**A Cruel, Greedy Worldview Is What’s Really in Charge**

This issue of ***Works in Progress*** asks who is in charge. Actually, the problem is WHAT is in charge. For several decades an overall worldview has been increasingly dominating the U.S. and some parts of the world. We need to replace that with the opposite worldview.

A “worldview” is the overall perspective from which someone – or a group of persons or a society as a whole – sees and interprets the world. A “worldview” reflects assumptions and beliefs about what is real – and therefore about what we should do. The way you see the world will largely drive how you interact with the world. Your view of reality will largely drive you either to reinforce or to change the status quo.

A person who believes the world is inherently cruel and unjust will likely behave cruelly and unjustly in order to cope with it. But a person with a better worldview and better values will work from the grassroots up to solve problems and make the world a better place – more peaceful, more fair, and more sustainable.

Therefore, in addition to working on the specific issues we care about, let’s also confront the dominant worldview at the macro level and explicitly promote a better overall worldview. Our better worldview will provide context and support for our work on the specific issues.

**A cruel and short-sighted worldview currently dominates the U.S. and controls our foreign policy, domestic policies, economic system, and many other aspects of our nation. Its assumptions and premises include these:**

* It’s a tough world out there.
* You’ve got to look out for #1, arm yourself and use violence to get your way.
* Success means dominating other people and other nations.
* You win by conquering and using all of the natural resources.

**Decent people want to replace that with the opposite worldview, so we can create a humane and sustainable world:**

* Affirm every person’s inherent human worth, dignity and equality.
* Make sure everybody’s needs are met.
* Practice nonviolence.
* Respect nature and natural environments.

The dominant worldview assumes that “might makes right” and legitimizes violence. It assumes scarcity and greed (instead of sharing), competition (instead of sharing), polarization and fear (instead of welcome and inclusion), militaristic foreign policy (instead of peace), punishment (instead of rehabilitation), governments and economics that serves the powerful elites (instead of serving the broad public interest), and abusing the environment (instead of interacting sustainably with nature).

Ordinary people’s incomes peaked in 1976 or 1977. People’s anger and fear about their economic loss have been hijacked by the right wing and targeted at other victims instead of the real culprits: abusive capitalists.

The dominant worldview’s lack of empathy allows selfishness, greed, cruelty and oppression to hurt people and the natural world. Polarization into “us” vs. “them” hurts people and society as a whole. Some politicians use “divide-and-conquer” tactics to oppress certain demographic groups. The currently dominant worldview imposes systemic, institutional violence in many ways.

The dominant worldview includes “the arrogance of power,” a main aspect of U.S. foreign policy and our endless, unwinnable wars that keep choosing violence instead of honestly seeking fairness and peace.

What is the role of government? The dominant worldview’s negative view prevents government from solving problems, so Big Business can be free to control and abuse everything. In contrast, ordinary people really do want the government to protect us from exploitation and pollution, and to provide useful services for the broad public interest. We really do need good laws, regulations, and services – and a progressive tax system so the richest people pay their fair share.

Recently – especially with Trump and Republican dominance – the dominant worldview has gotten even worse. We’re experiencing more greed, corruption, entitlement, divide + conquer, racism, sexism, blatant lies, attacks on nature, attacks on democracy, attacks on independent free press, and so forth. Deliberate lies have increased. Political conflict has become toxic.

Many Democratic leaders also are subservient to Wall Street, militaristic foreign policy, and other aspects of the dominant worldview. As a result, these Democratic leaders fail to take strong actions to expose Trump, hold him accountable, or mobilize public opposition that could protect us from his fascist policies.

**Each of these two worldviews could lead to very different results in how we conduct our society and how we interact with the rest of the world.** Each worldview could drive our nation in opposite directions regarding foreign policy, domestic policies, economic systems, how we treat other people and the environment, and other aspects of our society. The alternative, humane worldview’s assumptions and premises could significantly improve our nation and the whole world.

For many years, public opinion polls have continually showed that most Americans think our nation is “on the wrong track.” This is largely because the currently dominant worldview has been violating people’s better values and hurting our society and our world. That worldview causes greed, corruption, cruelty, oppression, and other problems.

We must replace that worldview with an alternative worldview that is humane, compassionate, peaceful, fair to everyone, and environmentally sustainable. Actually, most people have better hearts and better sense – and they want a better worldview. Public opinion polls keep showing that most Americans want progressive solutions to political problems.

My blog – **www.parallaxperspectives.org** – offers many resources on the topics discussed in this article. Especially see items I’ve posted in the category for “Our Current Political Crisis.”

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