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RE: Spreading the Gospel of Christian 2019

Dear Reader,

502 years ago, Martin Luther, my fellow countryman, attached his 95 Theses on the doors of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. He saw significant flaws in his society at the time. With the help of Gutenberg's printing press those Theses spread to many people and ultimately created significant change in the world over time as many people agreed with Luther's truths.

Today the world again faces truly existential challenges. The environment is under attack, and Mother Nature is hitting back. The chasm between rich and poor is growing. Politicians are taking money from the rich and votes from the poor to protect them from each other. Healthcare is a growing cancer in the US economy. Higher education is becoming unaffordable.

I would like to ask you to read my thoughts on the following pages. If they resonate with you, or you simply enjoy the humor, please share them with anybody you like to share and discuss them with. We are running out of time. Unless we can reestablish fair Government by the People for the People, and change our way of life to a sustainable path, all the children and future generations will suffer the consequences of our destructive choices. If we continue with "Drill-baby-drill" as usual we are cutting the branch of evolution that has created us.

Luther had Gutenberg to spread his message. We have the Internet! A good message can travel far and wide in a very short time. Keep it moving!

Thanks and Regards,
Christian Lutkemeyer

Nature is amazing and beautiful! Let's keep it that way!



The Gospel¹ of Christian, 2019 ©

By Christian Lutkemeyer

What is wrong in America?

A plea for change to preserve the world as we know it for all children.

Dedicated to my children, my wife, our families, our communities, our fellow countrymen and women, all people in the world, and all future generations of humans on Earth.

Fellow US Residents, Dear US Citizens!

I am writing to you today, November 10th 2019, on the 502nd anniversary of Martin Luther's publishing of his 95 theses on the doors of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. I want to share a grave and urgent concern with you, that affects all of us, and all human beings and all life on Earth.

Before elaborating on my concern I would like to apologize to you, the US citizenry, for addressing you second, and not first, as would be more appropriate, especially in these "America First" times. However, I myself am only a resident of your beautiful country and don't want to be accused of pretending otherwise. I am only a "fake" citizen you could say, as I am not allowed to vote. At least I look like somebody from Norway, so your President might like me. Since I live in California, my vote, if I became a citizen, would most likely not matter at all, at least not for the next presidential election. I expect that California will overwhelmingly vote for the Democratic candidate, even if it is a dog. Or a person who handles her emails completely unprofessionally by running her corporate emails through a private server in her basement. Every professional knows that you have to use your organization's email system for business!

Due to the quirks of the US election system with the electoral college, and California sending all its electoral votes to the side of the presidential winner at the state level, my vote will not make a difference, regardless if I voted for the dog or the other side. Wouldn't a system where every vote counts be better? It would definitively have changed the outcome of the last presidential election, maintained the standing of the US in the world, and would have increased the chance to get the world on a more sustainable trajectory. Then again, thinking about how a Republican-led Congress would have investigated Hillary Clinton for her use of her private email server, it might have just been another four ugly years of gridlock. At least Hillary would have complied with subpoenas in the investigations as she does respect the law. Your current president shows everyday his contempt for it! Laws and rules only apply to others. Executive privilege is raised as a wall to hide corrupt acts. Donald Trump has stated that "walls work"; I hope that he is wrong in this case. His wall did not keep the whistleblower's report hidden, although the "Justice Department" tried to keep it under wraps. The Truth wants out. With Humor!

¹ The word **gospel** comes from the Old English god meaning "good" and spel meaning "news, a story."
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One Man or Woman, One Vote

One man/woman, one vote does not apply in America. Here the politicians select their voters with Gerrymandering to create safe seats for themselves, and to prevent the majority of voters to get a majority representation in state houses and congress. Power corrupts. The US is minority ruled at this point. And it is ruled by the golden rule; who has the gold makes the rules, and the rules are made so that the golden boys get more and more of the gold. Look at the Trump Tax cuts. When Trump was campaigning he promised to remove the unfair carried interest taxation rules which are a sweetheart tax rat on the income that hedge fund managers collect from their investors. In the Trump tax cuts this special interest loophole remained. Republicans claimed that their tax cuts would pay for themselves. Now the red ink in the federal budget has exploded! They keep telling the people that trickle down economics works, despite all previous failed attempts at this like the Bush tax cuts. Give more money to the rich, and everybody will prosper. At this point the initial sugar rush from the December 2017 tax cuts has subsided, and the economy has reverted back closer to its long term trend of growing by 2% a year. The tax cuts were used for a lot of corporate stock buybacks and not much to create new jobs.² This has resulted in a record high stock market while the returns on savings are still miniscule and start to evaporate as the Federal reserve is again lowering the interest rate to prop up the failing administration. The little people don't own stocks, so the stock market bonanza has not benefited them. The only thing that has blossomed is the red ink in the federal budget which ran close to a trillion dollars in the last fiscal year. And that at a time of very low unemployment where the federal government should improve its financial position to build ammunition to fight the next recession. It is not a question if that will come; only when. I think that at this point the little people should understand that tax cuts for the rich only produce "golden showers", and I am not talking about the ones made with the chemical element "Au". These showers bring mostly H₂O with other trace elements like urea, and it is the little people who get soaked. Future generations, our children, will have to pay the balance, either in the form of increased taxes, or reduced Government services. The interest payments on the Government's debt reduce the ability to invest in our future, our children.

Essentially we are stealing money from our children's future!!

Education

I arrived in the US in 1999 from Germany after receiving a free, tax payer funded, university education. A high tech company in Irvine sponsored me for an H1B visa, and later also supported my application to receive a green card. I am very grateful for the opportunity that I was provided. I hope the US is also grateful for all the income taxes that I paid over 20 years. I think Germany has missed out a bit. When they gave me their free education they were

² Well, it is hard to create new jobs when we are close to full employment. You would need more workers, perhaps immigrants like me. When unemployment was high at the beginning of the first Obama Administration the Republicans in Congress were very concerned about Federal Deficits. Now that they are in the spell of the King of Debt and bankruptcies all those concerns and the money get thrown out of the window. There are no principles, only interests in those politicians.

probably hoping that one day I would pay all the money back, and then some. That may still happen. At least I continue to pay into Germany's retirement system, albeit at the minimum contribution level. This way they do not forget me, and in case I go back one day I could still return into their retirement system. The products that I am developing here in the US together with colleagues from many different Nationalities are integrated circuits for fiber optic communications. They are manufactured in Taiwan. One of our customers is a company in Germany, and so thanks to my work in the US they are able to sell competitive products world wide. Through this indirect route Germany is still benefiting from the education that they funded for me. It is important to see the complex global interconnectedness that we live in today. Higher education in America is very expensive these days. Public funding has atrophied, and there are many for-profit universities as well. Many students finish school with six-figure debt loads and degrees that will make it very hard for them to retire that debt. It will probably keep many of them down for most of their lives. A for-profit university has inherently conflicts of interest. Shareholders will ask for growing profits, the university spends significant amounts of money to attract the next group of students (customers), and all that money is not spent to provide actual education to the students. And to make all that even worse people have to worry about falling prey to scams like Trump University!

Healthcare

I am sorry to take such a winding road to start to talk about my concerns, but I wanted to first share with you that I have an outsider's perspective on many of the questions and problems that I have been observing in the US over the 20 years that I have been living here. I already discussed education. A second important issue is healthcare. Having grown up in Germany I feel that universal healthcare for all people in the country is a basic human right in a developed society. When you look at Germany, you can see that they are actually quite successful despite, or I would say, rather because of, the availability of good healthcare for everybody. Smart and healthy people are Germany's most important resource in the global village.

The healthcare system in the US is characterized by its much higher cost compared to other developed countries, and a large number of uninsured people. A lot of the healthcare system is in the hands of for profit health insurance companies and for profit hospitals. They have the same conflict of interest as the for profit universities that I mentioned above. Should the health care company pay \$2,000,000.00 on a gene therapy for a newborn, or on shareholder dividends, or their CEO bonus? A lot of the money that the healthcare sector extracts from the economy is actually not used to keep people healthy. Under President Obama the Democratic Party spend a lot of their energy and political capital to create the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to reduce the number of uninsured people. To fund the expansion of the healthcare system people were required to buy health insurance, including the young and healthy. People who could not afford the premiums received subsidies. To require everybody to have insurance makes sense when you think about the full life of a person; ultimately most of the young and healthy warriors will end up requiring their share of health care treatments later in their life, too. Nobody knows if they will get cancer or some other disease which would be very expensive to treat. Insurance spreads this risk and ensures that the population as a whole stays healthy and productive

longer. Without health insurance many people in the US are only one sickness away from bankruptcy when expensive healthcare bills push them towards the abyss and to a point where they lose their homes and are forced to live on the street. We have quite a few homeless people in California. The lack of universal health insurance is definitely a contributing factor in this problem and makes it much harder for them to recover from homelessness. And when somebody loses a job with health insurance they are at high risk. You may appreciate the importance of health insurance in the US when I share a personal example. When my son had appendicitis the bill from the hospital for two days including the surgery was close to \$30,000.00. My health insurance company only paid about 15% of that amount as it was pre-negotiated. The provider wrote off 85% of the initial charge! At that point I thought what would have happened if I had to pay the surgery from my own pocket. Would I have been able to shave off 85% of that bill? I don't know, but having to pay close to \$30,000.00 would have been hard. Here you can already see how the people without health insurance are screwed. In surveys on the street, average Americans respond that they would have difficulties to cover an emergency expense of \$400. So most of the time they have to tap into credit cards which may charge 20%, 25%, or 35% interest rates. You would think this is usury when you know about the interest rates that banks pay to the federal reserve (less than 2%) or on the deposits of their savers (0.1% for big banks, but if you are savvy and go online you can also find up to two percent). So why is this HUGE differential in the interest rate not usury? Well, the banks are big contributors to the politicians in Congress. They essentially pay for their protection. Now imagine that due to a medical emergency you have to put \$30,000.00 on a credit card at 35%... How long will it take to pay that off if you can save \$100 a month? Essentially forever, and the balance keeps growing. Back to healthcare.

The Republican Party failed to repeal the ACA under Obama 54 times in the House of Representatives when they had the majority in the House. They finally had a majority in both houses of congress when Donald Trump became President. Even then they failed to repeal the ACA thanks to the late Senator John McCain who cast the deciding vote against repeal in August 2018. It is very strange that the party that claims to care so much about the unborn life that they want to force women to carry babies to term which were conceived through rape, cares so little about human life after babies arrive and start breathing. I think there are also several examples where Republican congressmen rather not receive a baby when they got their mistress pregnant.

After failing to outright repeal the ACA, the Trump administration engaged in administrative sabotage of the ACA as much as they could. They removed the insurance mandate, and claimed afterwards that the law is unconstitutional.

As the question of constitutionality winds its way through the courts to a conservative majority Supreme Court we are back to the schizophrenic situation where people do not have to have health insurance, and at the same time emergency rooms have to treat people even if they do not have insurance. This system does not make much sense when you think about it. The most expensive place to provide emergency care is sometimes used to treat bad colds as people cannot go to a regular doctor.

When the Republicans were working in 2017 to repeal the ACA, Trump made the statement: "Nobody knew health care could be so complicated." He was probably the last to understand that problem.

In my view some of these topics are actually quite manageable if you applied basic financial analysis, common sense, and the will of the politicians to create a fair system for their constituents. Let me give you a very specific example here. The cost of insulin has been in the news recently where people are reportedly dying because they cannot afford the insulin that they need. They reduce the dosage or substitute it with insulin that is meant for animals. Reportedly, a vial of Humalog costs \$300 retail in the US, and about \$30 in Canada. Looking at these two numbers we can immediately draw two conclusions: First, the manufacturing cost of Humalog must be below \$30. Otherwise it would not be sold in Canada for that price. Second, there must be at least \$270 additional profit on the Humalog that is sold in the US. If you look at the business parameters for insulin you will see that the drug is 100 years old, and there are no patent protections to manufacture it. There is also a steady and high demand for it. Taking all of this together, manufacturing of insulin should follow a utility model. It is essentially a very low risk business, and the manufacturer should only earn a small profit margin. The fact that the profit margin is astronomically high proves that the system is rigged against the people whose life depends on insulin. When will the politicians start to fix this outrageous abuse?

Draining the Swamp

I think it is examples like the above that caused a significant number of people to vote for the outsider, Donald Trump, in the 2016 election, even if they had voted for Barack Obama in 2012. They had the hope that he would fulfill his many promises to drain the swamp, and that he would be more faithful to them than his first two ex-wives. I can sort of appreciate that dream, but I have to tell you that hope is not a strategy. I actually have several close family members that are very dear to me who made the same choice. As we see in the news, hope dies last. Many of the Trump voters are still hoping that the wall will be paid by Mexico?

Unfortunately, draining the swamp in Washington is significantly harder than the fifth labor that Eurystheus ordered the classical Greek hero Hercules to perform: Cleaning the stables of King Augeas in a single day. Voters intuitively felt that this job should be done by an outsider. However, in voting for Donald Trump with his well known record to stiff small contractors, a large number of credible allegations of sexual misconduct against women, and defrauding students at his infamous Trump University, just to name a few of his many disqualifying acts that voters knew about, they essentially send the biggest bull into the stable to do the clean up. As I and many others expected, this has not improved the situation. Getting conservative judges on our courts does not make up for all the bulls#!t that has been coming from this White House. To the contrary, the mess in our society has gotten much worse. Look at our divisions! The federal budget is bleeding! The pile of excrement has been growing and is stinking to high heaven. Saint Peter had to close his windows even though heaven is very far away from Washington as you might imagine correctly.

What did you expect the bull would do once in the stable?! Now it is pretty much a Brown House and corruption is flowing out of all the gates! Only the willfully blind and olfactory lobotomized are still pretending that there is no there there! I can only imagine how the Republicans in Congress who voted to impeach Bill Clinton would be howling if Hillary was president and doing just 10% of the crap and lies that are thrown at all of us in a never ending Tw³itter STREAM.

Trade

Let me add a few words on trade. Germany does not have much oil that it can just pump out of the ground and sell abroad to fund a lavish lifestyle like for example some people in Saudi Arabia. So their smart and healthy people design and build exciting Mercedes or Porsche cars and sell them to Saudi Arabia so that the people in Saudi Arabia can commute to work in a nice and air conditioned ride, and save their camels for racing on the weekends. When you think about the countries and people of the world as a global community where each and everyone of them can contribute to each others mutual benefit with things that they have or can produce, and others don't, you may appreciate the benefit of global trade. Trade has been going on for a long time. Salt, spices, and silk are some of the early important goods that drove our ancestors to explore places far away from their home and return with the riches that those places could provide. Unfortunately, in human history, trading has not always been fair and there are many examples of theft where one country took the riches of another without fair compensation. This is still happening today. There has been a lot of injustice. This is one of the darker sides of human nature and trade. Many of the cheap goods we buy may have been manufactured by children.

If done fairly, trade is beneficial to all the parties involved. The amazing high tech products that humans are able to put together today are only possible with globally sourced materials, supply chains, knowledge, and labor. Trade wars are not helpful, and they are not easy to win. In the end we all lose.

Collaboration, an opposing thumb, and our intelligence are in the end the most important properties of us human beings. They made us so successful that we are on the verge of devouring the natural foundation that we need for our existence. We are sitting on a tree and sawing the branch off that we are sitting on. That image does not quite make us look so intelligent any longer. But hey, at least we were able to make a power saw!

Human Nature

I like to share my view on human nature and how it is related to the dysfunctional state of affairs that we observe in the political realm in many places in the world, not just the US. Think about Brexit, Brasil, Hungary, etc.

As individuals, human beings are pretty weak and very vulnerable. After we are born we need 24x7 nurturing and protection from our parents for many years before we become productive elements in our society. Even when we are adults we need the protection of the herd for survival. In the stone age, every night, when we had to sleep, we needed to be in safety. We understand the importance to be part of the herd at a very basic level. It is ingrained in our DNA,

³ Tw=Sh

and we behave accordingly. We are willing to engage in all kinds of crazy rituals that do not make sense to us individually just to stay in the good graces of the group. Political demagogues are very skilled at exploiting these herd instincts and fears. “Watch out, there is a caravan of migrants over there!” Suddenly “we the people” turn into “we the sheeple”. When humans are part of a herd their rational decision making vanishes, and they follow their emotions and reflexes and the flow of the herd. How else can we explain that otherwise decent and caring individuals can cheer a lynching mob on when the varnish of civilization cracks?

When I look at the behavior of the politicians and voters that associate or themselves with the Republican Party today, I have to think about a herd of wildebeest that has been driven into a stampede to cross a river full of crocodiles. There is no reasoning any more. They completely live in an alternative reality, created by their demagogue leader and the aligned media like Fox News and Breitbart, to just name two. In their Potemkin village a corrupt phone call that betrayed our country’s interest for the personal benefit of it’s corrupt leader was just “perfect”. If this had been done by Hillary Clinton they would be foaming at their mouths and scream for impeachment! Now they are stampeding towards the river of impeachment where the crocodile of truth is waiting for them. Any of their leaders who are trying to regain a rational and objective thought are pushed out of their herd. Everybody has to embrace the cult. The politicians have incited this stampede; now they lost control and are trying to stay ahead of the herd that is threatening to run them over. It is like the march of the lemmings, or a group of whales that is about to beach themselves. But ultimately all this behavior is ingrained in our DNA. Launching a stampede may have been the right reaction against some threats to our tribe in the stone age. Wild animals could not be beaten back with reason and compassion. In today’s modern world a stampede is less useful. Let’s have a stampede against sea level rise? Or against a forest fire in a red flag situation with 50 mph winds? Those problems need a smarter response. The gut does not see the problem. Even if it is a very big gut behind a long red tie. The best that the gut can do in situations like this is s#!t into the pants.

Tribalism

Tribalism enables politicians to divide us along many possible fault lines. Language, religion, skin color, culture, or policies (like for example the second amendment right to bear Kalashnikovs when the kids go to school⁴). In caveman days we shared all these traits within our tribe. Conflict usually arose with people from other tribes who were different in one or more of these features and wanted to take our land, women, or other stuff. Therefore, the people who survived had a healthy distrust towards the “Other” and this is also coded in our DNA. Today this feature on our DNA has changed into a bug as it is used by politicians to divide and conquer us, and use our fears to vote against our own best interests. There are so many of us. We need to find a peaceful arrangement to share the limited resources that Earth can provide us. Nobody wins in the war today. Actually that is a lie! The military industrial complex wins a lot! How about

⁴ Well, so far the kids don’t bring the guns, but some school districts promote that teachers bear arms. What society have we created where children in school have to worry they will be gunned down because there are so many guns available. They get special security drills on what to do when under attack. In the land of “The Free” there should be freedom from fear for the children in school. That right should trump the right to bear arms that are weapons of war and not needed for hunting.

directing some of the tremendous resources, and human capacity, and ingenuity that we dedicate to building weapons towards moving all of humanity on a path to a sustainable future? As long as we have all those nukes ready to launch there is so much deterrent that we should not be so fearful.

And here is the good news! Most of the energy on Earth is ultimately provided by the sun, and that is estimated to shine for another 5 Billion years. So if we deploy solar technologies we have a solution for a very long time.

Ashamed

Dear US Citizens, I have to confess that I oftentimes feel deeply ashamed for many of the actions that the Government that a minority of you voted for, executes on our behalf. I told you that I did not vote for the Government myself as I am only a permanent resident. But, I do support the Government with my generous tax payments. So I believe that I am at least morally responsible for a lot of the misdeeds that are carried out on all of our behalfs. I am essentially aiding and abetting their bad deeds. By writing and sharing my thoughts here I hope that they may take notice when this gospel spreads. I would like to give you a specific example. If you follow the recent news, it has now been confirmed that more than 5000 children of families who crossed into the country illegally or legally to request asylum had been taken away from their parents by our Government. And the Government did not keep proper records to reunite those families later. In my view this is an unimaginable cruelty. Who is being held accountable for these policies? So far nobody!

I want to add a specific question here to the people who call themselves Evangelical Christians. If the polls are correct, the majority of you strongly supports President Trump. I am a Christian myself. I could shoot somebody on Fifth Avenue in New York⁵ and still be Christian as my Mother gave me my beautiful first name. You however do not have this solid association to be Christian and rather derive yours from the claim that you are following the teachings of Jesus. It has been a while since I read the Bible, but I grew up in a very catholic home. I do not consider myself an expert on the subject but I am certainly an educated layperson. So I remember that Jesus said to the people: "Let the children come to me" when the people tried to keep the children away from him (Matthew 19:14). He definitely did not say: "Go take these children away from their parents and put them into the cages that I have here, and separate them forever." So based on my knowledge you cannot claim to be a Christian and at the same time support a Government that has taken away thousands of children from their parents, without even a thought on how to reunite them! This cruelty has caused a lot of pain and suffering that may never end for some of the affected families. Have you put yourself in their shoes? If they even have any. Many of them are poor and have lost everything on their way to find asylum. Don't you remember Matthew 25:40?

I think that the masters you follow don't lead you to the Pearly Gates. Maybe they lead you to the bollard fence on the Southern border to Heaven. To get into Heaven they probably plan to drill through the bollards while you all chant "Drill baby, drill"; The archangels that control the

⁵ Of course, I would not do that as it would be stupid! Only stupid people talk about killing somebody on Fifth Avenue in New York.

access to Heaven inside will already be chanting “Lock them up, lock them up”; and when you all will finally break through the wall, and illegally enter Heaven, they will take your children away and lock them in cages. No asylum for YOU! Or maybe somebody will make a claim of executive privilege on your behalf to enter? Do you really think those masters care about you and your future?

If you put a suit and a long red tie on a caveman after he has been cleaned up, he is still a caveman underneath. Only when you listen to him when he speaks you will learn if he shows signs of wisdom, curiosity, knowledge of history, good reasoning, self control, respect, compassion, and all the other traits that we expect from a good, unifying leader.

Many Republicans today appear happy to accept all the lying of their Government into their own faces, the corruption and self enrichment, just to get four more years of conservative court packing. And in their Media bubble “perfectly corrupt” is perfect.

Accountability

I feel that the leaders we choose should be held accountable for their actions when they violate the public trust and create great harm. With great power comes great responsibility! Looking back to the Iraq war that started in 2003 it is incredibly painful to realize that a lot of false information was used to drive the whole country into an armed conflict that cost many of our soldiers lives (4424+31952 wounded), and probably several hundred thousand Iraqi lives. Not to mention the mind boggling cost of \$1.9 trillion for this missadventure. You may remember Condoleezza Rice talking about mushroom clouds, and Colin Powell who presented “evidence” to the United Nations that purported to show that Iraq was possessing weapons of mass destruction. Under the leadership of US President G.W. Bush and VP Dick Cheney the US started the war without a UN resolution to authorize the use of force. A year later, the United States Senate released the Senate Report of Pre-war Intelligence on Iraq which concluded that many of the Bush Administration's pre-war statements about Iraqi WMD were misleading and not supported by the underlying intelligence. **Nobody was held accountable.** Instead, George W. Bush was reelected! And out of the war in Iraq grew Isis. Evil begets evil. Injustice begets injustice. Do our Christian friends remember the Sermon on the Mount? How about turning the other cheek? Of course that is hard to do, especially when we operate on our cavemen reflexes. An eye for an eye feels so much more appropriate, emotionally. Or 100,000 lives of theirs for our 1000.

Technology

Dear Flintstones, I strongly believe that if any of us would drop their clothes we could submerge ourselves into a caveman society very easily. As you are reading this probably on some kind of electronic device, it is obvious that as humankind we have come a long way from caveman knowledge and life. But when we are born, each one of us has to essentially start at the same level as the cave babies did. We would most likely struggle with most of the hard tasks they had to solve after having been pampered a lot in modern life.

If we look at our DNA, our basic instincts and behavioral patterns have not changed (fight or flight and hide, anger, and herd mentality to name a few). All the trappings of civilization (your

Armani suit and tie, or perfume, make-up and nailpolish) are only a thin veneer on the cavemen hardware that our bodies still are. Today we are essentially trying to run a 21st century society on cavemen hardware. To me it seems the software of the 21st century is not really backwards compatible with the stone age hardware. We need to fix some of the software exploits that the software masters at Facebook, Google, etc are using to manipulate us. So what makes us different? I believe that what makes us different is the knowledge that we have gained over not so many generations thanks to the amazing smartness of many individuals (many unknown to us today) who figured out how the world around us is built, how we can manipulate matter, and how to make tools from it. We learned how to preserve knowledge from one generation to the next, so that the total knowledge could grow from generation to generation in an increasing march to higher and higher specialization of knowledge and skills. Innovation has progressed incrementally, and sometimes in giant leaps. We stand on the shoulders of many generations of inventors. That has allowed us to build an amazingly tall tower. Like the tower of Babel. My scripture loving readers probably know what happened to the tower of Babel in the Old Testament and to the people who wanted to build it to reach to the heavens? You have to admit that our ancestors in the days when that story was written had already a pretty good appreciation of their social and cultural challenges and barriers. We still fight the same devils today! Many times, deep thoughts of one individual have revealed groundbreaking truth that had been unknown. Think about Newton. Or Albert Einstein and how he derived the theory of relativity. Humans have been amazingly successful at understanding the world and the universe. We harness the elements and materials surrounding us. This has also created great dangers. We are now able to wipe all of us from Earth in a giant nuclear holocaust if the cold war would ever become hot again. Or the cavemen chief in the White House⁶ hits the wrong button on the nuclear football out of spite that he will probably go to jail in the future. He most likely prefers all of us to go to hell with him in his incessant hate! There he will be free to abuse us more.

We have created communication devices that can reach the most remote places on our planet in fractions of a second. This enables an unprecedented intensity of collaboration that we should use to solve the most pressing problems that we all face today on a global scale. Many of these great inventions and developments were enabled by the cheaply available energy that was stored in fossil fuels in millions of years. We are depleting this inherited gift in a couple hundred years and destroy our environment in the process. With Electric Vehicles (EVs) or plug-in hybrid cars (PHEV) and solar panels the voracious gasoline use of our country can be massively reduced. To give you a specific example: My family reduced our gasoline use by 90% compared to driving our Minivan by buying a Chevy Volt that achieves an average fuel consumption of >200 mpg, thanks to the availability of cheap electricity from our own solar panels. The investment into the solar system was amortized over just four years and will continue to pay rich returns for many years to come. Smart people will embrace these opportunities, if they know about them. But there are the entrenched special interests who are greasing the skids to our demise by promoting the wasteful and unsustainable energy use of the past. Oil is too precious as a resource today to waste most of it by just burning it up in inefficient

⁶ Here is an interesting alternative fact in the Trump Administration: White=Brown

transportation devices. Future generations would enjoy having some as a basic raw material for medications or other important uses. Burning gas in a 20 mpg Flintstone car is not cool! It cooks the planet!

We are under Attack

If you have followed the news recently you will have seen that California has again a bad fire season. Millions of people had their power shut off, many thousands were evacuated, and lots of land and property has burned. You could even see how Ronald Reagan's Presidential Library was threatened by the Easy Fire burning in the hills close to Simi Valley. Fortunately his Library could be saved by the courageous firefighters of the Government. I wonder if Saint Ronald, as he watches from the Republican Heaven, has any regrets about saying: "The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help." I think if the fire is on their doorsteps even hard core republicans are not going to wait for the free market to figure out if they are worth saving. Government is only bad when it helps other people!

On another note, when you leave the Reagan Library which sits on top of a hill, you will find the image of President Obama attached to a light post at the exit of the roundabout! And from Obama to Trump it is downhill, to the next light post! This is a truly ominous sign. You can see this for yourself in Google Maps Street View if you want to check this out for yourself without making the trip to Simi Valley. Isn't technology great when it is used to help us understand reality! Unfortunately it is used a lot today to divide and conquer regular citizens by herding them into separate media bubbles.

On October 4th 2019, Donald Trump again showed the global community once more his short middle finger. His Administration left the Paris Climate Accord. This makes as much sense as closing the entry to your cave while enjoying a nice fire. Only that the delay to the consequences is longer. And much more far reaching! In the cave, your small group will die from carbon monoxide poisoning in a short time. By continuing and accelerating the carbon pollution of the atmosphere many people will die in the coming decades. Millions of people will lose their homes and livelihoods. There will be more people looking for asylum in other countries. Walls will not hold those pressures. Only a "very stable genius" can come up with so many bad decisions as we have seen from the Trump administration. As a next step we should bring back leaded gasoline and paint those shiny red MAGA hats with lead based paint. Lead damages the brain. Then all the MAGA hat wearers will be even easier to control through their lower level brain functions. Hate and Fear! And with enough lead spread in the environment, even the liberal resistance might be dumbed down enough to fall in line.⁷

I hope that nobody will tell the big chief in the Brown Cave that there is a tiny amount of platinum in the exhaust system of each modern car that has an internal combustion engine. He will probably rule that it is a terrible waste to hide this great treasure away and rather extract it and put it as rings or chains on his queen for all of his followers to enjoy. Actually that would be a win-win since the lead would damage the catalytic converters anyway.

⁷ As Trump said in Nevada in February 2016. "I love the poorly educated".

Another sad statistic is the high number of deaths from gun violence in the US. In 2017, 39,773 people died from gun-related injuries according to the CDC! Sixty percent of those were suicides. Now I am sure you remember 9/11. On 9/11, 2977 people were killed, plus the 19 hijackers. So if we look at the gun fatalities in the US we have a 9/11 every month of the year! If you then compare the response of the politicians in Washington to the 9/11 attacks to the response to the gun deaths it is astounding how the US is essentially sacrificing 39,000 lives a year to the false gods of individual freedom, and the gun lobby, without much thought and action to reduce this terrible loss. They even added a law which mandated that "none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) may be used to advocate or promote [gun control](#)."⁸

Aren't those lives worth saving? If politicians in Washington behave like that, I understand why people say that the opposite of progress is Congress.

I completely appreciate that people needed arms in the days of the wild west when they had to protect themselves against grizzly bears and a lot of other dangers.⁹ The government was very far away in those days and could not be relied upon to help in a timely manner. In today's world we might all be safer, at least in densely populated areas, if we relied on the Government for our protection. Trust the police! At least if you are not black, that might work. And the argument that individuals need weapons to protect themselves against the Government seems a little bit unrealistic if you think that you can only have something like an AR-15, or even a few of them with bump stocks, but the Government has tanks and helicopter gunships. In case you have a disagreement with the Government, working with the American Civil Liberties Union may be smarter and more successful than attacking with your own relatively limited firepower.

Happiness

Having the biggest economy in the world does not mean we have the happiest people on Earth. Despite all those Happy Meals! The US has a big economy thanks to people who spend money that they don't have on products that they don't need to impress neighbors whom they don't like. Human nature shares some of the genes with the peacocks, at least on the mental side. But we don't have their impressive feathers. Therefore, many of us are trying to get attention by showing off all the things that they (pretend) to own. Just look around you! Ferraris, Lamborghinis, and all the other exotic cars essentially exist because your hair and body cannot compete with the peacocks. There is even a reverse correlation. The more expensive the car, the more deficient the body inside. The ladies should better look for the men on the bicycles. Another reason why the economy in the US is so large is that the food industry is spending gobs and gobs of money to get young children hooked on their junk food. And once their bodies

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dickey_Amendment

⁹ The crooks we have today had ancestors, too. Just to pick a random example: If you look up one Frederick Trump on Wikipedia, you will learn that he headed to the Yukon gold rush. But he had no plans to do actual mining. That would have been hard work. According to Wikipedia: "In Bennett, Trump and Levin opened the Arctic Restaurant and Hotel, which offered fine dining, lodging and sex in a sea of tents." So there you have it: Trump Tower 1.0. Here is my advice: If you meet their descendents, be very careful. As our cavemen properties like braveness, the will to work hard, honesty or a sense of fairness and humility are encoded in our DNA, there may also be a crooked, screwy gene that slithers down the family tree.

break down the drug industry has the pills to keep them alive and suck all the money they can make out of them. Insulin, high blood pressure pills, pills against cholesterol, supplements over supplements, are creating a huge economy that is actually only the proof that our system is significantly broken, does not serve the basic needs of many of its stakeholders, and requires significant healing and repairs.

If we understood that all our children are a resource for our future we would help them to develop healthy eating habits and give them a good education so that they can be the most productive element in our society that they can be. And with these thoughts it would be easy to find a solution for the young men and women who arrived illegally in the US as young children and would like to become fully legal contributors to the great country where they grew up.¹⁰ The problem of DACA and the DREAMers is not that hard! They are assets and not liabilities. We have already paid for their school education. But this is apparently too difficult to understand for somebody who only knows how to get ahead in life on the backs of other people through scams and in bankruptcies by writing down other people's losses to avoid paying taxes.

The Fluent Puzzle of Life

In my view, happiness grows out of a feeling of meaning, purpose, and connectedness in life. Every person is like a puzzle piece with different skills and needs, and different activities that they enjoy. Personally I feel very blessed that I have interesting work where I can discover new truths, and my work is appreciated. Happy people are those who find a place in the puzzle of our society where they fit, are appreciated, and are a productive element. And all work is important. The trash collectors are as important as the CEOs. Actually probably even more important. I can easily live without the CEOs showing up to work for a few weeks. The trash collectors? No, thank you! But the captains of industry have risen to the top of a pyramid. Even if they are just lucky or make poor decisions they have golden parachutes to softly glide to retirement. The US has a very strong safety net! If you are in the 1%. Many of the rest of us are struggling to make ends meet and are only a medical emergency away from losing all our savings. Many work several jobs because life is so expensive and the income distribution has become so uneven.

At no time in human history has there been as much change in such a short time as we have experienced in the relatively few generations since the industrial revolution. Many purposeful jobs have changed massively or have been completely eliminated by automation. This has put great strain on our society. Human adaptability is pretty awesome, but still limited. Just take the coal miners as an example. As a society we need to work harder to help everybody to remain a productive element of society even when jobs go away. The solution is not to go back to the dirty past. Miners have paid a high price for the progress that our society has made thanks to their willingness to risk their lives going underground to extract the energy that has enabled a large part of the progress that we enjoy today. We need to work together to keep this progress alive without leaving the miners behind.

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deferred_Action_for_Childhood_Arrivals

Greed

I recently watched Ken Burns' documentary "The West". Not to go into too much detail, I actually watched it while I was preparing for my first colonoscopy.¹¹ The part with the Suprep where you sit and drink a large amount of fluid to flush and clean the gut. This is a vital organ similar to the one where US national security decisions are made these days; mine is just smaller. So while I was s¹²itting in one place and worked on my private security questions, I watched the documentary part where the California Gold Rush is described. Reviewing this phase in human history is an excellent reminder what a strong force greed exerts on us cavemen. People came from all over the country, and the world, to strike it rich quick. Many left their families behind. Many never came home because these were dangerous times. There was an intense competition for the best claims. A few miners struck it rich, and that was enough to keep attracting more and more people into this economic bubble.

In the end, the people who really became rich were the merchants¹³ who were selling the shovels, and all the other goods and services that the miners needed. This is another example that shows how our most basic primal urges can be exploited for financial gain by crafty, grafty operators.

You just have to look at the animal kingdom to see what males are willing to do to get lucky. This is a strong primal force in all male mammals (or mam-males?). That is probably one significant factor in many of the sexual misconduct cases by people who lack self control.

And people today are just as motivated to gamble on striking it rich as they did in 1849. Look at how people today buy tickets when the Mega Million lottery has grown to a billion dollars.

Nothing has changed. Maybe the risk is more contained.

Over all of human history humanity has extracted a large amount of gold out of the Earth and destroyed a lot of nature in the process. After much of the gold has been extracted and purified humans will bury it back under ground in their vaults. Future generations with more brain than greed may ask why humans did so much destruction to concentrate the gold when they actually did not really need it. To ensure the survival of our species this activity does not serve us well.

But there are beneficiaries from this destructive activity. As long as a buck can be made, business as usual will be more than happy to destroy the foundation of our existence. Let's lobby the government to allow more mountaintop removal mining and allow us to push all the discards into the surrounding valleys and waterways. The free market does not care about our future. It assumes there is an unlimited supply of resources, and fools to separate from their money.

Bitcoins

A good example to highlight the potential of the Internet to be used as an accelerator of crooked activities that do not serve humanity are Bitcoins. Bitcoins are yet another speculation

¹¹ Thankfully this benefit was covered in my corporate health insurance package due to the Affordable Care Act. But not all "benefits" are enjoyable!

¹² h

¹³ Including the guys who provided lodging and sex in a sea of tents.

mechanism that can be used to separate fools from their money, or as an anonymous and supposedly untraceable payment mechanism for extortion payments. Let me give you a personal example here. In 2018, I received an anonymous extortion letter in the snail mail where somebody wrote that he had learned my darkest secret, and if I did not pay him 1 Bitcoin, which was the equivalent of about \$8500 at that time, he would share this secret with my wife and neighbors. Now I live a pretty uninteresting life, at least from the perspective of a blackmailer. I am still living happily married to wife 1.0 and don't have any Stormy encounters in my past that could be used to blackmail me. With a quick search on the internet I was also able to confirm that these kinds of letters are sent out as scams frequently. They just try to see if something sticks. Here you see the bad and the good of the internet all in one place! It can be used to scam, but also be used to find the truth. So I just ignored the letter. Looking at the economics of this scam model the scammer had to create a personalized letter that had at least my name on it, print it, attach postage, and put it into the mail. So he had to invest about 50 cents per letter, hoping to find a victim that pays him \$8500. To break even at least one in 17,000 people must have a dark enough secret that they are willing to pay up if we ignore the cost of labor to handle all this. If you consider that the scammer is probably looking for a significant profit margin in this "business", his success rate must actually be significantly higher. The most hilarious part of that blackmail letter where the Bitcoin payment instructions. They ran actually over two pages, and in one paragraph the writer told me to watch out and only work with a Bitcoin payment facilitator who has a 99% positive rating to make sure I would not get scammed. What a caring person!

From an environmental standpoint Bitcoin is awful as it wastes a huge amount of electricity in the competitive process of mining.¹⁴ A recent estimate puts the electric power use at about 7 Gigawatt. That is essentially the equivalent of 7 large nuclear power stations. That is 0.25% of global electricity production to run a gambling/speculation/blackmail payment system. And of course, when Wall Street sees a lucrative way to separate people from their money they are not far behind to get on the train.¹⁵ Volatility is their lifeblood. And even Facebook wants to create its own Cyber currency! Just. Say. No!

The underlying blockchain technology could have definitely beneficial applications for example in securing voting tallies in our election system. But the politicians in Washington, at least some of them, are not really interested in running fair elections. In 2019, Mitch McConnell, the Senate Majority Leader, has blocked Senate voting on election security legislation for a long time. Now if just one politician is against a piece of legislation in a democracy that is part of the system and it can be overruled by the majority. Unfortunately, in the US Senate, the majority leader can stall legislation forever if he wants to. You may remember how Moscow Mitch¹⁶ stalled the Supreme

¹⁴

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/7/4/20682109/bitcoin-energy-consumption-annual-calculation-cambridge-index-cbeci-country-comparison>

¹⁵ Just look for an article at forbes.com dated 9/24/2019, titled "Wall Street Paves The Way For Bitcoin To Become 'People's Currency'"

¹⁶ Once in a while I have to drop the level of my writing to a Presidential level, to make sure everybody can understand me. Name calling is the most Presidential act that we can expect from the Brown House in these days. Shifty Schiff, Crooked Hillary, Low Energy Joe, Low IQ Maxine Waters, are all childish

Court nomination of Merrick Garland after he was nominated by President Obama on March 16, 2016. Mitch refused to have a vote on the floor in the Senate so that the next president could fill that vacancy. Garland would have been most likely approved as he was well qualified. Instead, the minority elected President Trump put Neil Gorsuch on the Supreme Court. It is shameless and undemocratic acts like this which confirm the bad intentions and corrupt behavior of individuals in the position of power. So here is my wish for 2020. May the US get a Senate Majority Leader who follows the spirit of the Constitution, acts in the best interest of democracy and the country, and holds up his oath of office. No crooks need to apply!

Needs and Wants

At this point, I want to share a few thoughts especially with the richer ones among you. To live a decent, modern, comfortable life there is a certain amount of food, water, energy, and safe clean living space required for each human being. We also need education and health care to move the modern society forward¹⁷. The interesting part about us humans is how many of us will relentlessly work to get more and more stuff beyond our basic needs. Keeping up with the Joneses! Many of us appear to have an insatiable appetite to grow their pile more and more. And to make it worse, the rich will start to corrupt the politicians so that they can continue to grow their assets beyond any reasonable point. How many vacation homes, jets, sports cars, etc. can you really enjoy? Our life is limited even with the best healthcare. And then they hide their assets in foreign countries and shell companies to avoid paying any taxes in the place that protects them. Let the chumps pay for the military. If you just create a big pile of money and stuff for yourself there is very little legacy that future people will remember. To me this looks pointless and meaningless. To quote Jesus here: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Imagining this image, going to heaven looks like Mission Impossible for the rich. Maybe that is why they don't even try. Before Luther they could just buy themselves a seat in the first row.

At this point, I would like to appeal to the better angels in the rich people: Think how you can use your money and influence to help move humanity on a sustainable path rather than just growing your personal piles. How many billions more do you want? You could create a true legacy with a constructive role in human history instead. And flying to Mars does not look like a good alternative to the preservation of Earth. The New Mexico desert is much more hospitable than the red planet. And who knows if the Martians are friendlier and warmer than ICE¹⁸.

Humans Explosive Fertility

Recently, I heard some interesting thoughts on how the part of human nature that makes us form small, stable family units with one father and mother has helped us to multiply much faster

names that our Insulter in Chief likes to use to distract from himself and all the trouble he is in. The funny part of all those adjectives is that he must get the ideas to them when he stands in front of the mirror! Projection! "Magic mirror on the wall, who is the worst president of all?"

¹⁷ If we do not get smart this is just the stampede over the cliff.

¹⁸ See <http://ice.gov>. Wouldn't it be nice to live in a country where they don't throw ICE into the visitors faces upon arrival at an airport? Who came up with that hostile acronym? Don't we want to welcome tourists to grow our economy?

than related bipeds. In other bipeds typically the mother is the only caregiver for the baby. Females will not conceive for a few years until their baby is mature enough to let go. In humans, a woman can get pregnant every year, so the number of babies born per female can be much higher when the father helps with some of the care. And does some other things that we don't want to talk about here, in case you want to share the gospel with your children. In the stone age, this high fertility rate helped us to outgrow the chimpanzees, but it was mostly balanced by a brutally high mortality rate which resulted in an overall small growth rate for humans on earth. I remember a documentary about Papua Newguinea where people still live essentially as in the stone age. There was a man with two women forming a family. Of the 9 children which were born to them only three survived. They would not even give a name to a child until it was at least six months old. Why bother? Can you imagine that? It must have been really painful to lose children all the time, and there was no Prozac! Stone age life must have been pretty depressing. Today, with modern medicine, clean water, and good hygiene, the death of a child is fairly rare. In the stone age it was more likely than not. However, if we combine modern medicine with uncontrolled human fertility this creates an exponential tsunami of human beings overrunning all habitable space on earth. If you look at the actual population growth over the last 300 years this is essentially what we see.¹⁹ And many of the fellow creatures who shared Noah's arc with his family face extinction because Noah's offspring are taking away all the space that they want. One noteworthy reason why the people in New Guinea are still living like we did in the stone age is that there are no 4 legged large mammals on the island that could be domesticated. The number of animal species that humans were able to domesticate is actually quite small.²⁰ Finding those animals about 11,000 years ago enabled for the first time that significantly fewer people could provide all the food that their community needed. That freed up the resources which could start working on our relentless march to world domination. Shouldn't we treat these fellow creatures with some respect and kindness for the great services they provide to us?

Nature

I love nature! Unfortunately it is suffering due to our interference. Recently, on my bike ride to work, I found a redtail hawk lying on the side of the trail. It did not show signs of injury. I thought it was dead and stopped to take a picture. Then I noticed that it was still breathing and called the Animal Patrol in our police department. An officer showed up 20 minutes later and carried the animal, which showed no injuries, away to get it to a veterinarian. Sadly she texted me later that the beautiful raptor passed away before she could reach the vet. The bird probably died because it ate a poisoned rat. It was very sad. This story shows in a nutshell how human activities destroy nature every day.

Every second of our life, mother nature sustains us with oxygen for our bodies. It is created by plants that break up carbon dioxide using sunlight for their photosynthesis. Without clean water we are doomed in days. Thankfully rains replenish our aquifers with clean water. If you live in the right places. Using some of that water, plants grow and provide food directly for us or our

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population

²⁰ cow, goat, sheep, chicken, horse, pig, dog and cat

food. Many people in the world actually do not have clean water and have to walk long distances to get some. Or their water is polluted by lead. That is even in the US a significant problem for many communities.

Modern life in the US has made it easy to find water and food for most people. Our cavemen ancestors had to spend almost all of their day looking for their next meal. Today only a small number of farmers is producing all the food that we need. That frees up a lot of resources to work on other problems like new technologies or entertainment. Many times the contribution of our farmers to our wellbeing is underappreciated. And they become pawns in the “easy winnable” trade wars.

In our modern society the high agricultural productivity is significantly attributable to the heavy use of pesticides and herbicides like Roundup. The Trump Administration is eager to roll back protections against bad insecticides like the Neonicotinoids. They were banned under President Obama²¹ to protect our indispensable pollinators, the bees. I don’t know why Trump hates the bees so much. Maybe because they are productive, and hardworking. Trump’s favorite bird is probably the cuckoo. He might say that the cuckoo is smart because it uses other birds effort to raise his young. Similarly to how Trump said that he is smart because he is not paying income taxes.

Instagram Mobs and Tourism

The world has some very precious places, which can only be visited and experienced by a small number of people. Thanks to the Internet and Instagram some of these treasures are overrun by tourists to the point that all the magic is gone. Examples for this sad phenomenon are the Colorado Horseshoe Bend in Arizona²², or the spectacular poppy bloom that we had in Spring 2019 in Lake Elsinore.²³ These examples show the harmful impact that humans have when they invade nature in unmanageable crowds. Sadly we kill what we pretend to love. Is there a better way?

Engaging yourself in your local community

I think a better model is one where we all become active in our local communities to protect and access local natural resources in a sustainable way and share special or spectacular moments with each other through the Internet. Today you can buy a spectacular size flat screen TV for less than the cost of an intercontinental airline ticket. And with these displays we can then immerse ourselves into the best photos and videos from places far away without the cost and pollution of air travel. We would also avoid the frustration of experiencing an overcrowded and degraded place that does not look at all like the picture perfect moment that drew us there. I have worked as a volunteer for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy since 2011. In that role I guide groups through the protected Open Space on the former Irvine Ranch where our visitors can

²¹ The one at the top of the hill, from where it is downhill to Trump.

²² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horseshoe_Bend_\(Arizona\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horseshoe_Bend_(Arizona))

²³ Search for: “Poppy apocalypse! California town forced to shut down a super bloom hillside viewing after being overrun by ‘Disneyland size crowds’ of flower crazed tourists trying to pose for photos.”

essentially enjoy an experience similar to a National Park, minus the crowds. Sign-ups are free at <http://letsgooutside.org>.

I want to also give a quick shout out to the International Mountain Bicycling Association²⁴. They have plans to develop mountain biking trails close to many communities in their “More trails close to home” initiative, so that young and old can enjoy bicycling in nature close to home. Think about how nice it will be to be able to do fun outdoor activities close to home, and in the evening you share your special moments with people around the world. No jet lag or jet fuel required. If many people changed their habits, initiatives like this could make a big difference in saving resources for future generations.

Powerful Stories

The history of mankind is also a history of powerful stories. Think about the Bible, the Iliad or Odyssey in the Greek mythology, just to name a couple examples that come to my mind. All cultures have stories like this. As our ancestors were sitting in their caves they had to develop their language in lockstep with their technological advancement. Without good language skills our children cannot develop good thinking skills. That is one reason why an advanced society needs to provide an excellent education to all its children, and not just the children of the wealthy. Complex thoughts cannot be expressed in 140 characters, or even 280.

When President Trump is unleashed from the teleprompter he usually releases a stream of consciousness²⁵ that is hard to make any sense of. Apparently, having a “very, very large a brain”²⁶ and the best words does not help if you don’t use the first and can’t put the latter together in a meaningful order.

In those great stories early humans also captured the rules they set for themselves on how to live with each other in peace, at least within their tribe. Think about the 10 commandments. In the beginning the rules were kept simple so that everybody could learn all the rules quickly and follow them. You should not have to be a rocket scientist to be able to understand the rules that govern your society.

In today’s societies most rules have exploded into quite unwieldy monsters. What does all this complexity do? It keeps a significant and smart proportion of the population busy with activities which do not make our life better. If the rules were simple enough that a caveman could apply them, all those smart resources could be deployed to work on getting humanity on a sustainable path to our future. However, these groups (accountants, tax lawyers, IRS workers) are now entrenched special interests that will fight against any change to their racket. As humanity we would be way better off if these super complex laws and rules would go the way coal did. But there are other special interest (the rich!) who like those complex rules as it enables them to hide their unfair loopholes and tax escape hatches underneath.

²⁴ www.imba.com

²⁵ Or better: unconsciousness

²⁶ <https://www.cnbc.com/video/2018/09/27/trump-says-china-respects-him-for-his-very-very-large-brain.html>

If you get your big flatscreen TV²⁷, I like to recommend to you the nature documentaries narrated by David Attenborough.²⁸ With modern technology these are truly spectacular and provide wonderful insights into many natural mysteries. You would never get this insight by traveling to those locations yourself, as the pro teams literally spend months finding the right spots and capturing these unique moments. And you will experience really great storytelling that will get to your emotional side. One of the documentaries that I cannot forget starts with a family of geese. To keep their nest safe from predators the parents build it about 100 yards on a completely inaccessible cliff. Thanks to this bastion they are able to hatch five goslings. This is where the drama starts. There is no food on the cliff. So the goslings have to come down to the ground. But they cannot fly. So the parents fly to a lower level and call the goslings to come down. They follow their parents calls. In the documentary you can see them, in slow motion, one after the other, pushing over the edge, reflexively flapping their fluffy and ineffective little wings. They waddle their feet. Essentially they are now playing the lottery of life. The air friction on their fluffy feathers slow the fall a bit, but we see them bouncing against the cliff, some tumbling, hitting their little heads and then crashing on the ground. In the filmed episode only two or three of the five survive this first challenge in their life. It is super intense, and heart wrenching to see! It is impossible for us not to root for the ducklings to succeed, but nature takes its toll. The geese as a species have been successful, but the cost to the ducklings is high. Human struggle was just like that in the stone ages. Most children died very young!

I like to draw yet another parallel between those ducklings and us. Our ancestors have bestowed on us all their technological advancements. We have now hatched and need to start our life with the super large group that we have become thanks to all the great care of our forebears. If we act smart we will be able to figure out a sustainable path to the ground where we all can live, or we continue business as usual, ignoring the danger and problems in our current relationship with the environment and jump over the cliff. Who of us will survive? Maybe the rich think that they will survive in their gated communities.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Since I work in technology and artificial intelligence is the buzzword that is all over the news, I want to share some thoughts on it here. When we look at humans recent development there must have been a lot of intelligence at work so that we can now enjoy all those amazing devices that people could not even dream about 200 years ago. But all this intelligence sits inside of our cavemen bodies. So it is subject to pain, shame, fear, love, and hate, just to name a few forces. We are not just a computer program. Our response to many of our emotions is oftentimes not even rational and rather hard coded. Fight or flight is a reflex. If the goal of artificial intelligence is to recreate human behavior all those irrational components will have to be somehow included in the model. And then there is herd mentality where the behavior of individuals changes because of group dynamics. Just look at the dot com bubble or the housing bubble that imploded in 2008. If we apply economic principles AI will be a success if the developers can make more money with it than they invested in the development.

²⁷ I knew you had several of them already!

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Attenborough_filmography

If humans were really 100% intelligent they would probably not spend money they don't have to buy objects that are larger than they need to impress their neighbors. Maybe there needs to be a new research topic on Artificial Impulsivity? We can even reuse the acronym!

My Will; When I hand over the spoon.

In Germany we sometimes use the saying "Er hat den Löffel abgeben" which literally means "He handed over the spoon". But its meaning is really that he passed away. Here is the story behind this meaning:

In the old days people made spoons out of wood. Now you can imagine, with the tools they had in those days a spoon that was cut out of a piece of wood had many rough edges. Those rough edges were smoothed out over the use of the spoon over the life of its owner. And when the owner passed on, he also passed on his now smooth spoon to one of his heirs. So this spoon was much better than a new spoon and that made the recipient happy. So when somebody passed on the spoon this was also a happy event, aside of course of losing a loved one.

Many years ago I went to a seminar about wills and trusts, which are essentially a plan how ones spoons should be distributed after we hand them over. One line that stuck in my mind was this: "Who fails to plan, plans to fail." So as I am sitting here now I realize that I have been procrastinating²⁹ on this for all these years, and I want to take the opportunity to at least make a baseline plan that I may revise later. So if no later plan is created I like you my family to follow the below instructions.

A medical power of attorney is also part of such a plan. So let's start with that.

Christian's medical power of attorney

In case I become mentally so incapacitated that I am not able to make any "lutkemeyeresque"³⁰ jokes, and I do not show signs that my mental capacity is still in this world (e.g. severe dementia), I do not want my body to be kept alive with intensive or intrusive care.

I teach a Mountain Bike Skills Clinic. One of the important lessons to learn in biking is that the body will follow to where we focus. For example, if you are riding on a trail and there is a cactus on the side, your chances of riding into the cactus go up exponentially when you look at it. Look where you want to go! So if you ride along a cliff, don't look down the cliff!

Applying this good riding habit to the end of my life: If you see that my focus has left this world, please do not hold my body back from following it.

I would be happy to have my body cremated and the ashes returned to nature, preferentially at Cathedral Rock in the Irvine Ranch Protected Open Space.

²⁹ Procrastination is apparently also a very human property. I am sure many of you will connect with this.

³⁰ A very dear friend and coworker for 16 years created this term to describe my jokes. They are funny, with truth that may sting a bit. After reading the pages up to now you probably have a good idea how these work. Not everybody gets them. That is what I mean when I selected "The Truth. With Humor!" (<http://TheTruthWithHumor.com>)

Christian's Family Will

In case of an accident that takes all of my immediate family members from this world together³¹ at the same time I hereby declare that the sole beneficiary to all the assets that the lottery of life handed over to me will be the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, unless a newer plan will be developed. IRC, please use my inheritance to continue your excellent work to connect the people to the land. I have enjoyed the privilege of guiding guests through the Open Space for many years, and many thoughts and ideas in my Gospel appeared and have been refined while riding and enjoying special places like Cathedral Rock, Fremont Canyon, Lizard Rock, or Dripping Springs, just to name a few.

As the executor of this will I select my friend who created the term "lutkemeyeresque". I hope he will do this final favor to me in the unfortunate event this would be needed.

In case I pass away while my wife and/or children are still around, the survivor(s) will inherit all of my spoons. I hope they will use them wisely to the benefit of getting humanity on a sustainable path. Please keep your focus where mine was!³² Heads-up, pedals level, weight back!³³

Hope

Seeing the activism of young people like Greta Thunberg gives me hope. When Martin Luther published his 95 Theses 502 years ago, the technology of Gutenberg's printing press boosted the distribution of his ideas and ultimately drove fundamental changes in the society in those days. Today we have the Internet. I have had a small part in developing parts of its infrastructure. Now I hope that the Internet can be harnessed to promote positive change to hearts, minds, and our behaviors to save the future of our children and fight the systemic corruption and misinformation that is happening in many places.

The roots of this corruption are also part of the human DNA. Who would not prefer a friend over a stranger?

We should only entrust people with great power who have shown strong ethics. There needs to be transparency into their finances so that we know they work for all of us and not just their personal enrichment or to fill their hotels. Or tents. There must be good rules against nepotism

³¹ We travel together to visit family in different places like Florida or Germany. If we end up in one of these Boeing planes with software glitches or cracked pickle forks, I want to make sure my spoons have a good destiny to serve humanity in a beneficial way. Or we could just get killed by a wrong way driver on the Freeway which almost happened earlier this year on the 405.

³² In case you wonder why I am making these plans now: If you have followed the impeachment investigation into the Ukraine quid pro quo you have heard that non-political White House witnesses are receiving death threats. Since my writings here speak truth to power I want to be prepared. I don't plan to fail this time. We don't know if the truth, or partisanship will win in the Senate trial. Talking to some of my Trump-leaning family members I realize that they have not received a lot of the facts that are already available like the transcript of the "perfect" call that was released by the president himself. At this point, after the testimony from the non-political White House staff, I have not seen any exculpatory evidence from the White House. Just stonewalling. That looks guilty, doesn't it?

³³ Our mantra at the IRC MTB Skills Clinic on how to be ready for whatever the trails will throw at you. And cover your brakes!

and selling access. And “We, the People” must hold all politicians accountable to these high standards, regardless if they are on our own or on the other team. If they just think about themselves they are not on any team! Unless you are part of the team of crooks!

Respect

As we interact with each other we can earn respect. If somebody holds an office and we don't know him, he deserves respect for the office that he holds, at least initially. Once in office he needs to carry himself accordingly. He needs to show respect to his office, the people who have entrusted him with it, and the entire system that it is part of. If we look at President Trump from this angle we already saw that he does not show respect to the US Presidency when he was promulgating the birther myth against his predecessor, President Obama. And every day that he has been in office he is lying to all the people in the US incessantly. Only that the lies are now called alternative facts! Anybody who is defending the lies and the liar should think about the future when the truth that the emperor has no clothes will become impossible to refute, and the caveman inside is revealed even to the last chump.

Only I can fix it!

At his inauguration, President Trump boasted: “Only I can fix it”! Only a megalomaniac cave chief can say such words and believe them. Looking at almost three years of his Administration no significant moves have been done to solve the big challenges of our time. He claimed that he and his followers have created a movement. I fully agree with that! He created a stampede in his base that has destroyed their individual reasoning skills and makes them behave like they have been infected by his rabies bite. Climate change is threatening our future. The gap between rich and poor is constantly growing. The US healthcare sector is metastasizing like a cancer in the economy, providing rich returns to a few well connected, at the expense of the many. Far more people are dying of opium addictions and gun violence than in any terrorist attacks; many political leaders do nothing about it. You know which party is captive to the NRA. Special interests are greasing the skids to our demise with their oil to make a quick buck. I do believe that Trump is ‘The Chosen One’. He has essentially revealed for all the world to see that what used to be the Republican Party has collectively lost their minds. After they nominated the Caribou Barbie as John McCain’s vice presidential candidate it was clear to a neutral observer that there were forces working in the background that were preventing the best and brightest to become leaders. Donald Trump is the culmination of these forces. They put a caveman into the White House, in a suite and with a tie that is too long. The special interests hoped that they could control the cavechild to do their bidding while he drives his followers into a stampede and makes them blind to the direction that they are driven to. They are running to the cliff like lemmings. Now we are looking at a shattered foreign policy, betrayed former allies killed by our Nato partner Turkey, and a black hole at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue that has sucked up all ethics and integrity. Or maybe it is a brown hole? If the White House was in Africa Trump would have said that this is a s#lithole Administration a long time ago.

We can fix it!

In contrast, I believe very strongly that only “WE THE PEOPLE” can fix the challenges that the whole world faces by collaborating together on a world wide scale to move human activities to a sustainable path where we are in harmony and balance with nature as it supports us. We have technology that can help us on this way if we use it wisely and are willing to make drastic changes to how the economy works today. The clock is ticking. We have only a very short time to brace for impact! Our survival as a species depends on us collaborating better than ever before within our country, and beyond our borders, with all the countries in the world. We all breathe the same air. Pollution cannot be stopped with walls. Ultimately every one of us has to make individual decisions that will move us collectively in the right direction. This has to happen very quickly. If we rely on the mechanism of evolution to provide corrective action it will most likely result in a large scale extinction of humans and most other species as they exist today. The world will continue to spin, and the sun will continue to rise, but we as a species will be culled as we were smart enough to become a global threat to our own sustainability, but not smart enough to control our cavemen impulses and converge onto a sustainable path.

We are well on our way to a global catastrophe. Don’t ask yourselves what the world can do for you. Ask yourselves what you can do for the world.

The only constant in life is change. If we don’t change our way of life, our way of life will be changed by Mother Nature’s wrath! We cannot stop firestorms with a human stampede. It is time to be proactive on these problems. The lag inherent in reactive behavior will doom our children’s future.

We need to replace the divisive politics of today with politics that are based on truth, mutual respect, fair laws, the acceptance of the rules in the system, and accountability of our elected leaders. We need to call out any transgressions on our own team as well as the other. Justifying gross misdeeds by small transgressions on the other side has resulted in a spiral of transgressions and ultimately lawlessness in the highest office of the US.

Please share this message! Words have consequences. I hope mine will. It is high time to start a productive discussion among all stakeholders in our society to create a fair and sustainable path forward that preserves nature’s beauty and resources for future generations. The cavemen politics must end as they destroy our children’s future!

Ronald Reagan said in 1991: “I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there is purpose and worth to each and every life.” He chose it as the final message for his grave. I really hope he is right!

So here is my final appeal! Do not cave in to the caveman or cavewoman within you! Love can trump the Trump in all of us! Humanity is doomed if we are not able to change our hearts and minds, and our everyday behaviors, and let special interests divide us! The future of Earth is in our hands. There is no Planet-B. The technology is there to massively reduce the amount of oil we use. I was able to cut 90% of gasoline use with a PHEV and solar panels and the investment to do it paid off after just four years. What are you waiting for? We are all the chosen ones as

we, together, can save our children's future. Please share this message and think about how you can help to put ourselves on a sustainable path for the benefit of future generations! And save money at the same time!

Warm Regards,

Christian Lutkemeyer



