

DECALOGUE FOR A PLANET IN IMMINENT PERIL

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Live simply that others may simply live.

Quaker Proverb

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, a *Decalogue* is a “fundamental set of rules having authoritative weight.” This Decalogue is basically a reminder to me of the ethical/moral relationship I aspire to have with the biosphere and all its components.

- (1) I will not cease efforts to protect and restore the biosphere, even in the context of bad news about its condition.
- (2) I will not willingly engage in unsustainable practices, no matter how many people espouse them.
- (3) I will do everything in my power to avoid contributing to either ecological overshoot or ecological deficits.
- (4) Nothing relieves me of the responsibility for leaving a habitable planet for posterity and for other life forms.
- (5) I must continually confront the ethical/moral question: “Which of my actions promote biospheric integrity and health- which do not?”
- (6) I fear not for the future of life on Earth – at least until the sun becomes a red star. I do fear serious disruption of the planet’s evolutionary processes.
- (7) I fear not that present irresponsible and unethical behavior is a threat to civilization and even the human species. I affirm that I will act responsibly to the best of my ability.
- (8) I pledge to use less fossil sunlight since the post-peak-oil era that humankind is now entering is a serious threat to both civilization and the planet. Coal is a dangerous substitute for petroleum. Biofuels raise the price of food (e.g., corn), endangering the over 800,000 people the United Nations reports are starving.
- (9) I will seek to understand and pay attention to nature’s warnings and lead a life that is harmonious with natural systems and the species that comprise them.
- (10) Since the survival of humankind has depended upon the continuation of the conditions provided by the biospheric life support system (BLSS) for the 160,000 years humans have lived on Earth, I will do everything in my power to preserve the BLSS in its present form. If the effort fails, I am prepared to accept that Darwin’s dice will roll again.

This is a first attempt to express what has been on my mind since the climate change, energy, and population crises made the present situation the worst emergency *Homo sapiens* has encountered. I do not think the Decalogue should be lengthy, but suggestions for improvement are welcome.

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