

Charles P. Gibbs

**Episcopal priest, Founding Executive Director Emeritus, United Religions Initiative
Senior Partner and Poet-in-Residence, Catalyst for Peace**

I believe nothing is ever impossible -- and yet, as I approach my 71st year, when I contemplate the future, my imagination is often trapped between promise and menace -- a space articulated in the prophetic words that open the Fuji Declaration.

A new phase in the evolution of human civilization is on the horizon. With deepening states of crisis bringing unrest to all parts of the world, there is a growing need for change in our ways of thinking and acting. We now have the choice of either spiraling into deepening peril, or breaking through to a world of dignity and wellbeing for all.

Into that conflicted yet improbably hopeful space, I offer this poem.

A Transformed Tomorrow

As all around us suffering sisters
and brothers, from infants
to elders of all species,
drench the Earth humans are despoiling
with tears of anguish and rage,
and old forms like parched plants
wither away, or hover
at the edge of surrender,
caterpillars entrusting all
to an intuited chrysalis,
or rage with the destructive
fury of a galaxy of exploding stars –
humanity inhabits a present
suspended between promise and
menace, echoing an urgent cry –

Come, you who would be
the womb to guard and grow
a transformed tomorrow.

The hour is late;
shadows lengthen –

Come, you lost and forgotten!

Come, you lonely and careworn!
Come you whose hearts are breaking!
Come, you secure-seeming
 in vaults of power!
Come, you who embody compassion!
Come, you who sail
 seas of change!
Come, you who awaken
 with the sun!
Come, you from all faiths
 and you from none!
Come, elders and infants!
Come, wise women and
 humble men!
Come, red, yellow, black,
 brown, white!

Come from the east!
Come from the south!
Come from the west!
Come from the north!

Led by fire, light and love,
we are the kindled spark,
called to conceive,
in co-creative goodness,
the already-emerging future.

Yes, the gestation will
be long and often terrifying,
but also overflowing with joy;
so, trust what grows
in the nurturing dark.

Yes, the hour is late and
the shadows lengthen;
yes, the labor will be long
and the pain fierce;
but on the far side
of advancing night
the sun will rise,
new life will emerge –

perhaps, in the dawning light,
withered fields and forests
will revive, new species will be born,
the hoop of the nations
healed, the circle of life
restored to a new wholeness. Perhaps.

May we awaken and,
in fire, light and love,
labor as one
until this dawn of
promise is delivered.