions

The media is in the midst of a full-scale revolution, the third since the mid-18th century and by far the most rapid and powerful. It is a revolution that creates networks of communication across the globe. The global potential of the communication revolution is matched by the global challenge of finding ways to live on the planet without destroying essential balances in the environment and pressing a significant segment of the world population below the level of physical subsistence.

The new media possesses the means for responding to this challenge. But the time is short, and the danger of reaching a threshold of irreversible change that forecloses positive responses is real. A new paradigm for sustainable and flourishing on Earth needs to inform channels of communication across the globe. The conditions for taking practical steps in this regard are already given, but the steps themselves are yet to be taken. It is urgent to create the messages —“stories”—that take hold of the imagination of a critical mass of the people and inspire them to adopt modes of thought and modalities of action that would pave the way toward a sustainable and flourishing civilization.