

OUR NATION'S CRISIS: HOW WE GOT INTO IT – AND HOW TO GET OUT

by Glen Anderson in March 2017

Thoughtful people know that the U.S. is now suffering perhaps our most serious crisis since the Civil War. The White House resident shows he is grossly ignorant, psychologically unstable, dishonest, corrupt and cruel. Americans and people worldwide are worrying about how to get out of this mess.

The next few pages provide insightful answers to three questions:

(1) How did we get into this mess? (pages 1-6)

(2) What's going on? (pages 6-7)

(3) How can we get out of this mess? (pages 7-end)

(1) UNDERLYING PROBLEMS AND A CONFLUENCE OF TRENDS LED TO THIS CRISIS:

Trump himself is not the only problem. His first few weeks in office confirmed millions of people's worst fears. But we must recognize also that he is also a symptom of underlying problems and systems that have been getting worse for a long time. So **it's not enough to stop Trump himself. We must also fix the underlying problems and systems.**

For decades the U.S. has suffered from underlying problems including racism, sexism, anti-gay bias, anti-immigrant bias, ignorance of foreign policy, American Exceptionalism, big business's greed and corruption, abuse of our environment and climate, economic inequality between the richest persons and everyone else, and mainstream media's simplistic reporting.

In order to stop the Trumpism that has captured the U.S. government, we must recognize the underlying systemic problems that have resulted in this blatant symptom. We must identify, resist and roll back those systemic problems that led to Trump's power. Demonizing one person can distract us from addressing the serious underlying problems

and symptoms that allowed Trumpism to dominate the federal government.

Besides addressing the **long-term** problems (discussed below in this essay's **PART (1)**), we must also take **immediate** actions. This document's **PART (3)** proposes a variety of remedies for getting out of our current mess.

Immediate actions include (but are not limited to):

- Affirm America's best values and rally people to support and build upon those – and oppose attacks on them.
- Expose the lies and publicize the truth to all people across the political spectrum.
- Use satire, the arts, and creativity to expose what's bad and propose good alternatives.
- Organize at the grassroots to resist what's bad and build nonviolent movements for good alternatives.

Our current crisis resulted from a number of long-term problems. These include (but are not limited to) the ones summarized below and through page 6:

Economics:

Big American oil companies have always powerfully influenced U.S. foreign policy. When Trump nominated the CEO of ExxonMobil to be Secretary of State – the cabinet official in charge of U.S. foreign policy – this made the corruption blatantly obvious. Oil companies have had too much power for too long. Both political parties have been yielding

to oil companies. (See the section on pages 4-5 about **Two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties.**)

When Trump appoints big business insiders to positions of power, this is nothing new. But liberals who allowed Democrats to take such actions are only now aroused by such abuse. The problems are underlying, systemic, and bi-

partisan. (Again, see the section below about **Two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties.**)

For decades, extremely rich people and giant corporations have become excessively wealthy, while the middle and lower classes have failed to progress. Since the mid-

Loss, fear, and anger:

The 2016 election season exposed much of the fear, anger and divisiveness that were already existing in American society. Over the years – and especially in 2016 – some politicians have exploited and manipulated people’s pain, fear and anger toward scapegoating other vulnerable people. People who were already hurting in various ways were further antagonized, traumatized and polarized.

This will distract and prevent our nation from solving the underlying problems. Rather, this cynical exploitation and manipulation will escalate the already serious problems with more dangers for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, governmental corruption – and for democracy itself. Many serious problems that had already existed will get much worse. We are in for hard times.

In order to resist and roll back the problems, we need to better understand the sources of those problems. Very often the emotions people express are actually rooted in very different (sometimes unconscious) experiences and emotions. Some politicians are clever at manipulating people’s emotions in order to serve their own political purposes.

For example, Lyndon Johnson once said, “If you can convince the lowest white man that he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice that you’re picking his pocket.”

The vast majority of Americans – from the middle class on down – have been suffering economically for several decades, and they know it. Economic elites and politicians of both big parties have been skewing the economy to make the rich even richer at everyone else’s expense. But instead of admitting this, some politicians have been blaming scapegoats (*e.g.*, immigrants and women taking white American men’s jobs) for their own political advantage.

Many Americans feel economically vulnerable. Giant corporations gobble up locally owned businesses, close our factories, and export our jobs. Giant corporations raise prices and reduce quality and service. In many ways, people experience far less control over their lives than before. This causes anxieties and feelings of loss, fear, and anger.

1970s the gap in income and the gap in wealth (assets) have widened enormously because of laws and policies supported by both political parties. Economic inequality is well documented and is a major factor in the public’s sense of **loss, fear, and anger** (see immediately below).

Ordinary Americans have been disempowered in other ways too, which worsen our feelings of loss fear and anger. Services that Americans used to control through democracy (electing public school boards, electing local governments to operate public water utilities, etc.) have been privatized, so we can’t even control many of our basic services. Extremely rich people and giant corporations fund politicians’ electoral campaigns and initiative campaigns, so those economic elites want to “privatize” even more, and so they are deceiving voters and subverting democracy itself. Our environment and climate are in severe danger. Our fears are triggered and we are humiliated as we go about our daily lives, such as waiting in long lines at airports for screening passengers.

Among the world’s nations, the U.S. used to rank at the top in terms of economic well-being, health, education, and so forth. But now the U.S. is far down the list in these rankings. Americans know from our own experience that we have sunk low.

Americans have been abused in many ways, so we have perfectly legitimate reasons to be afraid and angry. We have valid reasons to feel afraid about our environmental safety, economic survival, civil rights, and so forth. However, clever politicians have tapped into those underlying fears and deceived the public by scapegoating people who are even more vulnerable. (Remember Lyndon Johnson’s insight, “If you can convince the lowest white man that he’s better than the best colored man, he won’t notice that you’re picking his pocket.”)

During the long 2016 campaign season, some politicians exploited people’s fears about other demographic groups, and many politicians tried to make us feel afraid about their political opponents. None of that fear-mongering was actually proposing constructive solutions for public policy. It simply smacked of nasty campaigning. And it converted people’s fears into anger against vulnerable scapegoats.

We must understand these underlying dynamics in order to understand our current political crisis. Also, we must publicize these insights in order to help the public devise and push for smart strategies to turn things around.

Despite having the world's biggest, most violent military, Americans still feel afraid in the world:

While the section above dealt with Americans feeling loss and fear regarding a variety of economic and social realities, people also feel loss and fear about the U.S.'s current situation in the world.

For more than a quarter of a century since the Soviet Union collapsed, the U.S. has been the world's only superpower. We have thousands of nuclear weapons, a gigantic military force, the world's most modern and deadly weapons, and 700 or 800 military bases in other nations. In 2016 the U.S. made military attacks (including drone attacks) on many nations, deployed elite "special forces" to 138 nations, and persisted as the world's #1 seller of military weapons to other countries. **But despite all of this extreme militarism, Americans still do not feel safe.**

Despite all of this, Trump's campaign further provoked and exploited people's feelings of insecurity, and he pledged to significantly increase U.S. militarism.

Why do people feel afraid?

It's because ultimately **the whole notion of military defense is a sham!** All of the U.S.'s nuclear weapons and gigantic military failed to prevent a few guys with box cutters from hijacking airliners and attacking the U.S. on September 11, 2001. Their targets were the very headquarters of the U.S. military (the Pentagon) and the symbolic headquarters of global capitalism (the "World Trade Center").

Indeed, it is nuclear weapons themselves that threaten us. But clever politicians exploit our fear for their own electoral advantage. So in 1960 when John Kennedy was campaigning against Richard Nixon (who had been Dwight Eisenhower's Vice President), Kennedy falsely claimed that Eisenhower/Nixon had failed to build enough nuclear weapons to challenge the Soviet Union and promised to build more to fill this (non-existent) "missile gap."

During the 1980 campaign Ronald Reagan lied about an alleged U.S. shortage of weapons. Now Trump has done this too. This recurring theme fools voters because – although many Americans are afraid – the real reasons are the exact **opposite** of what the candidates claim!

As the 9-11 attacks showed, nuclear weapons and other U.S. military power cannot protect us from acts of terrorism, and indeed, the U.S.'s "war on terror" has only provoked more terrorism and spread it into more nations. The U.S.'s militarism is like a dog chasing its tail, only worse, because instead of merely circular, the dynamic is escalating. Every time a U.S. soldier attacked an Iraqi family's home – and every time a U.S. drone killed someone in any of the many countries the U.S. drones are attacking – we radicalized their

neighbors and extended family members and recruited more people who want to hurt the U.S.

Indeed, ISIS cheered Trump's election and his rhetoric and policies calling for a war on Islam, because Trump is feeding directly into ISIS' propaganda and strategy. ISIS proclaims that the world is waging a global war against Islam, so ISIS recruits people worldwide to fight back. Under both Obama and Trump, the U.S. military did exactly what ISIS's propaganda claimed, thereby giving credibility to ISIS. Trump and his appointees are further helping ISIS.

Actually, the American people's sense of loss and fear stem from the fact that the world no longer allows the U.S. to boss it around. The U.S. Empire has lost respect and credibility. After World War II the U.S. promoted itself as the beacon of liberty and democracy and human rights. But for many decades – under presidents and Congresses of both political parties – the U.S.'s actual foreign policy and business exploitation have taught the world not to trust the U.S.

Also, World War II was the last real war the U.S. actually won (but we prevailed in Panama and Grenada). Korea was a stalemate. The U.S. has lost the Vietnam war and all of the other wars for the past 70+ years. No wonder Trump campaigned to "make America great again." But that's impossible even with the U.S. having thousands of nuclear weapons and the world's most violent military. Military "victory" and "security" and "greatness" are all shams. Military overkill cannot "make America great."

I develop this theme further on pages 6-7 in this essay's **PART 2 – "WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE NATION AND U.S. EMPIRE WE HAVE KNOWN WERE NOT SUSTAINABLE."**

See much more information about this in the .pdf document titled "**De-Militarize U.S. Foreign Policy Workshop Handouts**" on the "Issues" page of www.olympiafor.org

Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, people still assumed that the U.S./USSR Cold War would continue. Almost nobody foresaw the quick collapse of the Soviet Union.

Likewise, despite mounting evidence that the bloated U.S. Empire is finished, almost nobody in the U.S. is actually predicting the collapse of the U.S. as the world's superpower, but that too can happen quickly when Americans and people elsewhere lose confidence in the U.S. This collapse of U.S.'s unrealistic superpower status could collapse as quickly as the bloated stock market crashed in 1929 and led to the Great Depression.

Americans do not consciously recognize this reality, but it exists below the surface and gets expressed as a futile

“wishful thinking” attempt to believe we can “make America great again.”

This is what Proverbs 16:18 refers to as the pride that goes before a fall. The myth of American “greatness” is a long-standing scam, since our nation has failed to deliver on our self-praising rhetoric. (See pages 6-7)

This self-serving myth is part of what led to led to electing Trump, who is a notorious con-man and huckster. He repeatedly promised greatness in his business dealings, but

Corporate-owned news media and the dumbing-down of America:

You would think that journalism would help Americans understand what’s going on. But mainstream news media are giant capitalist businesses that seek profit, not truth. They failed us during the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war, when they accepted at face value the Bush Administration’s lies that Saddam Hussein was building “weapons of mass destruction” (WMDs), even though much more credible sources debunked those claims as not true. Likewise, during the long 2016 campaign season, mainstream news media failed to expose the lies and seek the truth. Instead they focused on trivia instead of reality. Although some mainstream media are calling out the lies, many others are “normalizing” the bizarre and cruel policies without calling them out. We can’t count on mainstream media to save us.

Corporate-owned news media – newspapers, broadcasters, internet companies – are not committed to informing the public or supporting democracy. Nor are they committed to promoting the truth and exposing lies. Corporate-owned news media exist in order to sell advertising and generate profits. Les Moonves, the CEO of CBS, emphasized that political advertising produces big profits. *The Intercept’s* Lee Fang reported on Feb. 29, 2016, that Moonves had just a few days before told the Morgan Stanley Technology, Media and Telecom Conference, “Man, who would have expected the ride we’re all having right now? This is pretty amazing.... Who would have thought that this circus would come to town? But, you know – it may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS. That’s all I got to say. So what can I say? It’s you know, the money’s rolling in, and this is fun.”

Nearly all Americans – in both big political parties and swing voters alike – are so thoroughly enmeshed and trapped in cultural and political myths and misconceptions that they cannot see what is really happening.

Let’s pay attention to what is really happening, apart from Trump’s simplistic, snarky tweets and other quotations. Trump has been saying outrageous things that the media promote and people react to. That puts Trump in charge and puts us in a reactive, defensive position. **Please do not**

he repeatedly cheated his employees and customers, failed to deliver on his promises in many ways, and went bankrupt several times.

But instead of demonizing one person, let’s recognize that this “great” scam is the logical result of a nation that has deceived itself about many things for many decades. He is a symptom of corrupt, deceptive, egocentric problems we must fix in our national functioning.

let outrageous communications distract us from working on the real political issues. This is like magicians who distract people’s attention so they don’t see what they are actually doing or pickpockets who brush against one of your shoulders to distract you while they steal your wallet from the opposite back pocket.

Throughout the 2016 campaign season, Trump spewed lies and hatred. His track record in business showed that he routinely cheated people. Mainstream news media could and should have exposed these, but they chose not to expose them. There is no reason to think they mainstream media will hold Trump accountable now or in the future. Mainstream news media exist in order to earn profits by selling ads to businesses. Truth is not really important. **We people who do value the truth must take responsibility to publicize the truth ourselves** in a variety of ways, including:

- **Mainstream media:** Do various things to pressure mainstream media to expose the lies and report the truth, rather than yield to Trump’s pressure to “normalize” the extremism of him and his appointees.
- **Conservative and right-wing media:** Do various things to counter their biases and outright lies.
- **Alternative and progressive media:** Read, watch and financially support the good media sources. See a list near the end of this essay. Create alternative, creative ways to inform the public.
- **Non-profit organizations provide accurate, useful information about issues and organizing:** Their newsletters and e-mails can inform you and help you take effective actions. They deserve our financial support too, in order to help turn things around. Look especially for non-profit organizations that work to change systems rather than merely apply band-aids.

An excellent non-profit organization that monitors and critiques mainstream media is Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) at www.fair.org. They publish a magazine that provides this information too.

Two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties:

The track record of the past several decades has shown that the U.S.'s two big political parties represent special interests, not the American people's best interests. Both of the big political parties have been deceiving us. The American people are angry about that. Indeed, Trump won partly by campaigning against both parties.

An important factor in the losses and angers people felt during the 2016 campaign was the fact that Obama – who had campaigned as a populist progressive in 2008 – governed in support of Wall Street and the military-industrial complex.

In 1992 Bill Clinton was elected largely by showing how Reagan and the older Bush had hurt the economy. Clinton's 1992 campaign strategy was to emphasize their main talking point, "It's the economy, stupid." But when Bill Clinton was elected he continued hurting the working class and transferring our money to the capitalist class, especially by deregulating big business functions to enrich them and reduce public protection from their abuses.

Although Barack Obama campaigned against NAFTA in 2008 and said he supported ordinary people, he continued the "free trade" mania of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Obama's push for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other "free trade" scams caused voters to react against him and opt for Trump, who opposed those, even though Trump is absolutely loyal to Wall Street and against the working class.

Likewise, Hillary Clinton had a long track record of subservience to Wall Street. When she served on Walmart's board of directors and served as one of Walmart's top lawyers, there is no evidence that she did anything to help the workers, many of whom were women and minorities. She did not campaign on economic populist issues until mid-2016 when she adopted a few – and only in response to Bernie Sanders' leadership on those issues. Washington State's two Democratic U.S. Senators supported the TPP. American workers saw clearly that Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party were not on their side.

Obama and Clinton bragged about the "jobs" created during Obama's eight years, even though many of those jobs were at wages much lower than the jobs lost during the Obama administration. Obama and Clinton kept bragging about how good the economy was now, even though everybody knew the economy was terrible. Such is the self-deception and public deception of the big political parties' elite class.

President Obama has sought good publicity for publicly saying nice things about the climate and taking some climate-friendly actions, but much more of his effort has been

for Big Oil, and largely without exposure by mainstream media. Obama's "all-of-the-above" energy policy (supporting fracking, nuclear power, etc.) was really an expanded version of Sarah Palin's "drill, baby, drill" policy.

Obama took many actions to serve Big Oil. He signed a new law that – for the first time in four decades – allows the export of crude oil from the U.S. He quietly supported and even fast-tracked several nasty pipelines. He permitted more offshore drilling and vigorously promoted fracking. He kept the Keystone XL pipeline alive for several years before finally yielding to massive sustained public pressure to stop it.

Both of the big parties have been promoting deregulation and "free market" policies. Bill Clinton vigorously supported the WTO, pushed NAFTA through to passage, led efforts to repeal the Glass-Steagall law (thereby leading to the 2007-2008 economic collapse), led efforts to deregulate giant telecommunications companies and concentrate ownership through the 1996 Telecommunications Act, and so forth. Barack Obama continued promoting George W. Bush's "free trade" deals with several nations and giant "free trade" scams equally horrible as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Obama appointed one of Comcast's top lobbyist to the Federal Communications Commission, and he appointed agribusiness and Big Pharma officials to positions regulating their industries. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is supposed to serve the interests of the public and investors, but Obama appointed to the SEC someone who had gained prominence in protecting giant corporations from transparency and oversight. The list goes on and on.

Democrats who are criticizing Trump's appointees now were silent when Obama appointed Big Business insiders to powerful positions. Obama appointed a great many officials from Goldman Sachs to top positions in his administration after Goldman Sachs had been the biggest donor to his 2008 campaign.

During the 2016 campaign, the institutional Democratic Party rebuffed its populist candidate Bernie Sanders, who was generating huge public support and would have won in a landslide with long coattails that would have elected many Democrats to Congress and state and local governments.

For many years the institutional Democratic Party has been failing to deliver to its base of working class voters, but when the Republican Party wins they actually give their base what they asked for. In 2016 the Republicans won by listening to their voters and nominating the person who was generating popular support.

“Pride goes before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18): Trumpism is doing the OPPOSITE of “making America great.” Actually, its extremism is hastening the end of U.S. empire and selfishness:

“Pride goes before destruction – and a haughty spirit before a fall.” This famous passage from Proverbs 16:18 is relevant to Trump’s arrogance in particular, but it also pertains to the U.S.’s national attitudes and behaviors overall.

Just like the longstanding underlying problems discussed above, this too is the culmination of the longstanding arrogance of U.S. Empire.

For many decades the U.S. government, political culture and population have felt entitled to dominate other nations politically, militarily and economically. Our government always feels entitled to violate international law because of “American exceptionalism.” Likewise, many Americans deny science and assume that the U.S. can extract and burn fossil fuels without suffering consequences to the climate or clean water resources. Nationalism trumps reality.

This kind of bipartisan arrogance, smugness and self-deception – accentuated even more than ever before under the new Republican-dominated government – are hastening the end of the U.S. Empire and will seriously harm our national well-being – socially, politically, economically, and environmentally. Truly, “Pride goes before destruction – and a haughty spirit before a fall,” as Proverbs 16:18 warns.

In ancient times the writers of Greek tragedies referred to this as *hubris*, the kind of arrogance that led to tragic outcomes. The U.S. keeps acting on the *hubris* of “American exceptionalism,” and we will increasingly reap the tragic consequences.

Although the popular understanding of the word “prophet” is someone who foretells the future, the Biblical tradition uses the word differently. A “prophet” is someone

who is authorized by God to speak God’s message to the people, especially when the people do not want to hear it.

God told the Old Testament prophets (Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.) to speak God’s harsh warnings to their people. The message was that – despite the people’s outward religiosity and compliance with ritual – they were violating God’s deeper requirements to treat the poor fairly, to be honest in business dealings, to welcome strangers, and to trust God rather than military might. These prophets warned that violating these serious obligations would result in their nation’s destruction.

The political and religious establishment did not want the prophets to speak God’s hard truth. When the establishment and the people did not stop their arrogance and did not start practicing compassion and true justice, the prophets’ warnings came true. Disasters did occur, and other nations did conquer, as the prophets had warned.

The U.S.’s arrogant self-image that we are “God’s Chosen People” will not save the U.S. any more than it saved ancient Israel. The prophets speak to us too: superficial religiosity cannot mask or compensate for massive injustice. A nation that claims to follow God must practice real fairness and justice in its day-to-day life. The U.S. falls horribly short and will suffer the consequences.

How about this analogy? The 2016 election can feel like the story of “The Fall” from the Bible’s book of Genesis. This was a sudden plunge into a harsh world dominated by evil. Millions of people voted for someone who promised he would make us great. We “bit the apple” and discovered not only nakedness but also racism and greed and cruelty and lies. Only radical grace and nonviolent grassroots organizing can save our nation from fascism.

(2) WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE NATION AND U.S. EMPIRE WE HAVE KNOWN WERE NOT SUSTAINABLE:

For decades the U.S. Empire has been overreaching and has not been sustainable. We must help the American people understand this and change toward more ecological – and more modest, humane and peaceful – ways to interact with the world.

Despite U.S. violence against other nations, we can no longer compel other nations’ obedience. The last war we won was World War II more than 70 years ago. The era of colonialism is long past. After the Cold War, other nations have long since stopped tolerating “the only remaining superpower.”

Trump’s “America First” rhetoric reflects his own narcissism and panders to the U.S.’s narcissism and American Exceptionalism. A psychologically healthy and mature person – or nation – works to get along cooperatively and harmoniously with other persons and nations, not to demand being first. For example, I should not demand a “Glen Anderson First” policy that lets me crowd in front of the checkout line at the grocery store. An “America First” policy is neither fair nor sustainable nor realistic in a world with nearly 200 other nations. Narcissism is very bad public policy.

The climate “deniers” are denying science and denying reality. They are refusing to acknowledge the hard truth that we and our giant business corporations are using natural resources at an unsustainable rate. This refusal to accept reality means that the U.S. is refusing to solve real-world problems. **When people deny hard realities, they prevent themselves from solving the real problems, so they are setting themselves up for catastrophic failures.**

The rest of the world does appreciate science, but the U.S. has become a “denier” nation regarding climate and science itself. Denying climate science – just like denying human rights for women, Muslims, LGBTQ people – is preventing our nation from moving ahead to a better future. Rather than “making America great again,” this anti-science bias will do the opposite. It will make us a backward nation that will allow problems to worsen and will let other nations move ahead of us. When the U.S. underfunds education and fails to teach real science, American employers will have no alternative but to urge increased immigration from nations that do teach valid science and hire those immigrants.

The “Loss, Fear and Anger” section on page 2 above mentioned our nation’s declining standard of living. Already, we are far down the list of indicators of quality of life (life expectancy, access to affordable health care, etc.). Michael Moore’s clever film “Where to Invade Next” makes some interesting points and comparisons.

Would Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’s insights into five stages of dying help our nation cope with the loss of U.S. Empire and nationalistic egocentrism? The stages are Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and finally Acceptance.

Someone new to Alcoholics Anonymous is told that the first step toward recovery is to acknowledge the hard reality that the person is addicted to alcohol. Likewise, **the first step for Americans to start healing our nation is to acknowledge that the U.S.’s economic system, empire, and militarism are not sustainable. They never were sustainable.** No amount of bullying and lying can change this hard reality.

Trump’s extremism will hasten the end of U.S. Empire. America’s smug nationalism is doomed. Americans need to acknowledge and internalize the truth of Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction – and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

We need a fresh consciousness to actually let go of our overuse of natural resources, our abuse of climate, our worldwide militarism, etc. We must internalize that reality intellectually, emotionally, and in new public policy. Only then will we be truly free to explore fresh visions for the future instead of trying to hold on to the unsustainable past.

Let’s get real! Of course we need to reject Trump’s phony “Make America Great Again” slogan, but we also need to reject the mainstream myth that the U.S. is “the indispensable nation,” because that also is arrogant and false.

(3) USE VALUES AND STRATEGIES TO ORGANIZE NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE AND PROACTIVE PROGRESSIVE REMEDIES:

PART (1) of this essay explained how a confluence of long-standing problems led to this current crisis. Now PART (3) (from here to this essay’s end) explains how better values and nonviolent strategies can get us out.

Ordinary Americans can help our nation get through these hard times – and create decent solutions – if we:

- **Recognize that we must and can indeed address the problems effectively;** and
- **Understand how nonviolent grassroots movements are powerful ways to achieve social and political progress;** and
- **Work strategically and nonviolently with other people to accomplish our goals.**

Instead of piling on more “ain’t-it-awful” laments, let’s understand and organize:

Clearly, the 2016 election results portend extremely serious dangers ahead for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, and governmental corruption. We are in for hard times!

When disaster strikes, a normal human reaction is to lament the horrible event. After the 2016 election, people

piled on a lot of “ain’t-it-awful” lamenting and reinforced each other’s worst fears about what awaits us. That reaction is understandable, but it can crush our human spirit, so we must not let ourselves or our nation get stuck there. During Olympia FOR’s March 2017 TV program, one of our guests said, **“Don’t agonize. Strategize.”** Right on!

Instead of letting dread overwhelm and immobilize us, we need to think clearly and devise smart strategies

for solving the problems. The rest of this document will help us do that.

After protesting Trump in reactive ways, now let's get proactive. Build progressive movements for what we want instead:

The anti-Trump Women's March on Saturday January 21, 2017, was the biggest inaugural day protest – and one of the biggest protest events on any issue – ever in U.S. history. We made our point clearly. But now what?

Trump's method of bullying includes saying and doing outrageous things. **This keeps him in charge and puts us on the defensive, reacting to his provocations. If all we do is protest, we stay in the reactive mode, and he stays in control.**

As time goes on, will the numbers of protesters decline, and will Trump's fascist bullying become the new status quo? Some liberals are already saying that we should simply play defense for the next four years and hope to elect someone better in 2020.

We can do better than that! We ourselves must seize the initiative by asserting our own agenda of positive changes we want to accomplish. If we take the proactive

initiative, we can make the government, big business, mainstream media, and other parts of the establishment respond to our demands. **Let's activate the old saying, "the best defense is a good offense."**

Most Americans already support many of our goals, (e.g., get big money out of politics, significantly raise the minimum wage, protect women's rights and LGBTQ rights, protect the environment, etc.). Let's organize vigorous non-violent campaigns and movements for goals that build upon our nation's best values and majority public opinion. If we do that, we can overwhelm Trumpism with popular democracy and a truly progressive proactive agenda.

To make this progress, we must be strategically savvy and scrupulously nonviolent so we can bring millions more people – including newly awakened people of all ages – into our grassroots movements. **For information, inspiration and resources, see the resources listed near the end of this essay.**

The American people are not stupid:

Do not fall for the self-defeating trap of assuming that the American people are stupid. That false assumption prevents us from solving problems and making progress.

Fish do not have a concept of water because they are so immersed in water that they don't even notice it. Likewise, we are so immersed in a culture of corruption, lies, injustice, oppression and violence that many people do not notice these pervasive baseline contexts for our daily lives in society. We need to pay special attention in order to recognize the systemic problems. Mainstream news media and mainstream politicians do not alert us to these realities. That task is the responsibility of the people reading this article. Then

– if we want something better – we must specifically organize to solve the problems and create good solutions. That's what the rest of this article is about.

So, despite what some people say, let's not fall into the trap of thinking that the American people are stupid. Let's provide good information and encouragement and grassroots organizing so people can figure things out and move ahead. If we treat people as if they were stupid – and speak condescendingly to them or about them – we push them away rather than bring them together into solidarity to solve the underlying problems. The rest of this article suggests ways to help people create solutions.

Understand "populism" with smarter insights:

Trump campaigned as if he were a grassroots reformer seeking to disrupt the corrupt elitists and return our government to serving ordinary people. Mainstream news media and some other people fell for this shtick and kept calling Trump a "populist" – as if this billionaire elitist were really on the side of ordinary people. That image, of course, was a deliberate lie. Political writer John Judis write in his book *The Populist Explosion* that populism attracts people when

mainstream political parties let problems fester. Growing populism is a warning sign that a political crisis is brewing.

John Judis distinguished between two very different kinds of populists. He wrote that **left-wing populists** bring people together to oppose elites or the establishment above them. However, **right-wing populists** bring people together against an elite that they accuse of coddling a third group that they think does not deserve support and should be kept

down. Right-wing populists pick on vulnerable populations instead of directly confronting the elites that oppress all of us. They whip up resentment.

Many politicians do indeed use a “divide and conquer” strategy to pit people against each other in order to benefit

those politicians. When people share a common crisis, we do come together (*e.g.*, organize sandbagging during a flood). But when **diverse** people come together, the power structure feels threatened, so the power structure wants to divide and conquer.

Corporate corruption, endless wars, failures to address persistent social and economic injustice, and other problems – all of these are BI-PARTISAN, so we must change entire SYSTEMS, not simply replace one politician or party with another:

The long-standing underlying problems discussed on pages 1-6 of this essay’s **Part (I)** are not just about individual politicians or individual political parties. Really, these are rooted in big systems of entrenched power and wealth. **So if we want to solve the underlying problems, we need to examine those systems and institutions and figure out how to use nonviolent strategies to fix or replace them.**

The U.S. is trapped in a **bipartisan status quo** that maintains the same overall power systems even while it rotates from one party to another every few years. **This partisan game-playing is an electoral illusion of democracy. It distracts people from the underlying persistence of abusive power systems.** Both of the big political parties are corrupt and dysfunctional. Such bipartisanship is part of the problem. Democrats who criticize Republican presidents give a “free pass” when Democratic presidents do the same things. (See the section above about two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties.

To move forward, we must stop letting rich people and big business and the military-industrial complex dominate public policy altogether – not only when Republicans do it. **The problems are not so much partisan, but really more systemic with top-down wealth and power preventing bottom-up democracy!**

Efforts within the Democratic Party to reform it to become progressive have been beaten down by the Democratic Party’s institutional insiders and corporate funders ever since the mid-1970s, and most recently on February 25, 2017, when they prevented progressive Keith Ellison from serving as chair of the Democratic National Committee.

Can we use the tragic 2016 election results as a wake-up call to the underlying problems that have been hurting the U.S. for a very long time? **Instead of merely cycling from one party to another, can we focus on the underlying problems and really change the systems?**

Huge public protests and resistance against Trumpism shows that the American people are ready to take action:

- Millions of women and others protested in the streets on the day after the inauguration.
- Millions of people have protested in various other ways before and after that.
- Many local and state governments and colleges have become “sanctuaries” that will refuse to obey anti-immigrant orders.
- Unprecedented numbers of people have phoned U.S. senators to oppose the appointments of grossly unqualified and corrupt nominees.

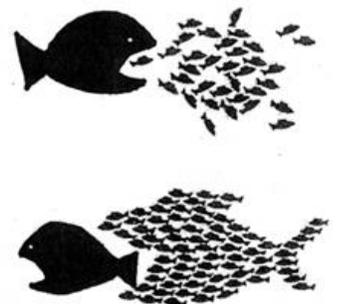
The list of public resistance goes on and on. These prove that the American people recognize the extreme dangers of fascist policies and horrible corruption and abuse targeting people, our environment, and democracy itself.

James Zogby, a savvy political analyst, recently said, “The will to resist is greater than the will to repress.”

The actress America Ferrera told Washington DC’s Women’s March audience, “Trump is not America.... We are America!”

“Dictators are never as strong as they tell you they are. People are never as weak as they think they are.” This is the wise message from Gene Sharp, the world’s best researcher on the power of nonviolence and how to use nonviolence to remove dictators from power.

This is what we must understand in order to refuse to be intimidated by Trumpism – and in order to organize vigorous non-violent grassroots movements to resist Trumpism and create real solutions



to our nation's real problems. See resource information at his non-profit organization's website, www.aeinstein.org.

Trump campaigned against "crony capitalism." But he appointed many crony capitalists to positions of power. The American people hate such hypocrisy. We can help the American people recognize and oppose Trump's hypocrisy

and corruption. Indeed, Trump's conflicts of interest could be his Achilles heel. See www.tinyurl.com/zwdqdhw

People in other nations have exposed their oppressors' corruption and used this as great leverage to remove them from office.

Acknowledge the problem's seriousness. But instead of feeling despair, choose to empower ourselves for nonviolent grassroots organizing:

"When we awaken to the enormity of our crisis and the magnitude of our loss, often the first response is a crushing despair. Yet on the other side of despair is fullness and an urgency to live life beautifully. We can choose a different world – the 'more beautiful world our hearts tell us is possible.'" This is what Charles Eisenstein wrote in his 2007 book *The Ascent of Humanity*.

This is not mere "positive thinking" or "cheap grace." It is a practical way to proceed. We must empower ourselves and generate the strength to push ahead in strategically smart ways until we win. Much of the essay you are reading – and

many resources about the power and effectiveness of organizing nonviolent grassroots resistance and movements – show that this is not "wishful thinking," but it is actually practical. Let's get on with it!

Throughout American history – from the colonial era of the 1760s and beyond – Americans have always risen up with nonviolent resistance and grassroots organizing to stop oppression and to achieve positive progress. The work we must do now is grounded in the best of American values and American experience.

Ground ourselves in our best values – and our nation's best values:

Our society seems to be suffering from escalating polarization. Let's not assume that we are stuck with this. Some of the apparent polarization resulted from partisan and ideological exploitation that has appealed to people's emotions and then stampeded them into right-wing politics. This is mentioned in **PART (1)** on pages 1-6 above, "**UNDERLYING PROBLEMS AND A CONFLUENCE OF TRENDS LED TO THIS CRISIS.**"

Actually, very few Americans are as cruel as Trump's policies and propaganda would have us believe. Ordinary Americans have more humane values. Let's remind the public of our nation's best values, including:

- All people are created equal.
- We are endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights.
- Our rights include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- We are a nation of immigrants, and the Statue of Liberty welcomes immigrants and refugees.
- Every person deserves the right to vote.
- The First Amendment protects every person from governmental interference with his or her religion.

Any politician who would suppress or lead us astray from our nation's best values is violating our nation's best values.

Democracy implies that we must respect the basic humanity of every person – including the people with whom we disagree. While we demand that the government respect our rights and values, we also as individuals must practice what we preach. Let's always use humane, nonviolent communication in our person-to-person conversations and at the larger community and national levels.

Let's develop better skills for having meaningful conversations with people on the other side. Let's develop better skills for advocating for public policies. Yes, we really can find better ways to raise our issues so that we will be more effective in moving the public, moving the media, moving the politicians, and moving our society's other decision-makers.

Instead of merely reacting against bad stuff, let's ground ourselves – and help other people get grounded – in our best values so we can move forward. Watch the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's **March 2017 TV program ("Protect America's Best Values")** through the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org. Three savvy guests affirm the best values that our nation has claimed over the years. They urge people to act upon these best values to solve our nation's problems.

Instead of getting trapped in partisanship and elections, let's organize nonviolent movements from the grassroots up. Watch two experienced, knowledgeable, inspiring guests discuss the power and practicality of this on Olympia FOR's

January 2017 TV program (“Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for Our Current Crisis”) through the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org.

Next to the link for watching each of these programs is a link so you can read the document that thoroughly summarizes what we said during the TV interview.

Do not let people distort what Jesus taught and practiced:

Jesus’ actual teaching and practice are grounded in values that are profoundly faithful and humane and inclusive, rather than narrow or commercial or nationalistic.

He lived in a society that practiced discrimination against people who were deemed less worthy (women, foreigners, the poor, the disabled, etc.). **Jesus repeatedly broke down the social barriers and welcomed all people** into the new society he was building. When right-wing Christianity opposes equal rights for women and LGBTQ people, and when it supports the rich against the poor, and when it fails to protect the natural environment (which God created and called “good”), it is violating Jesus’ clear teaching and practice.

The best modern Biblical scholars (*e.g.*, Walter Wink, Marcus Borg, and scholars in the “Jesus Seminar” movement) have written books that lift up the authentic message of Jesus. One of Jesus’ major goals was to confront social injustices and the “conventional wisdom” that discriminated against marginalized people. He vigorously promoted equal human value for everyone – an inclusive and egalitarian society with nonviolence, forgiveness, economic justice, etc.

Anyone who prioritizes racism or nationalism or commercialism above these better values is practicing idolatry and violating Jesus’ teaching and practice. Actions speak louder than words, so even if they claim to be Christian, Jesus said, “By their fruits you will know them.”

Recognize and deal with fear and anger. Practice compassion:

Our society as a whole needs healing, and so do individuals within our society. **Fear** and **anger** can impair the people who feel them. Also, these emotions can be contagious within a society and impair the society overall. Are we feeling these now? Why not practice **compassion** and start an epidemic of compassion to displace fear and anger? Why not practice **empathy** in a contagious way and start an epidemic of empathy?

Let’s pay attention and notice exactly what we are feeling as individuals and what feelings are widespread in society. If we recognize fear, anger, or other strong emotions, recognize that these are likely to be expressions of some underlying fears and hurts. Let’s pay attention to what unmet needs exist, and find better ways to meet those needs. This can heal individuals and our society overall.

In addition to the underlying problems listed in this essay’s **PART (1)** on pages 1-6, another source problem is the collusion between the Republican Party and right-wing Christianity since the 1970s, when each started influencing and corrupting each other. When the Republican Party moved toward the right wing it found they could recruit people from the “culture wars” part of right-wing Christianity into becoming Republicans. Likewise, those religious people used the Republican Party to achieve their “culture wars” goals. Each of these entities carried its baggage into the relationship, so each corrupted the other.

This collusion shows thoughtful Americans why we must protect the constitutional separation of church and state. Real historians have clearly disproved the mistaken notion that our nation’s founders wanted to create a “Christian nation,” but some people want to blur this distinction.

The Republican Party (and increasingly the Democratic Party too) serve the interests of big business and rich people. The American people must take seriously Jesus’ statement, “You cannot serve both God and money.”

One good strategy for opposing Trumpism would be for people who understand and support Jesus’ authentic message to show how Trumpism violates what Jesus taught and practiced.

People really do feel the need for compassion and empathy and inclusiveness. During the Olympia FOR’s weekly peace vigils, our sign, “**All people are one human family**” produces a warm, supportive response from people who walk past or drive past. Regardless of any demographic difference or physical difference (heavy weight, many tattoos, purple spiky hair, etc.), everyone feels welcome and included. We also receive much support for signs with similar messages (*e.g.*, “**Human rights are for everyone,**” and “**We all share one earth**”).

Furthermore, instead of the “politics as usual,” which demonizes everyone on the other side, let’s try assuming that all people are basically good, and all people are seeking what they see as best. None of us has absolute truth or all of the answers. **If we assume good will on the other person’s part, this would open up space for a better interaction, and the other person would notice our positive vibe.** So

when we meet a stranger, let's assume that this person is someone of good will who wants to do what is best. If our initial connection with that stranger conveys that we see good will on the other person's part, our interaction will be more friendly, positive and productive. Ultimately, this also will incrementally improve harmony in the political dynamics of our entire society and lead to better results.

Despite the horrible things the oppressors are doing now, we must also recognize that some of them really are psychologically disabled – and spiritually disabled. They are so focused on narcissism, greed, anger, hatred and nihilism that they cannot recognize or feel normal human experiences of compassion or fairness.

Take the moral high ground. Be scrupulously nonviolent:

The right-wing forces of repression won votes by making people feel afraid and angry. If protesters against Trump use violence – or even tactics that can be misrepresented or misunderstood as violent – they feed into the very same fear and anger that elected the right wing forces of repression. They will frighten the public into wanting to militarize the police, increase surveillance of dissidents, violate our First Amendment rights to speech and assembly, and add to further polarization and repression.

Whatever methods or tactics we use are actually laying the foundation for the new society we are creating. If we want a society that respects every person's human dignity, then we must respect every person's human dignity. If we want a society in which all kinds of people feel safe, then we must use methods and tactics that allow all kinds of people to feel safe. **Scrupulous nonviolence helps lay the foundation for a humane and nonviolent new society.**

Urge mainstream media to expose bullying, biases & lies. Promote truth:

See page 4's section titled, Corporate-owned news media and the dumbing-down of America. It summarizes that problem and offers some remedies. We can do more about this.

First, in every possible way we must expose the bullying that exists and demand that all bullying stop right now!

Second, we must expose the lies and counter them with the truth.

Third, we must expose the Trumpists' contempt for honest journalism as a strategy that fascists use, and we must affirm the absolute necessity of honest journalism for protecting democracy and a free society.

During Nixon's first term his Vice President Spiro Agnew antagonized people with his extremely cruel words. But in the winter of 1971-72 I recognized that Agnew was psychologically and spiritually disabled, so I forgave him. From that moment on, he had no power over me.

We who do value compassion would be more effective in our work to oppose fascism in America if we were to recognize that the people we are organizing against actually are psychologically and spiritually disabled. While we organize against their horrible policies, let's also recognize the humanity of even those people with whom we profoundly disagree.

Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King taught and practiced ways to make this progress. Martin Luther King wrote this:

"The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate.... Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

We must practice what we preach! When our organizing is scrupulously nonviolent it is safe and welcoming for all kinds of people – children, old people, people with disabilities, people who are brand new to our movement, etc. – so we are laying the foundation for a safe and inclusive new society in which everyone is welcome.

Third, we must expose Trump's "tweets" and other outbursts as a form of bullying that interferes with thoughtful public discourse. He uses Twitter very heavily to throw rhetorical grenades and keep on the attack (and sucker everybody else into being merely reactive so he can stay on the attack). **Let's not get suckered into his outbursts. Let's encourage mainstream media and the general public to utterly disregard all of his tweets.**

Trump seems utterly incapable of well-reasoned thought. **Let's train him by refusing to pay attention to his outbursts and say we'll deal only with carefully reasoned position papers.** Then if he and his advisors want us to think about something they'll have to reason it out clearly so we can have a grownup discussion about it.

Political progress comes only from grassroots movements, not as gifts from the top down:

Opressors like to bully and overwhelm people from the top down in order to weaken our will to resist. Instead of yielding to despair, let's empower ourselves and recognize that political and social progress always comes from movements organized at the grassroots, not as gifts from the top down.

Women won the right to vote by grassroots organizing. Workers won labor rights by grassroots organizing. Likewise the environmental movement, and Civil Rights movement, the LGBTQ movement, and so forth. It was the Civil Rights Movement's grassroots organizing and nonviolent

strength that convinced Congress to pass major civil rights laws in 1964 and 1965.

Also, the Civil Rights Movement produced strong ripple effects for other emerging movements. It provided significant inspiration, insight, empowerment, skills, and volunteers for other strong grassroots movements such as the peace movement, the women's rights movement, and the environmental movement. Movements learn and build from each other. This is explained very clearly in the 2016 book *This Is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler. (Also see their website, www.thisisanuprising.org)

When the federal government is negligent, state and local governments can lead the way:

Historically, the federal government has always been slow to make progress. The states have always been the experimenters and "incubators" of new ideas. After several states have shown that a new idea is workable, it becomes politically feasible for the federal government. This is how we have made progress on a number of progressive issues. This has been happening in recent years, with local and state governments taking actions to advance LGBTQ rights, protect the climate, raise the minimum wage, and so forth.

Now that the federal government is moving backward, local and state-level organizing and actions are even more important. Decades ago, House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill famously said, "All politics is local." This is where we have the best access to elected officials and administrative employees. This is where democratic engagement counts more than big money campaign donations. This is

where we can organize ourselves in face-to-face working relationships that build and build and build until we win.

In 1850 when Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act that required people to help federal agents seize slaves and return them to their owners, decent people refused to do that and instead helped slaves escape to freedom. That spirit is still alive with the 1980s Sanctuary Movement that protected Central American refugees and the new Sanctuary Cities movement in which local governments, colleges, and states are refusing to help the federal government deport immigrants who lack documentation.

In what additional ways could we urge our local and state governments to resist the federal government's new oppression and work positively for democracy, human rights, the environment, and other worthy goals?

Democracy is 5% voting and 95% nonviolent grassroots organizing:

Although many people assume that voting is the heart of democracy, and voting is how we choose our country's direction, actually voting is only about 5% of democracy, while 95% of democracy is community organizing and building grassroots movements.

This organizing must be nonviolent. Typically we organize at the grassroots to urge a powerholder (in government or elsewhere) to do something different from what they are doing now. But the powerholder is not our first focus. Really the first step is to communicate with the general public. We alert the general public to the issue, get them to pay attention, to learn, and to understand the problems and solutions. Only then can we mobilize enough grassroots people-power to persuade the powerholders to do what we want.

In order to reach a broad range of people, we must be credible and trustworthy. We must welcome ordinary people to join with us. This requires that we be nonviolent.

Working nonviolently also creates a safe space so people will feel safe in joining with us, including people who are totally new to our movements. If a new person is afraid that violence – or even extreme rudeness – will occur, they will not join with us. We need to welcome larger numbers of people and all ages and ability levels into our movements in order to achieve our goals. When we organize effective activities that are nonviolent and safe, more people will join with us.

Nonviolence is not weakness. Rather, it is a different kind of strength. Also, nonviolence means much more than

simply not hitting someone or not fighting. **Really, nonviolence is a different way to build power – and it is more effective than the heavy-handed kinds of power we commonly see.** Many people think that heavy-handed power

(political or military) is the only kind of power there is. But nonviolence is a different kind of power, and it is actually stronger than the heavy-handed kind.

Nonviolence works against Nazis and other extremely brutal dictators:

Many people assume that nonviolence works only against oppressors that are not very nasty, but that nonviolence is not strong and effective enough to use against brutal dictators or Nazis. People commonly ask, “What about Hitler?”

Actually, history shows that nonviolence has been very powerful and effective in many brutal settings, including during the Nazi era. After World War II, people discovered documentation of communications among Nazi leaders expressing their utter frustration at being unable to stop the nonviolent resistance efforts and dominate the people they wanted to dominate. The Nazis knew how to fight back against violent resistance, but they were utterly flummoxed by resolutely nonviolent resistance. For example, when

Norway’s teachers refused to teach Nazi propaganda in the schools, the Nazis could not figure out a way to force them to do so.

Many, many other examples occurred in other settings, including South Africa during the apartheid era. Recently the Lutheran Peace Fellowship’s Glen Gersmehl and some other people created a list of 160 examples of nonviolent action throughout history – including a great many examples of people using nonviolence in settings of extreme violence.

Indeed, nonviolence is a radical, creative alternative to merely “fight or flight,” which we have been taught are our only two options. Nonviolence gives us a better – and more powerful – alternative!

Withdraw consent:

Thomas Jefferson recognized that “we the people” create the government – and “we the people” can change or even replace the government.

Likewise, Gene Sharp’s research (www.aeinstein.org) shows that powerful oppressors lose their power when people refuse to obey them – or at least withdraw their consent from them. Therefore, an important part of Gene Sharp’s advice is to **figure out how people can nonviolently withdraw their consent from oppressors.**

The American people worry that the new national government will increase oppression, social and economic injustice, environmental abuse, and political corruption. To protect ourselves from these problems, let’s look for ways to withdraw our consent from oppressors at governmental levels – and also from oppressors in the economic sector and in other parts of our society – to weaken oppressors’ power.

Let’s study Gene Sharp’s ideas and figure out the most effective ways to de-legitimize the Trump administration and weaken its power.

Remove the “pillars” that prop up unjust or oppressive systems:

A simple model explains one way to do this. Imagine a Greek or Roman temple with columns holding up a horizontal roof. Imagine that the big horizontal roof is an oppressive system or a specific unjust political or economic practice (*e.g.*, the death penalty, racial discrimination in housing, the U.S.’s violent foreign policy, abusive payday lending, or a certain kind of environmental abuse).

That specific oppressive system is propped up by a number of pillars – political or economic or cultural interest groups or institutions – social customs or norms – and so forth. First, let’s identify the pillars that prop up the unjust system. Next, for each pillar, let’s devise strategies for how to nonviolently remove or weaken that particular pillar. Then let’s carry out our plans. When we remove or weaken enough pillars, the oppressive top system will collapse.

For example, the death penalty is propped up by “pillars” such as racism, fear of criminals, a psychological need for revenge, politicians who would rather run on “tough-on-crime” platforms rather than solve the underlying problems that lead to crime, and so forth. We could identify additional “pillars” and strategize how to weaken or remove enough of them to cause the death penalty to collapse.

Another example would be to consider Trumpism overall as an oppressive system, or to consider a specific aspect of Trumpism (*e.g.*, Trump’s unjust immigration policies or his opposition to women’s rights). What are the “pillars” that support that oppression? Identify the pillars. For each pillar, figure out how we could we weaken or remove that particular pillar. Organize at the grassroots to do that.

Each nonviolent grassroots movement working against an unjust or oppressive system can consider how to use the “pillars” model to strategize ways to nonviolently dismantle that particular system.

As mentioned in several sections above, the problems we face are caused not by just one politician or by one political

party. The problems are systemic and interconnected. But do not let yourself feel overwhelmed. The fact that there are many interconnected problems mean that there are also many points and many ways for us to attack those problems. And for any given problem, we can strategically break each problem down and organize in specific pillar-by-pillar ways to solve the problem.)

Resist vigorously, but always nonviolently:

Several times in this essay I have emphasized that **profound and strategic nonviolence is practical, effective and necessary** for what we want to achieve. Nonviolence is not weakness. **It’s a different kind of strength.** These points deserve emphasis again.

Oppressors expect people to roll over and submit to their oppression. But when we resist nonviolently – and preferably with creativity and wit – we undermine and weaken the oppressors’ power. The late author Jonathan Schell wrote in *The Unconquerable World*, his 2003 book about the power and effectiveness of nonviolent action, **“Violence is the method by which the ruthless few can subdue the passive many. Nonviolence is a means by which the active many can overcome the ruthless few.”**

A number of persons and organizations have urged resistance to Trumpism, but not all of them have insisted on resisting nonviolently. Resistance that uses violence – or methods that can be misreported or misrepresented as violence – plays into the oppressor’s propaganda that their op-

pression is necessary in order to protect society from “terrorism.” But clearly nonviolent action takes away the oppressor’s propaganda claim.

An article urges us to make ourselves “ungovernable” in 2017: www.tinyurl.com/hgfh2j This article says many very smart things and offers much good advice, but it neglects to mention nonviolence as a necessary factor in our goals or our methods.

A new non-profit organization – Refuse Fascism (www.refusefascism.org) – arose to vigorously expose the fascism that Trump is imposing upon our nation – and to organize massive resistance to it. I’ve been reading various parts of their website and have not been seeing a clear call (let alone strategic emphasis) for **nonviolence**. Committing to scrupulous nonviolence would strengthen our resistance to fascism.

Kazu Haga, a savvy young organizer and trainer, explains why **not** to use any violence when opposing Trump: www.tinyurl.com/zyc327s

Strengthen our skills for working on issues:

Throughout this essay, we can see the need to strengthen our skills for working on the issues. Most of us would benefit from deepening our grounding in the theory and practice of profound nonviolence. Most of us could use better skills for organizing and strategizing. We could use better skills for communicating with people on each side of an issue (and the middle-of-the-road people who are not yet on our side).

Let’s tap into our own most humane values. Let’s help other people (those on our side, in the middle, and on the other side) tap into their own most humane values.

Let’s empower people to have confidence that they can indeed solve huge problems. Let’s help people develop better skills for organizing and advocating to make our society better. We can make progress in how we live our daily lives (doing what’s right, so we can “live the new society into being”). Also, we can make progress in how we work with other people and the media and social institutions and political systems provide leverage to improve public policies.

Yes, we really can do this!

A great many excellent resources exist. Study and use them:

We can learn from history within the U.S. and from the experiences of people in other nations who have nonviolently overthrown repressive governments. The basic principles and strategies are universal, and each population can adapt them to their own specific setting. Some of the resources listed below come from the U.S. and some from other nations.

Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation provides TV programs, printed summaries and related resources at the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org:

- The first step in dealing with the dangerous time ahead is to really understand voters (and not get stuck simply fearing and blaming). The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's **December 2016** TV program, "**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma,**" offers significant help in understanding – and healing from – the traumatic 2016 election season so we can move ahead more humanely and effectively. You can watch it and/or read a thorough summary (in Word format) at the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org
- For "where-do-we-go-from-here" insights and strategies, watch the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's **January 2017** TV program, "**Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for Our Current Crisis.**" Each of our TV guests and our host has half a century of experience working with the kinds of insights and strategies described in the essay you're reading now. You can watch this program – and/or read a thorough summary in .pdf format (or a very brief Word resource) – at the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org
- Our **March 2017** TV program, "**Protect America's Best Values from Attack**" helps people recognize, affirm and protect our nation's best values, which are being attacked now. Instead of cowering in fear, we can establish the moral high ground as real Americans who are protecting our nation's best values. Our diverse guests offer positive insights and encouragement. This would be a great program to share with people across the political spectrum, including middle-of-the-road and thoughtful conservative people. You can watch this program – and/or read a thorough summary in Word format – at the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org
- Some of our previous TV programs also have focused on nonviolence and/or grassroots organizing. Scroll down on the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org and click on the links for the programs that interest you.

Resources on the "Nonviolence" part of www.olympiafor.org:

Visit www.olympiafor.org, click the "**Nonviolence**" link, and scroll down to see many interesting, inspiring and practical resources. Some great resources are under these subheadings:

"What Is Nonviolence?"

"Understanding and Using Nonviolence"

"Using Nonviolence in the Real World." Many articles are especially timely now. Some people have especially appreciated the .pdf document "We Can Replace Cynicism and Despair with Empowerment and Hope"

Books and other writings:

Many, many, many books and resources are excellent for this topic. Here are just a few:

- *Why Civil Resistance Works* by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan (2011)
- *This is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler (2016) (Also see www.thisisanuprising.org)
- *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements* by Bill Moyer, JoAnn McAllister, Mary Lou Finley, and Steven Soifer
- *A Force More Powerful* by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall – and the DVD/VHS series
- Books and other resources offered (some by simple downloads) by the Albert Einstein Institution, www.aeinstein.org
- Books listed as resources on nonviolence at the Lutheran Peace Fellowship's website. Visit www.lutheranpeace.org. Click "Resources" link. Then click "Nonviolence" link.
- Books by and about Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Writings in many places by Michael Nagler and George Lakey
- For more referrals, contact me at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Non-Profit organizations:

Many non-profit organizations and their websites offer excellent information, insights, and resources. I especially recommend these:

- For decades I have been recommending the amazingly smart resources by Gene Sharp and others at The Albert Einstein Institution: www.aeinstein.org.
- Lutheran Peace Fellowship: Visit www.lutheranpeace.org. Click “Resources” link. Then click “Nonviolence” link.
- Nonviolence International: www.nonviolenceinternational.net
- International Center on Nonviolent Conflict: www.nonviolent-conflict.org
- Campaign Nonviolence: www.paceebene.org/programs/campaign-nonviolence
- In March 2017 we’ll post “**2017.03 Sources of Information,**” a long list of non-profit organizations and other resources, on the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org
- For more referrals, contact me at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Additional insights, questions, and possible actions:

- The first part of this essay discussed some underlying problems that led to the 2016 election results. Voters have valid reasons for opposing the status quo. But the voters did not want more corruption, dirtier environment, worse health care, and other problems that will be getting worse. Trump has always been a con man. Is the new Executive Branch his latest “bait and switch” deception? How could we connect with ordinary Americans, expose the realities, and help people organize for what we really want, not the fake remedies that are being imposed upon us?
- The early part of this essay emphasized that the most serious problems are far deeper than mere partisanship, so we need to work for systemic changes and not get stuck in mere partisanship, because that can trap us in a narrow range of remedies when we need more profound systemic changes. Instead of thinking that the Democratic Party can save us, let’s create a new Left that does not depend on Wall Street or global capitalism or the military-industrial complex. We need a truly progressive politics grounded in our most humane and peaceful values and grassroots people-power.
- We must fix our electoral systems too, of course. Increasingly in recent years the U.S.’s electoral systems have become seriously unjust. Big money corrupts both parties’ candidates and incumbents. Public opinion polls show most Americans hold more progressive values than either party, so – in order to hold onto power despite public opinion – the Republican Party has become cynically partisan and passed laws that actually make it harder for some kinds of people (especially people who are poor, young, or nonwhite) to vote. Republicans that dominate state governments have redrawn district lines to make it harder for Democrats to get elected. Computerized voting machine companies tend to be owned by Republicans and programmed with “proprietary” software that is easily hacked and can’t be independently audited.
- The new “Indivisible” movement seems to blend both of these to become effective. Some former congressional staff members compiled a 26-page guide to help people at the local level organize to apply practical pressure on their members of Congress. Each of the U.S.’s 435 congressional districts has a local “Indivisible” group organizing. You can download the guide from www.indivisibleguide.com Find your nearest Indivisible group by visiting www.indivisibleguide.com/local-action-groups
- For decades the U.S.’s militaristic foreign policy has been misdiagnosing other nations’ political, social and economic problems and has imposed military violence upon them. This has only made those problems worse. This escalated after the 9-11-2001 attacks. Both political parties have used “war on terror” violence that has only angered more people and provoked more terrorism and spread the problems to additional parts of the world. ISIS claims that the U.S. is provoking a worldwide war against Islam, so ISIS proclaims that it is Muslims’ only defense against that. U.S. foreign policy seems to support that claim and is playing into ISIS’s hands. This was true under Bush and Obama, and it will be even more true under Trump. How could we help the American people better understand U.S. foreign policy? (See good resources at the top of the “Issues” part of www.olympiafor.org and the Olympia FOR’s October 2016 TV program “De-Militarize U.S. Foreign Policy” and related documents at the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org
- Trump and Bannon seem to take delight in cruelty to people they despise. Their rhetoric and actual behaviors

show cruel racism, sexism, contempt for the environment, disregard for truth, contempt for honest journalism, abuse of Constitutional processes such as the balance of powers, and exploitation of various kinds of people. These are very serious fascist tendencies. They should be exposed and challenged as such. We must help the American people affirm our best values and denounce the rhetoric and behaviors that – far from making America great – are actually hurting our nation and the world in many ways. We must support truth, human rights, compassion, and so forth.

- Many despotic governments have also included corruption that benefits the people at the top of those governments at the expense of the general public. We are seeing Trump run the U.S. government for the benefit of his business empire and the crony capitalists he has appointed to top positions. In some other nations with such corruption, this has been an important factor in arousing the public to nonviolently rise up and topple the corrupt regime.
- Besides reacting against what we oppose, let's also organize proactively for what we want instead. Nonviolence extends two hands. We extend one arm out in front of us and hold up that hand in up upright "stop" gesture. Also – with the other hand – we extend that out in front of us with our palm up in a gesture that welcomes new alternatives. Let's make sure we organize with both of our hands. Getting stuck in negative reactivity is not sustainable. People need to organize for positive alternatives too.
- Look at issues from different angles and ask creative questions. For example, when the religious right claims that anti-gay people have a religious right to discriminate through their jobs and businesses, what about those of us whose religious beliefs positively protect diversity? In 1972 the U.S. government's draft board recognized that my religious beliefs justified my claim to be a Conscientious Objector to war. But the government still drafts my

Closing encouragement:

In early 2017 the U.S. is suffering perhaps our greatest crisis since the Civil War. A narcissistic, grossly ignorant, and psychologically unstable huckster has gained enormous political power. He has appointed ignorant, corrupt, and reckless people to stop the government from serving the American people and protecting our rights and environment.

In recent years, the American voters have become increasingly angry with the status quo and the politicians who have failed to solve problems. In 2016 many people saw nobody worth voting for. The heir apparent narrowly lost the Electoral College vote. The other big party's candidate

tax dollars to pay for war. Why hasn't the religious right or either political party supported the legislation that has been pending since the 1970s that would allow federal taxpayers to claim Conscientious Objector status and divert the military's share of our tax dollars to peace-oriented programs? (See www.peacetaxfund.org)

- Many people seem content to merely click e-mail action alerts as individuals. But when we individuals ask people in power to please do what's right, this perpetuates the power imbalance with those people in control and we stuck underneath, merely imploring them. In order to become really effective, we must organize ourselves in person and build face-to-face working relationships with other people to empower ourselves. Don't let the ease of "clicktivism" distract us from the real work of organizing face-to-face grassroots movements that empower us to gain power.
- Many of the constitutional amendments protect our rights and advance our democracy. Let's understand them and protect them. Let's support the non-profit organizations that protect these rights. See the amazing list of "Leading Organizations" at www.startguide.org
- Let's create and use better ways to inform ordinary Americans about what's really going on, listen to their needs and experiences, and work with them at the grassroots to organize solutions to the problems.
- We can reach the public through simple methods such as holding signs on sidewalks and other public places, writing letters to newspaper editors, promoting alternative progressive news media, wearing buttons on our jackets, and so forth.
- Remember that former U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neill said, "All politics is local." Watch out for Trumpist cruelty, discrimination, corruption, and other problems in state and local governments, including school boards, port districts, and other local jurisdictions.

received votes from angry voters who reacted against the status quo but did not recognize the dangers and havoc they were causing by voting for an extremist who vented anger.

Now we face extremely serious dangers ahead for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, and governmental corruption.

But I do not believe that most Americans want the bigotry and greed that our defective political system resulted in. Rather, I believe that most Americans actually have better

values, and they can be helped to understand and support peace, compassion, fairness, and honest government.

The problems and solutions are more profound than any major political party or candidate recognizes. I believe that most Americans want a future radically better than either of the big political parties has been offering. Instead of merely replacing one politician or one party with another, we need to organize for more profound changes that will actually solve the serious problems.

The 2016 election gave us lemons, but we can make lemonade! We can organize strategically savvy nonviolent resistance to roll back the worst stuff. And we can organize grassroots movements to mobilize new public opinion to actually turn things around and make progress on what we want instead!

The ancient Greek engineer Archimedes said something about the laws of physics that we can apply toward changing our political culture. What he said translates to something like: “If I stand at the right place and have the right lever, I can move the world.”

So instead of letting dread overwhelm and immobilize us, we need to think clearly and devise smart nonviolent strategies for solving the problems and achieving humane and sustainable goals such as peace, human rights for every-

one, an economy that is honest and fair for everyone, an environment that is healthy and sustainable, and a society that practices nonviolence and compassion.

To build a bold new future that is honest, humane and sustainable, we must organize strategically savvy nonviolent grassroots movements. Nonviolence is bigger and bolder in vision and in methodology than anything “politics-as-usual” can offer.

Now is the time for us to:

- **Ground ourselves in our best values.**
- **Study the theory and practical uses of nonviolence.**
- **Study how to build powerful nonviolent grassroots movements for social and political change.**
- **Inform and empower large numbers of ordinary people to come together into grassroots movements that will use strategic nonviolence to solve local and national problems.**

For more resources and free consultation, contact Glen Anderson, (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net