

## Essay 9-2014 Activism, Revelation, Change

We live, fortunately, in a democracy. Although our representative democracy is abused, distorted, imperfect, and manipulated by plutocratic and ideological forces, it is our best means to facilitate change and deal with our serious planetary problems.

Our Nation is based on ideas and perspectives stemming from 1776 - based largely on European and traditional Christian values and assumptions. At that time, due to 'New World' and Colonial perspectives, the planet seemed infinite: land, water, air were all in abundance and there for the taking. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, also in 1776, codified and expanded upon many of those assumptions.

These 18th century assumptions - even today, some 250 years later! - are the backbone of our present political and economic philosophies. These 18th century foundations have been repeated, inculcated, and espoused for several centuries. They form the foundation of our culture, our mindset, our national philosophy. They have been repeated and taught so often that they are no longer explicit, not even implicit, assumptions. They have become 'facts' and are hard-wired into our neuronal networks. The result is ongoing political and economic behavior which is changing the planet and the species living on it. We have come to *believe* that **Growth is good** - that 'a rising tide lifts all boats', that there's room and resources for all, that there are no substantive 'externalities'. Go forth, populate, expand, grow, enjoy.

Many reading this essay are likely of a different mindset. *We* understand limits, we understand constraints, we can separate reality from belief-based fantasy - and from old, now inappropriate historical assumptions.

*Our* challenge is to change the growth-based philosophy inherent in our government and our economics. We must make our society's fundamental *growth* assumption *explicit* - and then change it. **That means a rethinking and major revision of very fundamental and ingrained religious and cultural ideologies and doctrines.**

Most people know Earth is finite and that her air, oceans, land are being polluted. They know it is man and her growth-based, material-intensive, energy consuming economy that is producing the externalities degrading the planet.

The issue is *not* Science, or critical thinking, or facts, or objectivity... the issue is *Belief*. If you choose to *Believe* in something very strongly - to adopt a position very strongly - no amount of other input will change your Belief. It takes a private revelation to really change.

Upton Sinclair said it best:

*"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it."*

Brains become re-wired by major, often emotional, irrational events. We call such 're-wiring' a revelation, a Eureka moment. *Revelation* is the preferred term in Utah. One can also evolve as the result of many individual perhaps incremental exposures to a particular concept or fact. That's when we say 'I get it!' That's why real educators never give up.

That's where we come in. Most of Utah's population is semantically sheltered and 'protected' from uncomfortable issues and concepts, residing in a very ideologic self-reinforcing echo chamber.

They need to hear and see different words spoken and written - by people and candidates which otherwise seem to be reasonable. Eventually the new words will seem less of a threat. Some, hopefully many, will experience personal revelations, facilitated by you - and me. That will influence their words, positions, and votes - and that will lead to Change.

Your continued '**Activism**' helps facilitate personal *Revelations* which then lead to **Change**. That's the equation.

We need much more 'revelation engineering'. We must write, converse, sing, meet, march, protest, e-mail, post, and Tweet. Revelations can happen - 'engineering' helps!

Since everything is connected, any subject which 'turns you on' can be the basis of actions challenging growth and other problematic assumptions. Here are some examples:

Local newspapers encourage submission of letters and opinion pieces (op-eds). Utah's chapter of CCL ( [www.citizensclimatelobby.org](http://www.citizensclimatelobby.org) ) has been very effective in getting its carbon tax and dividend ideas in print;

Local academics are influencing their retirement fund, [www.tiaa-cref.org](http://www.tiaa-cref.org) , to offer a fund fully divested of fossil fuel-based firms;

local clean air groups have succeeded in gaining major attention, concern, and some legislative action to address Utah's very serious particulate and ozone air pollution challenges;

local mayors and planning agencies are being challenged to revise their assumptions as to population doubling in 25 years;

[www.utahpop.org](http://www.utahpop.org) has active programs related to genuine progress, carbon footprint and small families. Their [www.smallfamilies.us](http://www.smallfamilies.us) site and media campaign has had significant local impact. Mark Thomas, on their Board, has authored: *Truth, Population, and Mormon Symbolism*, a short essay to address the interests and concerns of those in the LDS/Mormon community.

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