

## **TIME - Perspectives, Patience, and Action**

Remarks by Joe Andrade at  
5th Amazing Earthfest, Kanab, Utah; May 15, 2011  
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Time.

We live in the present.

We look towards the past – to our parents and grandparents – and to the future,  
via our kids and grandchildren.

Our overall time 'window' is about 100 years – 50 years from the present to the past;  
50 years from today into the future – roughly 5 generations.

We live in the immediate present on a land and a Planet with a very long history. Our cultural traditions go back 500, 2,000, 10,000, and even 50,000 years. Our general anatomy evolved over the last 5 million years – give or take. Our biochemistry is based on the very earliest life on Earth – over 3 billion years ago.

Everything we experience and know is based on and dependent on physical laws and processes set in place and in motion with the birth of the Universe – some 12 or so billion years ago – give or take. The Birth of the Universe is what nearly all educated humans today refer to as the Creation Event - the 'Big Bang' – perhaps the work of a 'Great Spirit' or God.

For the last 2 million years or so, since the evolution of our big and diversified brains, we have wondered and pondered who we are, why we are here, and where we are going.

Our big brain is very good at taking in information from the world around us, using our experience and memory to fill in for information we do not have, and presenting us with scenarios for what may be going on. We then select or choose a scenario, perhaps discuss and embellish it, and develop a Story – to help us make 'sense' of the world.

We don't like uncertainty or mystery. We use our stories to explain what we don't know. And we develop new stories for new mysteries or concerns. Where did we come from? Why must we die? What's after death?

We developed creation stories and myths. We defined gods and goddesses. The Greeks called their Earth goddess Gaia.

We tell those stories, we embellish them, we write them down; they become comfortable. They become accepted. And many of those stories – in many cultures – are codified and some become considered sacred.

Gods are the basis of religions. At first there were many – we had gods for everything: fire, war, air, water,...on and on. Later on many of us became comfortable with a single God. We adopted mono-theistic or Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These monotheistic religions trace their history back 3,000 years, give or take. We found

these beliefs, rituals, and structure to be comforting.

Thousands of years ago we did not know the origins or basis of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes – we attributed them to Acts of God. If God was pleased with us, good things were expected to happen. If bad things happened, He was obviously displeased. So we developed commandments, prayers, rituals, and sacrifices to please Him.

We now know that natural disasters are indeed natural – the result of living on a young, dynamic, and unpredictable planet.

We did not understand disease, famine, plagues, inherited and mental disorders. We often attributed such problems to God's displeasure – or that God is 'testing' us – or that Satan or other evil spirits are invading us. So we developed scapegoats, such as witches. We developed exorcism rituals; we performed sacrifices – all to appease and eliminate evil spirits or God's displeasure. And we continue to do so today – thousands of years after the birth of science.

Our brains like reinforcement. If we hear the same story over and over we accept it as real – as fact. We become 'hard-wired'. And once we are hard-wired about something, it's very difficult to change that wiring – to change our mind. So stuff that's been told, written, and accepted as 'gospel', as dogma, as religious 'truths' is resident – and hard-wired – in our brains. Much of that stuff makes no sense in today's modern, science-based world. We know better. But we continue to accept and even worship those ancient stories and teachings – that ancient dogma.

Some of the stories tell us we can dominate Nature – we can use the physical and biological world as we see fit. We can populate the entire Earth.

Some of those stories – those beliefs – tell some of us not to worry about limits – not to worry about fouling the planet, because God will see to it that we're taken care of. And, by the way, our time here is limited. We are destined – some of us are taught and believe – to be carried away – to participate in a Rapture or similar event which takes us beyond this finite planet. Such beliefs tend to absolve us of the need to live in such a way that the planet is not desecrated, polluted, and fouled.

We discovered fire some 50,000 years ago, coal some 800 years ago, oil some 200 years ago, and, via coal and the steam engine, we began the Industrial Revolution. In the last 100 or so years we have burned much of the oil and coal produced over hundreds of millions of years. All that burning has resulted in a dramatic change in the planet's atmosphere, resulting in major destruction of life in the oceans, climate change resulting in severe and very unpredictable weather, and the beginning of a period of the migration of hundreds of millions of climate refugees. All largely due to the wanton, excessive, and clueless burning of fossil fuels.

There's a lot we don't know – and there's a lot we'll never know. Spirituality – and even religion - may help address such mysteries.

But we must not ignore what we DO know. We should not teach our children stuff which makes no sense – and endangers our very home, the homes of our children – and the homes of their children. We need not live irresponsibly.

We are here in a beautiful natural amphitheater, constructed of rocks and minerals,

some of which were formed over 200 million years ago. The biological matter produced and deposited over those hundreds of millions of years has transformed to the coal, oil, and natural gas we burn today. We are taking 200 million years of biological production – and we and fellow humans are trying to burn most of it in a hundred or so years!

This planet is about 5 billion years old. Life evolved some 3 to almost 4 billion years ago. Man goes back only 5 million or so years – industrial man only a little over 100 years – just a handful of generations. And those industrial men – including you and me – are dramatically changing this planet in an instant in time.

We are supposed to have big brains, be clever and smart creatures, be cooperative and even altruistic – and yet we cannot accept that we must change our economic and industrial ways – our lifestyle – in order to protect the planet for mankind.

We must transform.

The planet will survive. It is men and women – and particularly the younger among us - our kids, and perhaps their kids - who will likely not survive. That's not an exaggeration.

So action is required. Immediate action. Political and personal action. If we each do not take immediate and very strong action, our children will not forgive us.

It's about living sustainably – really sustainably. That's what this Invocation and Amazing Earthfest are about.

We cannot wait for politicians who claim they 'believe' otherwise.

No rapture will save us. No blessing, or priest, or indulgence, or wishful thinking.

Our metamorphosis – our transformation – is up to you.  
Get mad. Get active. Get busy.

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