

SIMPLE

Two and more years ago we elected a president, a new kind of president: Get out of Afghanistan — and get out of Iraq NOW, and do away with 700 world-wide bases, slash the Pentagon budget in half, and only allow them to use that to bring people home — leave the junk, payment for causing other countries a pain in the butt. That is what I thought we had voted for.

Now we know that none of that is going to happen. As far as our warring is concerned, we seem to stay on the same path. In a way, perhaps, it is not important because there are other issues, global issues, that are far more important than what one country is doing or not doing.

For the past ten and more years I have been increasingly indignant that Americans were not allowed to understand what is happening to our planet. For eight years we weren't supposed to even think about it. The economy was more important, remember? Well, the economy collapsed.

In a background which should be center stage there is climate change, one of the consequences of global warming, which is the consequence of our vaunted global industrialization. Whatever we call the planetary warming, droughts and floods, storms, extreme heat and cold — it is the Planet responding to our human destruction of the earth and our severe interference in nature.

Man's foot print on the earth has grown to monstrous proportions in the last 50 years. We, humans, use in one year five times (some people say six) as much resources as the planet can produce in one year. We dig up and then burn stuff that took ages to form. In other words we are plundering the earth as well as destroying our only home.

Can you think of anything more stupid?

The answer is not alternative fuels. It is **less** energy use. A lot less. An awful lot less. Europeans who live as well as or better than we, use half the energy we use in our houses. Why do we have to have a bathroom for every person in the house. Why do we have to have a bedroom for everybody in a house. Why do we have to own a car for every person over the age of 16.

Solar energy is a lovely idea — I would like to make my little house solar, but I cannot afford it. More important: do we have any idea what **consequences** there might be if/when we cover the Mojave Desert with solar cells, mirrors, and other necessities?

Our society, our culture, has forgotten that all force has a counter-force. That is a law of the universe. We finally learned (we knew that 50 years ago) that burning oil and coal spews all kinds of poisons in the air. Only now are we experiencing the consequences.

There are at least two billion people on earth who live on less than \$365 a year (\$1 a day), and another more than a billion on \$2 a day. Say half the human population of the planet (now 6.9 billion) is desperately poor on a planet where a few of the elite owns most of what we call *wealth*.

It is estimated that 4000 **more** children die per **day** than before the economic/financial meltdown.

We don't need **more** plug-in hybrids, or cars running on corn, or electric cars, we need **fewer** cars.

My suggestion for GM if they want to stay alive is to make buses, trains, mass transport. Infinitely more effective, and cheaper than what we have now.

Having an empty? Maybe clean up your house, do away with all the stuff you acquired but really do not need.

Rather than exchanging pictures on Facebook how about getting back to actually meeting each other face to face.

Simple things: turn your water heater off when you don't need it—which for most people is almost all day and all night. I turn mine on 7 minutes before I take a shower, and turn it off immediately after I'm dry. Almost \$15 a month off my electric bill.

Buy locally grown food, it's cheaper and an awful lot healthier. Grow your own, it's much easier than you think.

Do we need all the clothes and shoes that are molding in closets?

Why do we buy things when they are on sale when we have no real use for them.

We need the earth, nature. We are a part of nature, we are made of the stuff of this planet. We think we can conquer nature — what a laugh!

There have been movements for at least a century called **Voluntary Simplicity**. It works. It not only saves energy, it also emits no poisons, gives you a better diet, health, and it is positively happy-making. Try it; you'll find it fun.

It's not for nothing that almost all religious teachers that I know treasure and preach the benefits of living a simple life.

A simple life is living in close harmony with one's environment. In the tropics you don't need much. If you live in parts of the world that have winters and summers you need to look ahead, grow and save food for the winter, have warm clothes. If you live in the Arctic you build your house of blocks of snow (excellent insulation). If you live in a jungle you make your house of bamboo that grows all around.

How many TVs do you need in one house? How many DVD players, computers, telephones, electric can openers, electric tooth brushes...?

Here's a quote

*"Yet the day after his new-reserve-currency speech, Mr. Zhou [Zhou Xiaochuan, the governor of China's central bank] gave another speech in which he seemed to assert that China's extremely high savings rate is immutable, a result of Confucianism, which values **"anti-extravagance."** ...*

NY Times, oped, Paul Krugman, april 3, '09

I like "anti-extravagance" — does an anti-word sound okay though?

I also like living within one's means.

I like doing the little things like turning off lights where I don't need light.

If I have to go to the village I plan to do three, four, or more errands in one trip.

I grow all my veggies. Have to protect them from wild chickens but otherwise easy.

I like to be free of obligations, have clear relationships, like my own company as well.

I really like Voluntary Simplicity.

robert wolff, may 2009, february 2011