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The Search for Spirituality Amidst the Artificial Realities of Global Materialism

Chapter 3 - The Impact of Global Materialism

Most of the commonly recognized ills of modern global society are linked to, if not directly caused by, western materialistic philosophy because Globalism is an outgrowth of western civilization. This is not to exempt or excuse non-western cultures because a greed-driven mistreatment of the environment is not the exclusive proclivity of any particular political party or economic philosophy. Indeed the environmental atrocities committed in the 20th century by the totalitarian Soviet regimes had nothing to do with market economies, international trade agreements or secular capitalism.

No social organization or societal structure can escape the strengths and weaknesses of human nature, though some compensate for them better than others. Globalism's extreme size and pervasive impact on every level of life has subjected the entire biological environment to the spiritual nature of humanity. Just as a natural person is powered by material spirituality, so is Globalism. The life force powers all biological life. It impacts plants, animals and humans individually and the bio-cultural systems integrating all life forms collectively. When a person suffers from some kind of disease, a naturopath might focus on a particular biological support system, like digestion, or on the systemic health of his or her body as a whole. People experience the impact of the life force individually due to local and individual context as well as being affected collectively due to regional and global context.

Globalism as a complex system reveals a structure designed to overcome the natural limitations built into the earth's ecosystem – including people. Ultimately, even the massive socio-political economic matrix of Globalism cannot escape the eventual consequences of its fundamental structural conflict with the ultimate reality of natural spirituality. The specific areas of departure from balance are many and interactive because the environment seeks to counterbalance any violations of the life imperative. Groups of people have become mobs due to a collective distortion of reality that I believe may be subject to spiritual manipulation by human intermediaries and spirit beings. The popular association of occult practices with horror, bizarre torture and all forms of political, economic and spiritual oppression through the perverse manipulation and destructive exploitation of various fears is broadly correct.

Consequently, we should not ignore the possibility that Globalism may be the observable outgrowth of a spiritually dark agenda of social oppression and identity distortion. Parts of that agenda flow from the various and competing strategic interests of human governments and other organizations, such as global corporations – both for profit and nonprofit. I contend that the master strategy driving Globalism lies beyond any single human organization's capacity, which means it may be a juggernaut out of control or the visible manifestation of a broader spiritual battle in the metaphysical realm.

Globalism is at one and the same time the outgrowth and ultimate vehicle for disseminating the materialist worldview described in this book. The philosophy of Materialism inspires the structure of its operations and composes the core of its philosophic purpose. This fact is revealed in mass culture at all levels. It pervades the instant worldwide communications of humanity's electronic consciousness. Because a materialist spirituality lies at the heart of the Globalist vision, it materializes a reality of observable spiritual fruit in the lives of billions, which includes the fates of the interconnected ecologies of biology and human society.

In simple words, this means that Globalism's materialist spirituality will fail to solve universal human social problems no matter how intensive and well financed the well-meaning efforts of sincere public servants. Social problems sourcing from underlying spiritual bankruptcy will never be solved by secularly reasoned humanist solutions. It makes no difference how intelligent the social theory or how large and well managed the budget dedicated to the programs devised and implemented to address them. Spiritually caused social problems will only be solved through the freely chosen local or regional implementation of a genuine and healthy spirituality.

Globalism has exacerbated the competition between populations internally engaged in the economic struggle for survival. The excessive competition that nations and communities experience today goes beyond a survival-motivated grab for essential resources that has resulted in concentrating over 50% of the world's wealth in the hands of 2% of its inhabitants. This massive material imbalance provides convincing evidence that we live in a world out of spiritual balance. A grossly skewed distribution of

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wealth (and power) is the most obvious testimony of today's spiritual poverty. The Globalism juggernaut pervasively imposes itself upon nations, peoples and persons without offering the option to say no. Its appeal of illusory wealth and well-being is contagiously viral and spread accordingly. It infects regional cultures broadly and deeply from within its vitals, modifying core values and distorting any existing systemic balance.

Admittedly, human civilization in any cultural expression has always fallen short of the ideal. Most cultures or societies can stand some improvement when it comes to human rights, basic liberties or economic opportunity, but modern Globalism's impact excessively distorts every aspect of life it touches. Because people personally experience or otherwise are aware of their nation's or region's shortcomings, they will readily opt for the illusory material solutions to their problems that Globalism offers:

1. Increased wealth solves most problems, and
2. What it does not, Globalism's spiritual principles will.

People will choose the allure of a better life as seen through electronic media over the currently perceived pain or suffering popularly attributed to specific issues or problems. They do not grasp the consequences of jumping on Globalism's merry-go-round. They do not realize that they are exchanging their known set of problems for a future of much greater ones.

Attack Against the Middle Class

Spiritually healthy socio-economic systems produce a relatively populous and prosperous middle class able to exercise a politically controlling plurality in a significantly powerful governing institution. How wealth and power is distributed remains one of the better measurable indicators of a society's health, which means dynamic function with relative spiritual balance. As a socio-economic and growing political system, Globalism undermines the middle class even as it appears to grow it in some places, because it ultimately erodes traditional spiritual values. The traditional values of most societies are usually closer to natural spirituality than the materialistic spirituality expressed and manifested in Globalism.

When a culture supports a broadly based middle class, it indicates that the valuations of labor and capital are fairly balanced. The right of the average person to own and hold income-producing property is a key factor in the balancing act as is a sound and stable currency. Other important factors are a dominant, relatively homogenous culture that does not oppress minorities, military and police power closely subject to the citizens instead of being answerable only to a commander-in-chief, minimal social and governmental corruption, minimal and fairly indiscriminant taxation, access to capital at reasonable cost, minimal restrictions on trade, rule by written law based on just values and fairly judged as well as the freedoms of speech and expression. Globalist propaganda claims to provide these same benefits to all of its participants, but these claims are illusions based on partial truths or realities because the publicized benefits are not naturally sustainable.

The measurable truths and realities of Globalism are ultimately negated by the essentially artificial reality of the total system. Proof is found in the increased asymmetrical distribution of wealth and political power through the populace. The top 2-3% mostly control where the juggernaut dances even if they can't completely choose the type of dance or how it affects specific participants. Like any man-made economic or political power bubble, Globalism will eventually implode with disastrous consequences.

By all measures, the middle class in the United States of America is shrinking. In fact, America's middle class is under attack from an undeclared war on several fronts. In our daily lives, we still worship at the shrines of higher education and retirement golden years, but not for long as both of these cherished stages of middle class life are being destroyed by Globalism. Due to an increasingly incestuous dependency on others, our fears grow, and we demand more and more government insurance against the ups and downs of life. We trade real, hard-earned liberties for amorphous securities proffered by ingenuous, incongruent and untrustworthy politicians. Most of us are either

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clueless or so misinformed of the facts that they do not know what to do to rectify the situation. Our political options are little more than Dumber and Dumberer. Yes, we the electorate are Dumb.

Poverty levels grow due to a tax structure that does not trust poor people to decide for themselves how to spend their money. Small to medium owner property rights are undermined by excessive taxation and over regulation. Government is a necessary parasite. Good governments, like symbiotic parasites, provide services or benefits to their hosts: they contribute to the hosts' survivability. Like all parasites, governments will grow too large and become toxic to the health of the governed unless controlled and kept in balance. Today's nation state governments have become so large that they want to terminate their hosts in exchange for a piece of the whole globe! How can any person or organization keep a global government in balance?

Public education is a farce that does not deliver value through high school and then exorbitantly charges for college and other advanced education. Due to the poor quality of high school graduates, much of a student's college years are spent in remedial learning, which too often leads to substandard or impractical skills with a hopelessly large burden of debt. The present realities of institutional education and the workplace project a future for our youth filled with an unsatisfying day-to-day world that could be described as an employee-debt-enslaved consumertopia where the golden carrots of success or of an opportunity rich retirement are forever just beyond the tips of our noses. Happiness will be forever pursued, so seemingly close but truly, so far away.

Globalism increases the centrality of authority and wealth so that local school boards do not control the curriculum of their schools. Educational financing structures regulation at the state level and above has removed meaningful control from local school boards, which essentially nullifies parental influence. School systems have become encumbered with top-heavy administrations and intermediaries whose concern is state policy, which is more and more globalized, rather than the wishes and values of parents. The character and structure of public education has been one of the most important tools used by globalists to undermine middle class family values as well as being the primary agent in the secularization of spirituality, that is, the promulgation of a materialist spirituality.

The influential global elite attack America's middle class through the indirect manipulation of capital and labor. Money is totally imaginary. It is created, and its supply, cost and availability managed by and international web of privately owned "federal" or "national" reserve banks in defiance of constitutional provisions to the contrary. Any nation that does not cooperate with the global cabal is punished financially. The consequences are electronically quick and brutal. Through the manipulation of currency values via balances of payments and various forms of indebtedness, wealth is redistributed according to the wisdom of the banking elite.

To anyone who does a little research, it is plain to see that American wages and wealth are being purposefully eroded through the devaluation of the dollar. We only accelerate the process set inexorably into motion by governmental debt by our personally irresponsible financial profligacy in response to easy credit. One obvious step towards reducing this government debt would be to convert government pensions to 401K plans and reign in public service benefits to bring them into alignment with what is reality in the private business sector. Government pension-benefit plans are guaranteed and set at high levels. These overly generous government benefits will be unwillingly paid for by the middle class through the real value deterioration of our private savings and investments for retirement.

The global elite manipulate labor supply and demand, too. Like capital or anything else, market value is determined by supply and demand. When manual labor is undermined, all wage scales above it suffer. Politicians of both major parties promised that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada would provide more and higher quality jobs for Americans. Everyone knows the truth in retrospect. Jobs were lost in a program largely funded by the middle class – in other the words, by the very workers who lost their jobs.

Many will argue that Globalism is the kind of technology-driven progress that cannot be ignored or avoided. A person or a nation needs to "get with the program" or get run over. It is true that technology has made it much easier to outsource jobs and move goods more cheaply and efficiently

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around the world. This is not bad in itself, but how is it managed?

Are the choices honestly presented to the people? Are the promised improvements to working conditions and environmental stewardship ordinances enforced where the jobs go? The record is disappointing to say the least. When labor and production prices are too low, one will find abuse of people and/or the environment. Both result in consequences we all pay for with tax dollars or other economic and environmental shift of liability.

Advanced communications, computer automation and container transportation technology make Globalism profitable and possible. Yet, these technological tools are only turned into unbalanced advantages as a result of government regulation along with sophisticated tax and/or subsidy policies that usually benefit existing mega-businesses and make it difficult for genuine start-ups.

For example, the lessons of NAFTA are ignored and the US government pushes additional international agreements without even trying to fix what is wrong with the present one – much less repeal it. A North American Union (NAU) between the USA, Mexico and Canada seems to be on today's agenda. Super roads 10 lanes wide with sophisticated electronic infrastructure and power supplies are being built with the help of American taxpayer dollars. The NAU promotion strategy probably builds on trying to solve two problems at once: the collapsing US dollar and illegal immigration. First, the NAU's Amero will replace the US dollar, Canadian dollar and Mexican peso, which will save Americans from the total loss of their retirement accounts' purchasing power but at significant cost of freedoms as well as a substantial loss of real purchasing value.

Immigration – illegal and otherwise – is simply labor insourcing. Rather than move the jobs to cheap labor, governments facilitate the delivery of cheap labor to management through policies of commission and omission. Nationalism is out of favor, so borders are not that important other than for the potential revenue they can provide. The NAU follows the European Union's progression of unification, which supports a read-between-the-lines logic like:

NAFTA failed because the boundaries are still too real. If we eliminate them, then people will flow both to several directions, and money will flow likewise if it is all one currency. National and ethnic differences will become increasingly less noticed or meaningful. They are not important anyway.

The shape and form of today's societal ills have much to do with Globalism's political, economic and spiritual policies. These policies are driven by widespread greed in the general population as well as the ruling elite's particular lust for wealth, power and status through a phenomenon of equal opportunity corruption at the expense of the average person. Globalism corrupts the few who are winners and crushes the billions at the bottom levels of the worldwide human pyramid of power, wealth and status. Only at the limited and illusive midpoints of success may one find a balance particular to each person's identity.

Globalism doesn't just threaten nationalism. It attacks regions, ethnicity, the middle class and the chance for true economic advancement out of poverty, undermines the traditional family and ultimately commodifies the individual person. As I will discuss later, any balance in life leading to a creative identity formation is a spiritual process. Healthy spirituality demands each of us to exercise a freely chosen, determining role in its development and practice. Globalism puts such a high price on free choice that realistically, there is no choice.

A Short Spiritual History of Globalism

The globalist dream goes back into the dimmest recesses of human history. It is clothed in the myths of beginnings, which shroud probable cores of truth with powerful spiritual symbols. Even in today's political and economic rebirth of the European Union, we find mythic imagery that hearkens back to Zeus' rape of Europa and the erection of the Tower of Babel. Even before that famous first ziggurat, the Bible discusses the spiritual beginnings of urbanism, which cannot be separated from the transformation of historical western civilization into modern Globalism.

Globalism emanates from the great cities of the globe. The sociocultural systems that came together

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to create the first cities out of agriculturally based villages and towns now drive the juggernaut I refer to as Globalism. Its ultimate expression would be a massive urban superweb of continuously connected megalopolises. Just as the "miracle" of compound interest (so simply and memorably illustrated in the classic book, **The Richest Man in Babylon**, by George Samuel Clason) can make a mountain of money out of modest savings – given enough time, so the first urban centers have compounded their growth in wealth, influence and power to become the massively over-concentrated focused cancerous overgrowth of wealth and power known as Globalism. Today, no region, tribe or nation can escape its corroding psychospiritual, political and economic toxins. The planet spins beyond natural balance towards a scientifically projected eco-social collapse as this worldwide bubble of an integrated, all encompassing artificial reality meets the ultimate realities built into the physical cosmos, the metaphysical universe and natural hearts of humankind.

Since most of us live in cities and all of us suffer exposure to Globalism's impact, wisdom demands a little historical journey in order to better recognize and understand global materialism's hazardous influence on healthy spiritual growth. We cannot ignore the cultural histories of Greece and Rome or the Judeo-Christian traditions and scriptures as primary pillars of western civilization. The powerful truths of the Bible's stories and symbols have inspired sacrificial altruism and intolerant inquisition both. Despite the considerable incongruity between the values promoted by Scripture and how the history of the West unfolded in real life, the Bible's moral and ethical authority remains as a potential counterbalance to the spiritual distortions promoted in the name of God and/or the church. Like Social Darwinism, the distortion of biblical principles and history played significant roles in the birth of Globalism.

The Bible's first book of Genesis reveals where, when and by whom human civilization began to oppress its citizens in a way that inspired and rewarded evil. My definition of evil is:

That which steals life from another is evil. It is evil whether the theft is one of property or of the life force. It is true if the theft is total or partial, because partial theft or damage may contribute to the inability to provide for necessary biological needs, promote moral weakness, result in physical sickness or contribute to psychological depression. If the theft of life is complete, it obviously results in the death of the victim. It is this spiritually predatory activity of depleting the life force of human and beast that exacerbates evil thoughts and deeds...
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Cain invented the city to get around God's punishment for killing his brother Abel. A farmer by trade, Cain could not make anything grow. This curse followed him wherever he wandered as punishment for murdering his brother. (Genesis 4:12) Because the ground was cursed for him but not for others, Cain decided to settle down at the crossroads of trade routes and built the first city, called Enoch after his son. He made himself its king so that he could collect (customs) taxes off of others' produce and labor. (Genesis 4:9-17) From the creation of his city-state kingdom, the way of Cain meanders its way through time to become the road to Babylon and later, to Rome.

If Cain is the eponymous great grandfather of Globalism, then Nimrod is the mythical grandfather. Mythical and biblical sources cite the construction of the first Tower of Babel by Nimrod as the first major public works effort after the Flood. Most archaeologists equate this tower with the Mesopotamian ziggurat. Here is the biblical account:

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.

It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the

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city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth. (Genesis 11:1-9)

Most people remember the Tower of Babel as the time when human languages became diversified from the original Hebrew. They do not think about why God did it, and the lesson is valid whether one believes in a literal or symbolic interpretation of that collection of religious writings. When the rest of the Bible is read, the answer is plain. God divided human languages to diversify human culture so as to delay the political and spiritual purposes behind the tower's building. Nimrod sought to unify the world into one kingdom, as one mass of humans under one name. This is the first time politics was used to enforce a spiritual ideology, and we find political power in operation against the Creator. Genesis 10:25 and 32 reveal that God had wanted the families of humanity to move apart from one another and scattered across the face of the earth in order to fill it with families grown large as tribes and nations.

God's spiritual plan was to create unique persons living in families and tribes distinct from each other. Nimrod's plan was to accumulate power based on the number of people controlled and have them build a tower (uniting the population in a massive public works program) so that they could survive another Flood if need be. If the Creator may be called the King of the Earth, logic and tradition both identify Nimrod's motives as putting himself up as the anti-king in opposition to God. Today, we would call him an antichrist.

The ancient tales all agree that Nimrod, and most all of the ancient kings, did not tolerate the existence of another equal in political or spiritual power within their reach. These city-state kings used the social dynamics of urbanism to consolidate their power. By forcefully bringing the people under the control of the city-state, a king would break down tribal and family loyalties that might create a power base to oppose him. Ancient kings figuratively or literally headed the state's religious system, too. The citizens were taught to look to the king as their "father" representing God's forceful will and judgment on earth. Historically, this concept continued down through the ages in slightly different formats. Philosophically, this concept evolved to become known as the "divine right" of kings. With the institution of kingship always came a form of nobility or elites, whose power base was always military, religious and/or economic.

With city-states also came the first wars for wealth waged in the name of various gods. Terrible political instability characterized ancient Mesopotamia until Sargon the Great of Akkad. He was the first person in secular history to create a kingdom consisting of more than one city-state through a controlled policy of religious tolerance. The worship of more than one deity was permitted. As long as Sargon's power was acknowledged as primary, conquered cities could continue to practice their local religious customs in honor of their cities' gods.

This pattern of kings consolidating power over many cities and gods continued for centuries with more or less notable success. The Assyrian kings and Nebuchadnezzar are notable examples of success with some applied improvements to the original concepts of empire building. After the New Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants, the Persians actually took a step in the direction of centralizing their authority through a judicious use of autonomy in bureaucratic organization and religious freedom. For example, Cyrus introduced the Persian era by letting the Jewish exiles return to their homeland from their scattered captivity throughout Babylonia and other regions under Persian control. They had their own governor and priesthood and were permitted to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. This freedom permitted the Jews to create a society and culture more based on the Bible than during any other era of Israel's history.

Spiritual Father of Globalism

Classic Greek civilization was built upon a Babylonian foundation with unique advances in artistic expression, politics and philosophy. Greek history and culture has had contributed to the foundation of modern western civilization due to its enthusiastic adoption and promulgation by Alexander the Great. Alexander was a major innovator in the development of spiritual, political and economic Globalism. Because he believed that Greek culture, politics, sports, language and philosophy was universally

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superior to anything else, Alexander imposed it upon the peoples and empires he conquered. His enforced enlightenment intrinsically possessed great appeal to the conquered peoples as well. Everywhere he went, the urban elites embraced Alexander's program of Hellenization in much the same way that modern nations readily import and adapt many features and values of modern American culture as spread by global technology and trade.

I consider Alexander the Great the spiritual father of modern Globalism. Remember the inherently organic bond between urbanism and Globalism. Alexander built cities after the Greek model in every territory he conquered. His more famous undertakings were brand new cities like Alexandria in Egypt. Otherwise, his engineers Hellenized a city by building essential Greek cultural infrastructure like gymnasiums, markets, temples and theaters. The extensive distribution of these Greek culture centers demonstrates that Alexander was even more successful in capturing minds than he was in military victories. His governmental program of co-opting young local leaders and wealthy oligarchs under the direct rule of a small cadre of militarized loyalists established a permanent place for cultural Hellenism as an essential element of the Western way of life long after his death. In addition to fulfilling Alexander's primary purpose of spreading and nourishing Greek culture among the ruling elite, his program accelerated the human trend toward planned urbanization worldwide. As a part of his program of Hellenization, he encouraged and at times commanded miscegenation or the purposed mixing of the many nations of humanity to create one genetic and cultural new world order under his reign. His program promoted syncretism of culture, religion and race.

Alexander and his successors consciously encouraged enculturation of all of his conquered peoples to the Greek ways of speaking, thinking and doing. He did this by building cities modeled after the Greek plan. As the founder of cities, Alexander made himself a god-king on par or superior to the great cities of ancient Greece, which were each founded by an eponymous Greek god or goddess according to the mythical and real history of the city. Greek city-states were mostly ruled by an elite club of oligarchs, often using democratic tools to commit the populace to their programs. More than just a symbol of civic identity and pride, the temple of the city's god or goddess served as the city's treasury and last point of defense.

Alexander was the most successful conqueror of all time. I think that God struck him down while young knowing that his empire would divide, and thus delay once again the rebellious trend of Globalism. The Jewish revolt against Hellenism under the Maccabees is celebrated annually at Hanukkah. If the miracle of eight days of light from one day's worth of oil is true, then it would seem that God approved of their intentions and blessed their relative liberty from the Globalism of that time even if He would not have commanded their resort to armed revolution. Despite the intrigues at the top of the theocratic Hasmonean Kingdom of the Jews, the result was a free practice of traditional Jewish customs by those who wanted to do so without being forcefully dominated by Hellenism.

Julius Caesar and others since sought to match Alexander's great record and failed, but even in their failure to achieve the immortal fame of "the Great" Alexander, they still built a succession of great to mediocre military and commercial empires using his strategies of military conquest and cultural governance. Through the Caesars, Alexander's legacy inspired the creation of the Roman Empire, which to this day epitomizes western civilization. Augustus Caesar and his immediate heirs established firm central control over a vast realm that lasted another 1,500 years through the maintenance of governing institutions like the Senate and socio-political management of the masses through welfare food rations, public building programs and entertainment with gladiatorial events and a Roman state religion. Architecturally, Roman engineers created new weapons of war and then added better roads, sewers and aqueducts to connect and support the Greco-Roman city centers of baths, coliseums, monuments and temples built everywhere Roman legions traveled. Unlike Alexander's brief mortal life, Rome sustained a political and economic empire of direct control that lasted hundreds of years over every territory conquered.

Against Roman dominion, the Jewish Zealots revolted in the late AD 60s, which resulted in the termination of Jewish religious autonomy and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70. Another revolt began brewing in the 90s and erupted around 132 under the leadership of Rabbi Akiva and Simon Bar Kochba. They attempted to rebuild the Temple, and when Rome defeated their armies, the

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Jewish zealots retreated to the Judean Desert to hide in remote caves until they were hunted out. Emperor Hadrian sowed Jerusalem with salt, expelled all of the Jewish inhabitants and forbade any practice of Judaism. He also violently persecuted the Christians.

The deification of Roman Emperors simply strengthened the centralized authority of the state. Diocletian (circa AD 300) separated the Roman Empire into Latin and Greek halves. He eliminated all semblance of republican government and declared himself Lord and God (*Dominus et deus*) combining into his person the roles of political and spiritual leader. Being divine in person, Diocletian established a number of protocols that removed himself from public view, which added divine mystery and authority to his person and office.

The Emperor Constantine reconsolidated the Roman Empire under his rule and co-opted the Christian churches by making the Universal or Catholic Church the favored religion of Rome. They continue to the present as Roman Catholicism and the various Eastern Orthodox Churches (Greek, Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, etc.). Constantine strategized that an empire-wide common religion would unite the diverse peoples found within the provinces or dioceses under his own authority. To this end, Constantine called the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 to eliminate doctrinal differences between what had been a loose association of local churches of varying doctrines and/or traditions of ritual practice. The Emperor eliminated those who opposed his plan to structure the church after the imperial bureaucracy with one set of approved doctrines and rewarded those who cooperated with his goals with money, church buildings and lands.

Constantine's innovation mobilized the official Christian religion to the service of the Empire. He eliminated potential competition by combining the Roman state religion of political and military power with the mysteries named after a man who had lived 300 years before. Throughout human experience, it has always been more economical and effective to control the masses through fear of bad eternal consequences (fear/reward religion) than to hire enough police to make the threat of mortal death an imminent reality.

Besides the loss of much biblical truth and ancient patterns of worship (Jesus' teachings in favor of non-violence and against war, for example.), the major consequence of Constantine's Romanization of Christian churches was the repression of dissent or divergent individual opinion on spiritual matters. The institution of Christmas on December 25th is a good example of his syncretistic practice of separating the Christian church from its Jewish roots (in this case Kislev 25, Hanukah) and welding it to Roman-pagan ones (the Roman calendar's holiday of Saturnalia).

While Hanukkah commemorates an apparently God-blessed political revolution that created a cultural environment of religious liberty, Christmas observance represents enforced political acquiescence to the absolute authority of the governing hierarchy. While today's celebration of Christmas is mostly materialism gone wild, originally the holiday was purposefully designed to teach a biblically accurate doctrinal conclusion (God born in the flesh), but religious authorities linked it to the Roman calendar in a way that Christianized Roman culture without changing its traditional substance. Since it is not a biblical holy day or linked to Jewish historical observance, the celebration of Christmas instead of Hanukah moved public focus away from the practice and importance of divine social justice and religious freedom to a mystical reward for unquestioning obedience to the religious hierarchy of an official state church established under the emperor's watchful eye. In the western half of the Roman Empire, the political bureaucracy crumbled due to internal corruption and powerful external military threats. Beginning with Pope Leo I, the Roman bishop truly became the Pope fulfilling the emperor's failed role as the leader of civilization. In the East, the Orthodox Patriarch was appointed by, and usually remained subservient to, the Emperor.

The Bible nowhere commands the observance of Jesus' birth or his resurrection, though the Wave Sheaf offering during the Feast of Unleavened Bread both looked forward to and commemorates the date of his resurrection. (Leviticus 23:10-15) The Bible only mentions observing Jesus' death at Passover, which begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (1Corinthians 5:7-8)

Constantine's Council of Nicaea substituted a Sunday Easter observance for a variable day of the week occurring (and Jewish) Passover. Just as the date of Christmas separated Jesus from the probable date

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of His birth in the fall, its observance removes Jesus from His Jewish cultural heritage and context of teaching. Religious observance of Christmas is a symbolic submission to and acceptance of the primacy and power of the Roman Church. Since its social and religious observance is rooted in a syncretistic and materialistic spirituality, it is not surprising that modern Christmas traditions focus on the commercialized fulfillment of excessive consumerism in a manner that obscures the truths of its originally intended religious message.

How one observes Christmas, if done at all, is a good measure of Globalism's impact on his or her life: just evaluate the degree of commercialized focus in what you do and how you spend your money during that time of year. If for no other reason than to save money, the huge number of merchandise sales and new product releases will make even those would like to ignore Christmas entirely to pay attention to the message of the culture and participate in its materialistic orgy of consumer excess.

The Roman system of combined and/or mutually supportive political and spiritual governance was reinvented and applied to medieval Europe by Charlemagne. Around 800, he combined his empire with control over the Roman Church to create the Holy Roman Empire establishing a pattern of governance that continued well into early modern history. Certainly since 800, the Roman Catholic Church has used its influence and raw power to uphold the rule of monarchs and political despots favorable to it. The Roman church historically has not tolerated other faiths, including other Christian traditions. Through inquisitions of varying intensity implemented and enforced by Catholic rulers over the centuries, the Church has brought her influence to bear against competing religions in exchange for opposing her champions' competing politicians. One hand helped the other in the tradition formalized by Charlemagne.

A thousand years after Charlemagne, Napoleon renewed and improved upon the Roman Empire model in extending France's dominion over the European continent. Besides standardizing the economy and encouraging the advancement of science, Napoleon modernized the governing bureaucracy and the army, Napoleon "re-engineered" France after the Roman model in an admiring imitation of Charlemagne. He innovated a political methodology of using elections to get himself "elected" Emperor while making the French people feel like they had a hand in determining who ruled them and what their fates would be. Napoleon's nephew, Emperor Napoleon III, seems to have even done a better job of electioneering to his purposes.

Since Napoleon, the world has lurched through one imperious nation-state empire to another. After two named World Wars, Globalism now clothes itself with international organizations. Some of them are multi-national corporations, and others are non-government organizations – usually non-profit charities initially funded and controlled by elite families. Concurrent advances in technology applied to warfare have increased the scope and intensity of destruction beyond comprehension. Not only is humanity capable of destroying the surface of the entire planet several times, we are insidiously capable of destroying it gradually through the release of uncontrollable agents and processes upon the vitally essential biological and ecological infrastructure of the entire planetary life system.

Finally, we have experienced the rapid growth of international committees or councils of nation states. Some examples are the regional trade and tariff zones such as the European Union, NAFTA, the World Trade Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). A number of organizations also work towards religious unity in conjunction with various global organizations such as the United Nations.

Modern Globalism trends towards increased central control of power over the entire planet. If it follows the historical pattern, there will be an impression of democratic input, but the actual governance will emerge from public and private competition between the wealthy and powerful elite of this age. An illusion of great peace and prosperity will mandate political acquiescence and conformity in the name of prosperity. We can expect official encouragement for a unified religious organization to enforce support of global institutions of enlightenment in the name of tolerance.

The developing worldview is actually a materialistic form of spirituality that presents an image of truth and liberty, even as it suppresses the creative development of a genuinely balanced and healthy spirituality. As a psychospiritual phenomenon, Globalism is the most

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massive artificial reality in human history because it appeals to the billions with its materialistic spiritual values of illusory wealth and temporal power over at least one's own life, if not many others' lives and energy.

Globalism, the Invasive Parasite

Globalism is not simply international trade grown more intensive. The problems of Globalism cannot be fixed by merely instituting better labor standards or other rules to promote fairness of exchange, though fairness of exchange should be facilitated as much as possible. The natural universe exhibits built-in variability and physical limits such as the speed of light and the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Globalism seeks to overcome the natural limits of wealth distribution in order to solve human problems. It is supposed to be the ultimate perpetual wealth machine. It promises a present and improving prosperity for every corner of the globe. Within that prosperity is hidden the materialist solutions to all human problems. Globalism grows like a cancer. Its adherents are committed to rapid and pervasive growth of a worldwide economy and government believing that an explosive success will outpace the negative consequences of the methods employed in its achievement. Globalism is the ultimate living example of the old justification that the end justifies the means, but because Globalism violates the vital principles of natural spirituality that limit the negative impacts of human nature, it would kill the host planet if allowed to run its full course.

For anyone to survive in its competitive climate, Globalism drives social behavior in such a manner that leaves it perpetually unbalanced until total collapse. Just like its mega-corporate components, Globalism must constantly expand and grow, or it implodes. Externally, Globalism sustains itself with legitimate trade in goods and services, but at its materialist core, Globalism is the ultimate pyramid scheme in which the entire living fabric of humanity is at risk. Currencies and valuations are manipulated, as are environmental regulations and labor compensation, conditions and benefits. Its inherent evil is disguised by its legitimate business activity. Globalism is a moral hazard so huge that most people cannot see it. The only way to put Globalism into perspective is to compare it to the earth's entire web of interlocking ecosystems and the physical universe itself.

When compared to the natural world, Globalism is analogous to the deadly parasite that kills its host because it takes too much and loses it all. The international reach of global business and trade structures inserts foreign goods and services into local economies with deadly results. One of the best illustrations of this problem from nature is the increasingly common plague of invasive species into alien biomes. Naturalists the world over must contend with foreign invaders that seem immune and impervious to local biological controls. The kind of living thing is irrelevant. It may be a mussel, a plant, a fish, an insect or even a meek, grass-eating rabbit.

The source of these biological problems is international trade driven by irresponsible profit motives. The key factor is that a living being was moved out of its natural context beyond the natural constraints of its birth environment. Indigenous biological controls do not work on them. In these cases, scientists often attempt to identify and introduce a controlling organism from the intrusive specie's original biome that will hopefully not end up creating an even bigger problem. The task is not easy and not always successful. There is no doubt that prevention would have been the best policy, but prevention as a solution will not work once the infestation is established.

Globalism is an established parasite or invasive species. It will not moderate to balanced stasis or die on its own without destroying everything. It will not go away peacefully because its very existence thrives on imbalanced human demands based on materialistic spirituality and financial artificial realities that must be manipulated to the advantage of a few at the expense of all. Globalism can only be defused by changing the human spiritual condition in almost all nations: Globalism's core materialist spirituality must be transformed by encountering Ultimate Reality or the planet and all humanity will die.

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Natural and Necessary Constraints

Without a healthy spiritual dimension to human society, the necessary constraints required for balanced social structures never become a sustained reality. Where as natural laws force constraints upon space travel or ecological health, human civilization is an artificial reality system requiring humanly devised constraints to keep it in balance. Those constraints must be instituted with discipline and by desired choice that can only be successfully empowered by the voluntary application of healthy spiritual principles by all participating parties.

Some things work on a small scale and fail when they get too big. Natural constraints operate in the biological environment to manage the natural cycles of complex ecosystems. Without wetlands, water becomes polluted. Without sufficient mass of wilderness area contiguously connected together, thousands of plant and animal species become extinct because they simply need more than a thousand acres to sustain a biologically diverse population large enough to support genetic variation and sustained growth within a balanced biome.

Human nature is rooted in its material composition and natural spiritual essence. Next chapter explores natural spirituality further, but now suffice it to note that good and evil have pervaded every human culture since the beginning of consciousness. Material variation of social context has done little more than operate as a check or balance on human nature's indivisible mixture of good and evil. Each culture has experienced relatively better or worse periods of success in moderating the destructive negatives and enhancing the productive positives of the human experience. With very few possible exceptions, no great man is held to have been without sin or evil potential. A specific discussion of possible exceptions enters into the vast realm of religion, which itself exists in multifarious forms to deal with the human issues of good and evil among others.

Constraints derived from the balance of life are found everywhere in nature. By natural design the powers of life are divided – more obviously so in the more complex forms of biology. Flexibly balanced interactions of varying tolerances exist between multiple life forms in any ecosystem. Upset these naturally constrained interactions in an ecosystem, and death occurs because life cycles break down in contagious doom loops of collapsing interrelationships.

Within a species, the life force itself is usually balanced sexually. This division of reproductive power results in fascinating, interactive patterns of learned attention and instinct that work together to preserve the life of the immediate creatures or plants of study as well as provide for the survival of other biome members. If one gender dies out, the species usually dies out and other plants or animals dependant on them in some way may die out with it.

Human cultures create and impose artificial realities upon both the natural and social environments we live in. In the world of business, both natural and artificial scarcity have often been manipulated or taken advantage of to gain wealth. Artificial realities of human economic activity work well even on a rather large scale, but for sustained growth, they must operate within a functionally balanced matrix of diverse social realities that is itself sustainable. Each requires voluntary constraints to imitate the natural limits found at work in successful, healthy ecosystems of diverse and interdependent species.

Eliyahu M. Goldratt's Theory of Constraints (TOC)¹ works in the business world because of voluntary constraints applied to individual organizations within the larger system of the world economy. These self-imposed constraints functionally operate as consciously chosen governors of greed and other self-destructive inclinations of human nature to produce flexibly sustained organizational growth because of ongoing improvements through the reduction of bottlenecks to expand productive throughput. The operational prerequisites lie in the reality faced by most organizations that seek to apply TOC: a world of competition significantly large to produce an expanding demand faster than any one organization could voluntarily desire to provide. This state of affairs permits a business virtually unlimited growth in profits with an economic sustainability of intentionally sustained employment. Goldratt's theory will not

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_Constraints, accessed on July 30, 2007.

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work absent either the wisdom of good management policies and/or absent a quantumly larger world of healthy social institutions functionally designed within the natural biological context of a consistently healthy planetary environment that does not suffer from any spreading cancers of biological imbalance.

Modern Globalism already exceeds all concepts of natural and self-regulated constraints, and it is still growing. Some world leaders seek to apply TOC to Globalism through the spread of environmentally sound business practices and the practice of voluntary limits of wealth concentration. The emphasis on voluntarily choosing to spread the wealth of the world more evenly is rational, but people are not rational. Unlike individuals, viable social groups can never agree with one another on what is fair or just without the application of external force, so there is no peace in the Middle East despite rational plans to attempt a balanced coexistence between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews either.

The situation between labor and management is similar. Organized labor may be analogous to nation states with vested interests to protect and sustain, while unorganized labor are like informal, loosely connected terrorist cells composed of the have-nots of the world. Materialist spirituality would limit the size of humanity to control this problem much as DeBeers historically controlled the price of diamonds by artificial scarcity. Where as diamonds threaten to become a commodity, human life has already arrived at that status; therefore, the trick for global leaders is to get enough people to voluntarily "check out" of the system so that it can be sustained.

Of course, there will never be sufficient numbers volunteering to die so that somebody else – especially a group of foreign strangers - can live a quality life of relative wealth and ease. World leaders tolerate and implement policies of human commodification to achieve global goals of prosperity. The political difficulty is to accomplish the elimination of unwanted people at the same time as they project a humanitarian image or face. The ramifications of this observation could fill several books, but here are a few examples to inspire further thought.

World leaders currently tolerate many global conditions of inhumanity even as they take public steps to ameliorate them. While I would admit that many of the world's elite are at least in some measure humanitarians, their pragmatism necessarily rules their pocketbooks and inspires an agenda not so altruistically humanitarian. International human welfare and immigration policies are put into force intentionally to demonstrate a lack of racial bias in the elimination of undesirable excess population. The working ethic here is that it is impossible to preserve everyone alive, so a token representation of an ethnic and racial identity group is enabled by "equal opportunity." Others are given political asylum or refugee status by states to facilitate assimilation into the global urban sprawl. With such policies paraded across mass media outlets, humanity's varied genetic heritage is preserved and the population stabilized at the cost of millions of lives without inspiring overt political turmoil.

Eliminating the concept of "foreigner" is critical to the success of this program. By mixing nations into urban megalopolises scattered all over the known world, the concept of patriotic dedication to the modern nation state will theoretically disappear and bring peace. Alexander the Great began to implement the same strategy to eliminate the divisive patriotic ties to the various city-states of ancient Greece found within his armies and empire. If almost everyone becomes convinced that people are not that different - that we are all one brand of the brotherhood of humanity, then policies favorable to one group or class at the expense of another make less of an impact politically. If we "are all the same," then potentially effective political opposition by suppressed ethnic and racial affinity voting blocks is neutralized. With such a value system, no one gets greatly excited when large numbers of their distantly related co-nationalists suffer and die due to "natural causes" or "political turmoil."

Materialist philosophy does not recognize a truly potent spirituality beyond the social and emotional realms of human experience; therefore, religious tolerance is promoted because it is impotent (from Globalism's perspective) as an ultimate reality but useful for population management. Modern technology encourages and permits the continuation of representative ethnic traditions, religious customs and ancestral languages, which are harmless when stripped of nationalism and national critical mass. For example, Jewish

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cultural heritage, Yiddish and the various expressions of Jewish religion are OK, but only if disconnected from the Zionist state of Israel. Ultimately, Israel and every nation state are not acceptable. Globalism seeks to eliminate all of them one at a time through the strategy of divide and conquer - today Israel, tomorrow the Arab nations, for example.

Current conditions of pervasive poverty and shortened human lifespan will not be eliminated quickly because the economic system cannot pay decent wages to all of the people who are already healthy enough to work. Globalism contends that this goal is attainable if enough individuals and nations will restrict population growth through birth control. "Control" here is broadly defined, and its practice includes the presumed acceptance of sexual promiscuity without birth and homosexuality that adopts the accidents that do happen. Elective choice of conception is available to the wealthy in an empty, but very profitable, show of a commitment to life – especially a "quality life." After all, who wants to live any way other than what can rightly be defined as "quality"?

In the social science of politics, balanced systems are also necessary for sustained success in governance that grants meaningful, consensual input from the governed. The US Constitution represents the culmination of integrating several very good philosophic and functional checks and balances into a republic that protected its citizens from the dangers of human nature too often found in great leaders. It expresses a collectively enlightened self-interest that applies the golden rule in legal format.

The US citizenry has lost meaningful control of its government by permitting its politicians to depart from wise and legal constitutional constraints. I believe that most of the immediate problems facing the United States today derive in part from the neglect or imbalanced application of those originally designed safeguards. For example, the United States of America has engaged in a number of military conflicts more properly called wars - without any formal declaration of war. Changing what you call a war does not mean that it is not one.

Global Politics Revealed

Current political forums held around the world discuss what to do about the rogue elements that do not play by the rules. It is like the story about the wolf in sheep's clothing gone global. Sheep within a flock will sort things out between themselves with some butting and other means of establishing a pecking order. The end result is a reasonable balance integrating a measure of inequality. However, if a wolf in sheep's clothing is added to the flock, it will upset the whole process by eating his or her opposition. The wolf will keep eating the sheep until there are none left. The flock only survives if it can breed faster than the wolf can eat. This mad race may extend the final outcome for awhile, but eventually the fat wolf wins to die of starvation.

World leaders today commonly take public positions of moral integrity that recognize the "wolf in sheep's clothing" problem, but the trouble with Globalism is that we have many wolves in sheep's clothing. There are more than enough to consume the whole flock. The only reason they have not done so yet is that they fight with each other over who gets to eat which sheep. The public battle between them consists of one accused wolf declaring himself a true sheep and exposing an apparent sheep (his or her political opponent) as being a wolf in sheep's clothing that eats sheep in secret. Regardless of who wins the public contest, often decided by elections or public opinion polls today, the wool is pulled over the eyes of most of the taxpaying, economically trapped, and military-serving sheep.

So far, this publicly staged contest of denouncing the other wolf in sheep's clothing as a truly more dangerous, ravenous wolf has delayed the onslaught of global consolidation as the wolves battle it out between themselves and jockey for position in the overall order of global affairs. This has given the sheep an interim opportunity to reproduce faster than they are consumed, but time is running out. The wolves are multiplying and consolidating in a strategy of cooperative and coordinated sheep consumption. Once they unite, they will divide the fattened flock into their spheres of influence and then try to eat their competitors' sheep while protecting their own until last. Once all of the sheep are gone, the wolves will eat each other. If permitted to run its natural course, the last wolf would die of

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starvation and nothing would be left of sheep and wolves (humanity).

The material reality is that natural and labor resources are unevenly distributed over the face of the earth. These economic differentials provided the basic framework to David Ricardo's theory of classic comparative advantage. Comparative advantage functions effectively from a humanitarian perspective only when there are relatively balanced natural constraints in force. This means that there is neither extreme scarcity nor excessive abundance.

Globalism breaks the rules of comparative advantage by developing and thriving on a program of purposed superabundance controlled by a relatively few elite against a manipulated (i.e., regulated) scarcity in monetary and financial power. Globalism would not exist without international banks' mutually shared advantage in the control of currency exchange rates, terms of debt and level of interest rates. Global economic forces are driving towards regional monetary unions, and ultimately, a global currency. The behind the scenes struggle for power is evidenced in ebbs and surges of various currency valuations as the various entities compete for dominance. A global winner will temporarily arise when there is one global currency and one superbank to manage it. Both will be under the control of one government entity.

Meanwhile, these competing elite agree in a common message to the masses of ordinary people: world peace will come from global free trade in an integrated economy of ever-increasing prosperity. Play along with the fellows in charge and eventually everyone will be well off. If you do not, you will be punished – first with economic restrictions, and if necessary, with military operations or even occupation. Play along with the big bad wolves, and you may be the last sheep to be eaten.

Global Materialism Distorts Individual Identity Development

This is another way of saying that the superculture of global materialism distorts and oppresses true spirituality. The first way that Globalism crushes spirituality is through the spread of the American and Western culture of secular humanism with its materialist form of spirituality that so confuses the search for true spirituality. According to scientific humanism, spirituality is a matter of individual emotional and psychological need (a crutch) without reference to any absolute or ultimate reality.

The influence of this perspective extends into every corner of the world through mass media. Using multiple formats, popular and government-controlled media communicate a materialistic artificial reality in one underlying message: reality is only what can be examined and explained by science, which is further defined according to institutionally accepted facts and theories and/or a psycho-emotional perception within the imaginary constructs of a person's individualized experience of culture.

To live a balanced spiritual life today, we need to understand the underlying drivers of Globalism's social engineering – regardless of how humanely intentioned its agents may be. Creative identity development requires a significant level of liberty – the freedom for me to be me and you to be you - without an abandonment of social responsibility beginning with one's family.

Partly, this is due to the important role that a healthy, multigenerational family can and should play in one's spiritual journey. More importantly, to thrive spiritually and survive materially today we need to be able to see through the artificial realities generated by Globalism. Understanding the big issues and significant strategies at work will help to cut through the multiple media messages of misinformation and material spiritual values that threaten to drown out any hope for spiritual growth within a relatively stable context of tolerance and freedom of thought, speech and action.

Here I want to briefly relate how modern Globalism's values and strategies hearken back to Alexander's more openly stated objectives for his new world order of Hellenism. To me, the ultimate form of discrimination is to eliminate racial and/or ethnic distinctions because it takes away from who each person is as an individual. Please remember that the perspective of my discussion here is societal or systemic and not individual. I do not view individual decisions to marry and rear children of mixed ethnic or racial heritage as inherently unspiritual or wrong on the basis of that specific aspect of a marital choice alone. Depending on the persons and situation, a decision to marry and raise children of a mixed heritage may be the best spiritual decision to make.

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Racism is a great evil, and it is rooted in materialism and/or false spirituality. It attributes differences in material power and culture to biological differences. Most of the time, racism has been expressed as the material oppression of one or several groups by a dominant one due to imagined or real biological and cultural differences. Such oppression is a distortion of conditional love based on a perception of biased scarcity and the need to compete for resources vital to survival – particularly in regards to an identity group's survival. To preserve itself, the dominant social group forcefully steals life components (from capital resources to liberty of labor) from others. Usually great spiritual violence is also suffered by the oppressed.

Biological differences are a fact. The more science researches the human genome, the more complex it becomes, and much of that complexity aligns with racial and ethnic identities. This is how it should be according to Digital Spirituality because unique body characteristics significantly contribute to who we are as persons. The soul identity is created by synthesis of body and spirit. Each of them is different and true spirituality celebrates as holy the uniqueness of each person that comes about from the union of genetically unique body with the decisions one makes about how life is lived. How we live our lives in the bodies we are born with uniquely modulates the spiritual medium of reality much as digitized light reveals spectral signatures.

Traditional cultures around the world preserve the vital role of the body's genetic composition in spirituality by honoring one's parents and ancestors. The extension of honoring one's parents is to honor one's entire heritage. Such a simple but important truth drives and nourishes the spiritual health and personal creativity of a human being as expressed from gardening to writing an opera with symphonic accompaniment. Evidence of the power of heritage can even be found in American culture with Alex Haley's blockbuster book and TV mini-series, **Roots**.

Identity formation comes about through a series of personal decisions. Some of those decisions are made for us before birth, and some of them we make for ourselves. The destruction of national, tribal or clan entities removes an important component of a person's individuality. It is an attack on healthy spirituality, which is focused on the identification and fulfillment of one's unique place in the universe.

Recall that both Nimrod and Alexander the Great established dictatorial policies to eliminate genetic and cultural differences. They opposed national or tribal loyalties as competition to their dreams of universal, international empire. In both cases extreme concentration of humans into large cities was a major tool of their programs. Thus, urbanism has driven Globalism, and Globalism portrays urbanism as the ultimate living experience. Urban civilizations naturally attract people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds because great cities are built on trade routes. A natural mixing of people from different backgrounds will always occur in cities. The obvious consequence are arrangements that create families of mixed ethnic and racial heritage, which is welcomed as a way to reduce and eventually eliminate tribal differences.

Because of this topic's sensitivity, I write again that mixing racial and/or ethnic heritage is not wrong by itself. Cultural differences between spouses do present their special challenges to a marriage, but they are not intrinsically wrong. However, from the perspective of statecraft or global strategy, an increase in mixed marriages or other nontraditional unions evidence a subtle strategy to destroy us as individual persons from a systems point of view because they also undermine the multigenerational depth of family continuity. Just as globalist strategy seeks to destroy nationalism through the growth of a massive, interdependent, transcontinental urbanism that divides and conquers nations without armed invasion, so it seeks to destroy large, influential families through the idealization of individual particularism – the separation of a person from deep meaningful loyalties and relationships based on the traditional family structure.

The patriotic psyche and geographically significant (due to a combination of size and location) nation states resist movement towards the development of a global economy and polity. If powerful blocks of mutual political and economic interests can be broken into more numerous and smaller geo political units, then it becomes vastly easier for a global elite to establish and direct a world government through a form of democratic process or other expression of the people's will.

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A virtual set of global citizens constructed out of statistical analysis are more easily represented than real people with national histories and traditions. Furthermore, a world without nation-states makes it possible to force the compliance of any holdouts effectively with small military forces. It makes military strong-arming more economical even if requiring more intelligence and technology because, at best, the opposition can only muster a loosely organized terrorist network of scattered dozens instead of a million man army with missiles, tanks and ready-to-fire weapons of mass destruction.

Similarly, Globalism's social values also favor smaller family units without the economic and social depth of long continuity. The ideal global citizen is a individual professional of high taxable income exercising a lifestyle of high consumption. Non-work hours are filled with sensual or intellectual entertainment. He or she is socially connected to civic or interest groups that provide multiple social ties that are warm and civil but not the intensely deep relationships of healthy multigenerational families. Convivial lunches and meetings take place, life stages shared or recognized and good works in support of accepted civic programs performed. There is no familial confrontation to smooth rough spiritual edges and any lasting impact is limited by human mortality with little continuity due to a lack of familial heirs.

Once again for clarity's sake, I contend that every culture could stand some redefinition or improvement. This includes any traditional set of family values. Obviously, folks will disagree over the details, but that is not my point. What I observe is a worldwide general rejection of the traditional cultural package as a whole in favor of Globalism's material spirituality. Rejection of the whole is justified by problems with the pieces. Some of those problems are rooted in spiritually unbalanced social biases and some of them are no doubt due to the attitudes of those who reject what they perceive as their cultural heritage's unreasonable restriction of his or her individual human rights – most of which they have learned from electronic mass media.

Politicians loudly claim to champion family rights or worker's rights, but once in office, their actions are not congruent with their electioneering rhetoric. The issue is not just about families. The pragmatic ability to organize into any economically strong, politically potent affinity group, such as a union or political party is legally, bureaucratically, financially and culturally undermined by existing social and governmental institutions and the media that do not want any meaningful competition of ideas or programs.

For example, President George W. Bush campaigned with heavy rhetoric directed towards traditional religious values – especially Christian ones. Once in office, very little was done. A partisan might argue about Democratic opposition, but Mr. Bush did not apply the executive power of his office towards effecting an agenda in support of family values to the degree that he consolidated the power of his office and moved the country towards dependence on a global economy and government. National and individual liberties were sacrificed in the strategic neglect of Constitutional requirements, directives and obligations by all three branches of federal government.

Here is another example of how the citizenry of the United States of America is managed indirectly by elite controlling the mass media. In general, it permits a flood of factual misinformation on issues and opinion formation on what can be done about them. The pervasive massiveness of it is convincing. Specifically, I refer to how the media have successfully molded popular opinion in the USA (probably about 90%) to believe that supporting or voting for any party other than the Democrats or Republicans is money thrown away and a "wasted" vote.

To the United Nations and governments on the path to Globalism, human rights are important as long as they do not restrict what the established government wants to do or thinks is right. Self-evident, God-given human rights independent of a government's sanctioned authority and permission are taboo. As long as the rights under discussion relate to individual productivity and/or the disposition of an inefficient, high cost liability such as the care of children or persons with disabilities, they are accepted and upheld because it benefits the government to do so. Present technology does not permit further mechanization of these needed services, and present public morality does not tolerate the blatant disposal of human lives. Human rights encourage particularization through the

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separation of generations and the reduction of family members' influence on one another.

Small family units without economic, emotional or generational depth function as temporary support units for individuals when they are children or for persons with some sort of temporary or permanent disability. They function as short-term foster care facilities instead of dynastic conglomerates exercising influence from one generation to the next. Here is another example of how the modern economic and tax matrix concurrently destroys families in several ways. In today's world, most western families need to outsource the care of their aged parents to nursing homes in order to survive financially and continue to function in society as they have become accustomed to do. In the process of anyone entering a nursing home, all but the short-lived with extensive assets forfeits any possibility passing a meaningful financial inheritance from one generation to the next.

Sexual promiscuity and homosexuality work hand-in-hand to diminish generational continuity because they break natural family links and upset social balance even as they violate the principles of natural spirituality discussed in Chapter 4. Broken family ties destroy family businesses and make it much more difficult to accumulate sufficient resources to compete on the political stage. A regional political structure provides local stages and incremental political opportunities granting increased access to meaningful participation in the governing process. You don't need a fortune to run an effective election campaign in such a social structure.

That simply is not the case today in America or much of the rest of the world. Money is the kingmaker, and the media cover the dollars raised with more detail than any open discussion about truly important issues. The public forum is limited to projecting Rorschach images that permit the voters to see in a candidate what they want to see and sound bites that obfuscate the other contender's positions as well as prohibit any in-depth discussion of pragmatic options and their consequences. Most certainly avoided is how the government itself contributes to the problems that afflict the citizens' well-being and natural rights.

In a world population of individuals, each one sees himself as relatively impotent when it comes to dealing with global governments. Most people just cave in and do what they are told as long as they can survive the process of subservience. Others position themselves to do the telling. Those unhappy with the system are left with few options. Global government is too big and complex to fight: at best one bureaucrat can only help resolve a small part of any request or deal with any real problems. To get something done, one finds a way to get what he wants from the government without directly opposing it. If following the rules is not possible or desired, then such a situation leads to corruptions of many colors. History is full of them.

Globalism and Immigration Policy

A modern social issue relating to this phenomenon deals with immigration policy. Again, it is easy to empathize with individuals trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. While the emotionally strong stories of individual suffering and hope cannot be completely ignored, neither can they be the primary basis for the establishment of a national policy in regards to immigration – particularly illegal immigration, which negatively affects the status and lifestyles of legal immigrants even more than it does naturally born citizens.

Because it confuses national identity and weakens the popular (political power) resolve of larger states, my hypothesis is that illegal and legal mass immigrations of peoples from one state to another fulfill the unstated agenda of the global elite. A state composed of divided populations is more easily subjected to external powers, specifically global institutions. Not only do they provide necessary third party mediation of power to settle disputes, but if approached with proper strategy and intelligence, less military power is needed to control the country.

The natural consequence of immigration motivated by material advantage is the destruction of any national or ethnic identity based on spiritual principles of heritage. A nation is more than a creed. It is more than a mutual wallowing in material effluence. A nation is a set of related families grown large through long history of interaction and shared culture. The families may be quite divergent as to ethnic

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and racial heritage, or they may not. What is plain is that most nations recognize, or are coming to recognize, that their identities are being undermined by uncontrolled immigration justified solely by economic and political expediency. Divide and conquer works as well for the control of internal politics as it does internationally. Massive influxes of diverse nationalities into any existing state will wash away its distinctive identity as a people, which in turn undermine and confuse persons about who they are as individuals. Such confusion of personal identity undermines spiritual traditions and the belief in absolute truth or a spiritual ultimate reality.

Remember, throughout history Globalism has been instituted by the ruling, wealthy elite to preserve their positions of power and influence at the expense of the masses. While the perspective of the oligarchs is primarily concerned with their material advantage (the accumulation and preservation of wealth and power), it has even more devastating spiritual consequences to everyone alive because it spiritually destroys both "winners" and "losers" in the pursuit of material success.

Globalism uses racism to accomplish its purpose of subjugating 95% of humanity to the advantage of those already in power – be it political, religious, social or economic power. The elite always promise, and sometimes reward, one group over another for their sell out in effecting some part of the globalists' strategy. Actual or alleged racism and/or revenge for actual or alleged racism is used as a way to motivate shock troops into doing the dirty work of inhumane beatings and killings.

Having stated the above historical roots to Globalism's generic strategies, it is now time to address its most effective and subtle attack on spirituality. Globalism sells its philosophic approach to politics and economics by the "smoke and mirrors" presentation of prosperity derived from the application of technologically advanced secular materialism to social and economic problems. Outside of a show of concern for a moral workforce, because no one wants employees or partners who cheat them, Globalism undermines true spirituality by promoting a material form of it. It creates and sustains an artificial reality of prosperity and success by manipulating the temporal disconnect between the true causes and effects of liberty, prosperity and social justice.

Cause and Effect Disconnect

The present prosperity and liberty enjoyed by a majority of Americans are not the gifts or products of our present materialistic morals. The sustained level of a society's proportionate prosperity is directly related to a healthy spirituality – especially when it comes to the distribution of wealth. Healthy societies evidence a broad and powerful middle class. America's past moral and religious heritage is a major contributor to her wealth and success as a nation-state. Although the United States did not invent the middle class, it was the first nation founded by one. Her present power and economic position in the world flows directly from this spiritual and social heritage. In other words, our present good times are coasting on the spiritual investment of previous generations. Despite its imperfections, a positive correlation must be made between Christianity in America and our generally better levels of social justice and wealth distribution.

What is shocking is how quickly we are losing the great material benefits that blossomed out of a relatively long tradition of a constitutional government constructed in an environment of healthy spirituality that insured of liberty and provided great economic opportunity. Unfortunately, we have forgotten or are ignorant of how these facts connect to real life today. Times are good right now; therefore, our media assert directly and indirectly that America's brand of self-centered, greedy, egocentric materialism is the cause of our prosperity simply because of apparent temporal association. No wonder other nations fail to achieve broadly distributed economic prosperity for their peoples when they adopt the "American Way" of success. In search of democratic prosperity, they imbibe many of the values of our modern, materialistic culture - not realizing that the values of materialism actually carry the viral germs of tyranny and poverty.

Globalism "Americanizes" other nations to its economic and/or political values. To participate in the global system of illusory wealth generating finance and trade, a nation must also begin to adopt America's current culture of materialistic values, beliefs, goals and practices under the deceptive labels of democracy and liberty. Thoughtful statesmen should perceive the dangers even as they deal

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pragmatically with the increased integration of the global economy. They need to understand their nation's spiritual heritage deeply from a systems approach. Then it may be possible to integrate sound market economics, private property and/or democratic political practices into its native culture without destroying its spiritual fabric.

Measurable evidence in an increased democracy and broadly distributed wealth should become more obvious. Such an approach will be more faithful to the best interests for all of a nation's citizens and more likely to last for a longer duration. But without careful implementation of modern trade and financial vehicles, the momentum of a spiritually sound past will do little to protect them because the seeds of materialism so latently potent with American culture take quick root and choke out any hoped for promises of prosperity with social justice. Selfish license will supplant responsible liberty, greed will subsume good intentions, and "market facilitation" will become consumer driven materialism for its own sake.

The hollow, greed-filled, self-serving core of American culture communicated with more substance than all of our propaganda during the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese government and ruling elite copied the heart of American Globalism and did not follow our hypocritically outward proclamation of spiritual values rooted in our constitutional birth. The Soviet Union imploded on its own weaknesses more than America and the Western NATO alliance triumphed. Once again the temporally *non sequitur* relationship of a short term revival of the American economy due to massive financial pump priming with the fall of the Berlin Wall was irrationally used to trumpet American superiority over Communism's failure. The truth is rather that Communism simply failed first. It does not mean that the American culture of secular materialism is spiritually healthy enough to endure even as long as ancient Rome.

Yes. That means that America is not immune to her own sickness. Without change, her self-destruction is sure. As rot in the heart of a tree trunk eventually brings down a great tree, so America's spiritual rot will topple her majesty. It happened to Rome; it will happen to the United States of America. Given the accelerating trajectory of American sociocultural conditions due to the speed of modern technological change it will only take the United States a few years to implode as compared to the hundreds of years it took Rome to fall from her influential heights of economic and military power.

There are no exceptions to the law of limits in the natural universe. What applies to nations on the large stage of the world is also valid on a smaller scale in every person's life. Every assemblage of matter, every activity of energy - all have specific properties. We may not understand them all, but they are specific and limited in number, or any defining identity would be lost. Humanly we often deny this fact in what we believe and/or do, but in the end we all face the same, ultimate, undeniable limit. We die. Billions to trillions are spent every year to put this inevitable off a little longer. Additional billions are invested in researching about how to live longer. Most of this money is probably well spent. I'm not against life or its extension. I am definitely a big fan of life - bigger than I am of any professional sports team!

However we may seek to extend mortal existence or to continue our testimony and impact beyond the grave, it will always come to an end. Power is potent until it isn't. No matter how awesome it was at its peak, the power of this world or natural universe quickly evaporates. Memories fade. As the proverb goes, "a living dog is more powerful than a dead lion." I believe that all the great advances by science to extend natural life through chemical, genetic and biomechanical means will eventually run into some kind of natural limit. It is the law of the universe. For every birthing galaxy, there is a black hole. All life, matter and energy recycle to balance out at zero.

The natural world suffers from severe stress due to civilization's attacks on our environment. The net result is a negatively healthy world. How it will adjust is becoming a matter for strident debate, but almost everyone agrees that better management of our natural resources is called for on a global scope. Since the mass impact of our global industrial society has caused our environmental sickness, logically we should be able to largely rectify the situation given the understanding that more years and decades are required to undo or repair the damages than were required to inflict them. It is always requires more effort and time to repair or build something than to destroy it.

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Environmental healing is not just a simple problem of scientific understanding and logic; it is a matter of the spirit. Human energies strive with one another and the environment to survive in a manner desired. We cannot seem to do otherwise since we are driven by self-preservation and self-expression in statements made by how we live.

My hypothesis here states that a conscious nourishment of natural spirituality is possible across almost all cultures of humanity, and its fruit would be a restored natural environment populated by generally happier people. However, these people would still be searching since once aware of the pleasures and blessings of natural spirituality, we look beyond it through philosophy or religion towards personal encounter with the essence of immortality, the joy, peace and love from beyond light speed. It just seems to be locked up inside, looking to break out.

Because of our growing, almost universally materialistic outlook on life, many societies (our sociocultural environments) are also experiencing increased levels of toxicity. Materialism devalues relationships. The relationships I refer to are familial, neighborly and communal. Time is stolen from us, but then we let it be stolen. We choose it so, whether our choices are consciously made or not. Nonetheless, they are indeed our personal choices for which we are responsible.

Responsibility inevitably leads to some sort of evaluation or judgment. Some judgments are dramatic; many are not. The undramatic ones result from the simple consequences of previous decisions accumulated over time. Consequences are the environment of decision requirements for today that we have created by our previous decisions and behaviors. Cause and effect are indeed very real, but so is the serendipitous grace of life. Spirituality witnesses that reason is not the only tools to use when it comes to the causes and effects of soul significant events or conditions.

The addictive pursuit of philosophically materialistic, as opposed to strictly material, goals results in the lack of time and paucity of heart to invest in the work and play required to build relationships between individuals and communities. Productivity and value are measured strictly in terms of that which can ultimately be measured, purchased, traded or seized for later benefit. Some examples are status, power, fame or glory, security and general consumption to sensual surfeit. Money or wealth is a common agent of their acquisition, but raw power is also.

Materialistic goals focus on something other than life as its core value. These goals are intrinsically personal in their orientation because they fill perceived personal needs from accommodating certain fears to marking one's identity on the landscape of life. In one way or another materialism is an exercise of attempting to feed the needy void by some thing one can buy, find or take, whether it be the direct enjoyment of the thing (like food or sport) or the indirect statement of personal value through selective possession of things that socially communicate a reaffirming message of success or status to self and public.

Materialistic values and attitudes arise from an imbalance of the natural spiritual dimension. It is an impersonal conspiracy to confuse as this imbalance leads to the hiding or the re-naming of the motives for our overt behavior. We do this to ourselves. We do it to others in order to do it to ourselves.

Perhaps we first project the ephemeral images of our created images to others because internally we seek a desired personal reality, but being uncertain of it, we must look for its affirmation in how others reflect it back to us. Therefore, by successfully fooling others, we end up fooling ourselves as we lay layer upon layer of artifice upon the truth of our inner being. The longer this process of self-delusion continues, the more difficult it becomes to locate and nourish one's spiritual core identity. Honesty is essential to spiritual growth. Truth and mercy are the intangible foundation cornerstones to justice and life eternal.

The problem is that we live in a world in which it is not safe to be honest or truthful, at least not about whom we really are, what we deeply desire and need or fear. We must be politically correct in our speech, and socially acceptable in our appearance and behavior. The world is uncertain. Our mortal survival depends on such things, and even if home is good to us, the children of the playground are cruelly unkind. Such is the hard stony ground in which spirituality must be planted, fertilized, and watered under the sun of the Creator.

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Many people ascribe to the idea that changing behavior will change belief. This is only partially true because belief also modifies behavior. Belief and behavior are set spinning in a circle, and a spinning circle must be as balanced as a gyroscope in weight, form and speed, or it breaks out of balance in a wild and destructive tumble like a washing machine womping against the dryer, walls and shelves of cleaning materials in the laundry room. In the out of balance washing machine you've got a loud, uncontrollable, messy problem getting worse by the second until you can shut the power off. This is life. Life writ personal on you and your family and writ large on our nation and the world abroad.

Expedient Legalism

I reject the statements of softening sentiments that usually accompany a new policy or initiative. They simply mask the materialistic basis for a decision. Such a deceit helps no one. It is not good human relations, public or personal. It is a denial of truth. Such deceitful manipulation of true facts and motivations make the advancement of good spiritual decisions under bad circumstances impossible.

Lying or any other tool of manipulative control is a devaluation of anyone on the receiving side of the social interaction. Open honesty is far more respectful and promotes the kind of spiritual growth that yields long-term benefits for all parties. And do not forget, I have already stated how bad it is to be the person perpetrating the lies!

Unfortunately, even the American legal system promotes prevarication. The legal consequences of honest or utilitarian discriminatory decision can be huge. Therefore, it promotes duplicity of motive or action and retards the honesty essential for sound spiritual growth even as it may ameliorate the overt acts of violence common to social conflict. Trained lawyers are skilled in biased presentation of fact. Truth is not the object of legal action but advantage of the client. For example, this sad characteristic of the American legal system pervades the historical legacy of President Bill Clinton. In his case our current legal climate combined with his personality to produce chronic dishonesty and dishonor.

Principled honesty was sacrificed to political expediency. The message is that anything and anyone may become expedient at some point in order to advance the "good cause" of one's growth in power. Many "causes" could be considered good. That is not the point. The point is that for the perpetrators, the end justifies the means: the acquisition of the money essential to the support of an always-campaigning juggernaut or ever expanding business scheme is the materialistic bottom line upon which the principles of a self-preserved life are defined. People who constantly campaign, or who frenetically add one distracting activity after another to their lives, do so because there is something to cover up.

Such is the criminal consequence of materialism masquerading as social responsibility or even spirituality. Perhaps the criminals are less to blame than the country as a whole. As a polity, America permits such spiritual atrocities in politics because we don't much care about spiritually based values. As a culture, everyone has been co-opted by our desires to be a part of our almost pervasive national prosperity. It is as if the continued prosperity of the electorate can validate the inconsequence of governmental/political misconduct.

The sexual mores of the American public are confused, and the unpleasant politics of Washington was less important than the fact that most of us were making pretty good money. President Clinton did not resign, like many other democratically elected leaders do when such mistakes are made, because he knew that the people didn't care because they were just as confused about sexual morals as he was. The President and the people shared roughly the same materialistic value system, and he knew that the fortunate serendipity of growing national wealth in the 90s economy would protect him from a forced political removal. Unfortunately, the negative consequences of such a spiritually sick legacy will be with the nation for decades because it penetrated deeply into the fabric of our culture.

Returning to the discussion, we see that a materialistic worldview is typified by decisions, which are the essential expression of our intrinsic humanity based on some measure of material value. People infected with materialism exercise the power of their creative, imaginative choice according to calculated, conditional principles determined by the present benefit, as expressed in dollars or some other measure of material value.

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Materialism, Commodification & Spirituality

com·mod·i·fy *tr.v.* **com·mod·i·fied, com·mod·i·fy·ing, com·mod·i·fies**

To turn into or treat as a commodity; make commercial: "Such music... commodifies the worst sorts of... stereotypes" (Michiko Kakutani).²

Materialism is a value system wherein the cost or material advantage/benefit of a choice is the determinant factor of behavior. Everything has a price. That price may be a part of one's conscious process of making choices, or it may be subconscious – below the level of our analytical awareness. Realistically, the degree of consciousness versus subconsciousness is always on a sliding scale. We are never fully one of the other while mortal, and in fact the particular level of consciousness varies within any person over variables of time and setting throughout the continuum of decision making called life.

There are no exceptions in this worldview. It usually does not begin that way, but it ends up that time, relationships, truth, righteousness, honesty and honor become denominated by a measure of wealth or status. Even the mortal survival or dignity in being, the world's natural resources, the biosphere of ecologically dynamic plants and animals, our children - both future and now living, all denominate down to a common currency of economic benefit. Economic benefit is measured by the degree to which it preserves and extends a person's, group's or organization's strength and survival. There are no priceless principles or lives because survival is the bottom line: any alternative is better than death. Stated another way, better your death than mine.

This is the essence of commodification. It is not an issue of sentiment or statement of beliefs and principles; it is a system of hard facts derived from objectively observable behavior that gives true witness to the degree of materialism present in any one decision. Materialism is an attempted subjugation of the universe to the ego's value system. The value system of the humanly mortal ego is founded on its survival. Survival is promoted through the ego's extension of control over its environment in order to create a buffer zone of protection against any movement of life status towards weakness, sickness or death. This buffer zone is observed in behavior patterns that amass possessions, wealth, property, followers and family. It is also present in those that nourish and coddle the sensual appetites of the flesh in a consoling confirmation of its intrinsic vitality.

It is commonly believed that even though the body may die, somehow, "we" continue on, if nothing else, at least in the memories of others. Therefore, the human ego that we are all born with references value to its own material survival, benefit and extension. All value and its appropriate utility are judged from the reference point of the one holding the temporary control of the asset/person and/or its use/destruction.

Ego benefits provide materialistically tangible security for our intangibly mortal fears by protecting or nourishing our natural lives with fame, food, power, wealth or sensual pleasure. Each ego differs in its favored mix of reassuring delusions of insurance that it will not die but somehow continue beyond the grave. The important point to note is that these insecurities are manifested in behavior as opposed to the ideas, motivations and justifications for any particular behavior.

The Role of Mortality

Deep within us, the brain knows and fully believes in its mortality, thus it works ceaselessly to keep itself alive. The bottom line of human nature is that any alternative to death is ultimately acceptable. Life continued this moment provides hope for the next. Carried to extremes, self-preservation works against survival. Out of imagined or real fears, we often destroy ourselves in heroic efforts undertaken to prevent our foreseen doom. We take risks that we needn't have taken because we believed the dangers and fears we were fleeing were greater than the risks taken. Humanly, we will choose any uncertain outcome over certain pain, deprivation, death and destruction. Life is a gamble, and we take

² Commodify. (n.d.). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved November 05, 2006, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?r=2&q=commodify>.

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the odds that seem best at the moment.

Over the centuries of human experience we have learned to balance our fears with compensating belief systems. The more those belief systems are based on truth, the healthier has been their flavor of spirituality. What is truth? It is found in the facts (not suppositions or sanctioned speculations) of ensuing human conditions described by such terms as "general welfare," "quality of life" or in the predominant presence of balanced individual and communal love, liberty and responsibility in a social context.

As a result, successful people deny certain immediate gratifications or immediately needs for material survival in order to prosper in the long run. Socially, groups have learned to sacrifice a few that the many (the group itself) may survive. There is a definite interlocking connection between individual and group survival. Biologically, there is a cogent argument which states that we survive genetically through our relatives and our children; therefore, people are naturally motivated to sacrifice themselves up to and including death in order to preserve the continuation of their genetic or cultural heritage.

In other words, deep within us personally we all know that we will die. Yet the nature of the human ego within still denies death at some level even if our personal philosophy and belief is that there is nothing to humanness that biology can't explain - that we are naturally mortal and made of matter only. Furthermore, in the natural denial of our mortality, we create a fear of our certain and inevitable death, which in turn creates the need for some kind of belief in immortality - for the continuation of ourselves in some manner. For some, the belief lies in the idea of an immortal soul. For others, continuation lies in one's children, art or charitable foundation.

In subconscious to conscious reaction, we seek to escape mortality by embracing spiritual belief systems that contend and promote immortality in one form or another. The rationally explained expressions of our desired immortality have varied considerably over time and space. There have been a number of versions on the concept of an immortally divine spark possessed by each person as a source of personal identity, while others teach an eternal circle of recycling reincarnation where matter and metaphysical essence change form over the ages but are never destroyed. The common theme here is that the soul goes through some sort of eternally progressive cycle of purifying education. This process is spiritually automated and incorporates some aspect of judgment or quality control (as in Hindu *karma*). There are many theories to choose from, and they are the source of the world's concepts and practice of spirituality as religions.

Consequently, internal mental processes of thought and belief systems are much more difficult to pin down. For every admission of death's reality, there is a compensating balance of conditional denial, the ever present "yes, but." Therefore, one working definition of spirituality is any method of balancing out or overcoming these fears. This cause and effect explanation for the human condition is easier to see in others than to deal with it effectively as it applies to each of us personally. "I am just as mortal as the next person - regardless of personal style or belief system." This truth is difficult to accept, but once we have done so, the challenges of life become more manageable and spiritually enriching.

The fear of death is the source of human nature, the root of every manifestation of self-preservation present in each person. Its presence within psychologically healthy people presents humanity with a universal reality shared by all. Without recognizing this psychological connection, a spiritually balanced approach to life is impossible because a person will not be able to live at a level of elevated consciousness and social responsibility.

The reality of death is perceived at all levels of human consciousness. For those on an honest search for spirituality, there is no escaping it. We must deal with the definitive absolute of death's coming experience as well as with a faith construct defining what lies after mortality. In death every human, and thus artificial, construct of spiritual truth is tested at its graduation to ultimate reality. For the materialist, there is nothing beyond present biological consciousness.

For billions, there is the expectation of a reincarnation according to a karma form of justice that provides a new opportunity to finally escape the materialist treadmill into some kind of blissfully

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desired ultimate reality. Other billions believe that they go through some process of divine judgment that determines their spiritual destination for eternity.

Those who engage the ultimate absoluteness that death presents to them have sunk a part of the sure foundation life into ultimate reality. Death is a cornerstone of truth that can lead to other self-honesties. Being honest with one's self is the most essential prerequisite for a successful search for spirituality. True spirituality transforms the dissonance of human artificial realities towards congruence with ultimate reality or God.

The beginning of that congruence is to accept deeply and humbly that human life is biologically limited to what we experience and see around us as material beings. In other words, death is the mortal end of each person's identity configuration within this conjunction of space and time across all dimensions. The creative generation of a person's identity ends at death.

Spirituality as a Form of Materialism

One rational direction for this discussion is to now conclude that spirituality is a form of materialism and thereby end our conversation. People suffer from psychosocial needs, and they make up the spirit world and religion to meet those needs. But not so fast. The key transition here is that the innate human need for spiritual answers arises from questions about scientifically measurable, material facts. Facts specifically related to our proven biological existence and its mortality.

Moreover, I have not yet begun to address the evidence for the metaphysical dimension of the universe, which includes the edges of scientific probing into the nature of life itself and into the paranormal and/or extrasensory capabilities of people. Scientific research has compounded the growth of sensually acquirable knowledge exponentially. It has clarified, intensified, and confused the thinking person's search for spirituality, but it has not ended it. And it won't because there are spiritual dimensions to life beyond the five senses and reason.

If we are to grow in our understanding, then openness in a reach for truth is essential. Humans are not easily open about these issues. Yes, we may be to a certain point, you know - to where we left off last time we struggled with our mortality, but honesty to the core of our innermost beings is not easy to achieve. In fact, I do not believe it to be humanly possible to attain perfect honesty at these deepest levels. Regardless of that fact, I also believe that we must continue to try, or the spiritual growth of our being or "soul," as it were, dies within us leaving alternatives worse than the frustrations of not knowing or not achieving an acceptable level of success in our search for spirituality.

These explanations enable us to defuse the disruptive immobilities of life caused by our subconscious fear of death. Humans exhibit many kinds and degrees of phobias, but they all have one source - the fear of death because each person's subconscious, the deepest mortal you, knows the truth that death will end that person's/identity's existence. In consciously denying the biological mortality of the ego though various innovative spiritual theories (wishful artificial realities), we deny total mortality from within the deepest psychological self. Based on this deep denial, we philosophically and theologically construct an alternate truth, which thoughts and feelings are acted upon and expressed through the visible body. A person's precise interpretations and recitations depend on the belief system held or studied.

So spirituality puts a balance on the mortality of our consciousness, which enables human beings to function effectively in life and society. It accomplishes this feat through the temporary resolution of, or by providing interim answers to, eternal questions. These answers and solutions are combined with some level of covert denial of the truth that, without exception, every inner man or ego dies when the body dies. Since human nature inherently denies that humans are but biological matter, we imaginatively create rationally sound, spiritual explanations and substitutes for the truth of temporal material existence.

Dealing with the fear of death gives rise to some expression of faith and results in a spiritual rebirth. This principle is testified by the natural cycles of life as well as by the resurrection story of

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Yeshua/Jesus called Messiah or Christ. In one form or another almost all human philosophies and religions have embraced the myth that although humans are outwardly mortal and/or corruptible, we are all inwardly immortal and good due to one explanation or another. The "good" part is extremely important, for without it there is no enlightened rationale to justify immortality. Evil immortality is seen as hellishly undesirable, except by comedians looking for a bankably enriching laugh as they present the "other place" as an extension of the sensually good times enjoyed in the flesh.

Spirituality as the Non-Material

Contrasting spirituality with materialism is to define it as the unperceived reality beyond the reach of the physical senses, which is to say beyond the examination of the scientific method. Earlier I discussed how spirituality is an extension of the natural world of physical science. Throughout history and even today, most people think of spirituality as the opposite of materialism. The metaphysical spirit world or universe is an opposing negative mold or parallel dimension to the physical or material world.

Contrast is a very useful method to gain a better understanding of how things might be or probably are, and it is a rationally permissible approach. Even if one looks at spirituality from a scientific perspective, the issue merely becomes one of "where do you place the border between the two?" After developing the theories of relativity Albert Einstein spent most of his adult life searching for a "Unified Field Theory"; therefore, it is not unintelligent or unscientific to think of the physical and metaphysical dimensions as an integrated whole. Einstein spent most of the last half of his life looking for proof to what might exist beyond the speed of light. It is not wrong to speculate on what lies on the other side of a black hole.

In contrasting spirituality with commodification or materialism, we can conclude the obvious. We understand the search for spirituality to be a search for the non-material, for a something which cannot be discovered or measured directly by the five natural senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing.

The human mind is the ultimate analyzer and integrator of sensual perception. One could include thinking as an *Uber-Sensor* or summary of the totality of humanity's exploration of the natural universe and the mysteries of life because human philosophy and theology encompasses the rational application of these senses to these questions. Through the process of thoughtful exploration and logic, humans can embrace the intangible realities of the spiritual. We can visualize the metaphysical beyond the physical and sense that which lies beyond our natural capacity to explore materially.

Unlike material commodities, true spirituality cannot be bought. Even though access to and understanding of spirituality is advertised and competitively sold in the professional and media marketplace, its acquisition or experience cannot be directly caused by economic exchange. There may be an economic exchange to set up the conditions conducive to a spiritual encounter, such as a travel package to the mountains of Tibet or a session with a spiritual coach, but the exchange of material value, say money to buy this book, is not participation in, nor the enjoyment of, some level of spiritual exercise of and by itself.

The search for spirituality acknowledges by its existence that human life includes a spiritual component or dimension that desires fulfillment. Each person is more than just a body without denying the body, and we seek to encounter that spiritual essence of our ultimate being, of who we are transcendently beyond material substance or flesh. Spirituality requires the free interaction of one's being with the perceived evidences, which communicate the existence of a deeper reality, being, existence, dimension or power to the spiritually oriented person. By essence, spirituality exists beyond that which any person can readily dissect and classify using the vast arsenals of the physical and social sciences. Whatever this spiritual domain is, it operates according to rules only indirectly discovered by science in our physical dimension of space-time.

Symbolic evidence or the history of spiritual encounters usually becomes very important to the spiritual person. This is true whether the encounters occurred to others, such as a spiritual leader, or to the searcher because spiritual phenomena (miracles or encounters with the other side) are

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perceived as links to the very substance of life itself - or more importantly, to life's personal meaning and purpose. The scope of any particular spiritual manifestation ranges from an individual's experience of a deeply private or personal "ah-ha" moment to the reverence and respect of spiritual leaders and traditions that may be shared by millions of people.