

acknowledge the issue of the human condition—and, as will later be described at some length, manage the confronting truth of the extent of our corruption of self (that the explanation of the human condition necessarily exposes) in a most effective, TRANSFORMING way.

Part 2:5 The Propositions, by Jeremy Griffith

The overall submission I am making today is that through the finding of understanding of the human condition your life, and the lives of all humans, can at last be TRANSFORMED from a human-condition-afflicted state to a state that is effectively FREE of the human condition. As extraordinary, even outrageous, as this statement sounds, over the next few hours I plan to validate it by establishing the following fabulous propositions—and I want to outline these propositions now because while they may seem bold now, when I come back to them at the end of this presentation you might in fact find you agree with them:

The First Proposition is that what is to be presented will explain the fundamental paradox of the human condition—explain how we humans could be good, wonderful and worthwhile when all the evidence seems to unequivocally indicate that we are the very opposite of good, wonderful and worthwhile.



Cartoon by Michael Leunig, Melbourne's *The Age* newspaper, 8 Oct. 1988

This masterpiece by the Australian cartoonist Michael Leunig truthfully depicts all the horrors of the human condition. What is so brave about this cartoon is that it defies the historical and now deeply habituated practice of denial of the issue of the human condition and instead fully resurrects and confronts us squarely with the issue. Leunig has been contributing cartoons to and writing for Australian newspapers since 1965 and in that time has produced innumerable brilliantly honest, insightful and therapeutically revealing cartoons about all aspects of our species' troubled condition. This one, which first appeared in Melbourne's leading newspaper, *The Age*, on 8 October 1988, is in my view one of his best.

This is not a picture of a lovely ordered city park where people peacefully and happily enjoy themselves, as we all too easily prefer to delude ourselves that the world we have created is like. Rather, it shows a mother and child approaching the '**Gardens of the Human Condition**' with an expression of bewildered dread on the face of the mother, and in the case of the child, wide-eyed shock. With this cartoon, Leunig has boldly revealed the truth that we humans have been a brutally angry, hateful, destructive, arrogant, egocentric, selfish, mad, lonely, unhappy and psychologically depressed species. He has people fighting, beating and strangling each other, drunk out of their minds, depressed, lonely, crying, hiding and suiciding, going mad and egocentrically holding forth—reflecting, in effect, every aspect of the human condition. And he has further highlighted the issue of the extreme imperfection of our lives by identifying all this behaviour as actually being the issue of our human condition, labelling the park the '**Gardens of the Human Condition**'.

Even more exposing—and confronting—is his reference to '**Gardens**', which suggests that our behaviour now is an extremely corrupted version of an original, innocent, idyllic, pre-conscious and thus pre-human-condition-afflicted '**Garden of Eden**' state that the Bible (and indeed all our mythologies) maintain our pre-conscious ancestors once lived in. If the human race has departed from a state of original innocence and we haven't been able to explain why it did, then it is no wonder we are insecure about the imperfection of human life now; the issue of the human condition *would* elicit unbearable condemnation for being such a mean, brutal and savagely behaved species now. And, in fact, what will be explained in Part 3:4 of this presentation is that there *was* a time before we became a fully conscious species when we were free of egocentricity, anger and alienation—a time of innocence before there was even an issue called the human condition. And as a result, we *do* carry a very deep insecurity and resulting psychosis about our species' current extremely imperfect, less-than-ideal behaviour—and because of that, we *have* lived in denial of the human condition.

The reality is it hasn't been psychologically safe for humans to confront, admit and address the issue of the human condition until it could be explained and understood. So with this cartoon Leunig broke all the rules. He bravely put the term 'human condition' up front and centre, and honestly depicted it as relating to the bewildering mystery of the extreme imperfection of human life now—in fact, to the psychological anguish that our capacity for anger, selfishness, cruelty and meanness, our extraordinary capacity for 'inhumanity' towards each other, has caused us, *if* we allowed ourselves to think about it.

The fact of the matter is we have lived in near total denial of not just the issue of the human condition, but any thoughts that even remotely brought it into focus. And we certainly evaded the most difficult aspect of the human condition—how it relates to us personally, to our own imperfections, to the issue of 'self'.

I should also say that not only is the human condition the most difficult of subjects for humans to think about and look at because it involves self-confrontation, it is also a difficult subject for humans to engage in because it is the area of enquiry where religion and science, faith and reason finally overlap. When our objective, scientific analysis of the mechanisms and workings of our world finally finds the insights that make it possible to explain the human condition, science at that moment enters the subjective domain of the human condition where our spiritual faiths and beliefs have operated—reason and faith are finally reconciled. Objectivity and subjectivity, materialism and spiritualism meet when the human condition is addressed and explained, but this collision of two previously very separate domains can cause great anxiety, about which more will be said later.

Involving as it does these difficulties of self-confrontation and the massive religion-and-science-reconciling-paradigm-shift, it should not come as a surprise that the human condition has been the most contentious of subjects—*so* contentious that some people even believed it was a subject that could never, and should never, be opened up. The entry for ‘sin’ in *The Bible Reader’s Encyclopedia and Concordance*, for instance, maintains that **‘The problem of the origin and universality of sin...is probably one of those problems which the human mind can never satisfactorily answer.’** The American spiritual teacher Ram Dass held the same view in his 1977 book *Grist for the Mill*, when, in posing the question **‘Why did we [fall from grace] in the first place?’**, he answered, **‘That is the question which is the ultimate question [and] your subject-object mind can’t know the answer to that question.’** But while the issue of the human condition *has* been so terrifying that some people believed it could never be addressed, the truth is at some stage it *had to be* addressed and explained for there to be a future for the human race. To bring about the peaceful, integrated, environmentally considerate world we all seek we ultimately had to address and find understanding of our less-than-ideal, divisive competitive, aggressive, selfish nature—because without the reconciling, ameliorating explanation for *why* we humans have been divisively behaved the underlying insecurity about being divisively behaved would only continue; humans would, in effect, be condemned to a life of perpetual insecurity and thus ever-increasing levels of upset, angry, divisive and destructive behaviour and, consequently, ever-increasing levels of deadening denial or alienation to cope with the horror of that behaviour. *Only* the clarifying, dignifying, reconciling and redeeming biological understanding of the dilemma of the human condition could heal the underlying insecurity of that condition and, by so doing, bring an end to all the devastation, distress and suffering in the world.

But until we were able to explain the human condition and thus lift ‘the burden of guilt’, reconcile ‘good’ and ‘evil’, make sense of the dark side of ourselves, explain why we became so competitive, aggressive and selfish, we could not pacify our troubled nature, dismantle our psychosis; we would not feel, as it were, ‘welcomed back into God’s fold’, feel accepted on Earth, feel understood and appreciated. We needed to find the reconciling, redeeming understanding of ourselves—and it is precisely that crucial, all-important understanding that is going to be presented.

The overall point to be made here is that we humans have an unspeakable history of greed, hatred, brutality, rape, torture, persecution, murder and war—a propensity for deeds of shocking violence, depravity, indifference and cruelty. Despite all our marvellous

accomplishments, we humans have been the most ferocious and destructive force the world has ever known. And yet the very first proposition I'll be making here is that what is going to be revealed is that we humans are, in fact, not just fundamentally good, wonderful and worthwhile, but the absolute heroes of the story of life on Earth! So that's the extreme paradox of the human condition that I am proposing we are going to make sense of: how we humans are good, even divine beings, when we appear to be the complete opposite.



Cartoon by Michael Leunig, Melbourne's *The Age* newspaper, 17 Mar. 1984

In yet another brilliant cartoon, Michael Leunig has succinctly dared to ask this fundamental question of 'What does the chaotic, traumatic and strife-torn life of humans all mean—how are we to make sense of our existence?' He's done so by placing a very perplexed and distressed gentleman behind an 'understandascope', through which he peers into a sea of apparent madness. Everywhere he looks there is tumultuous congestion: there are people furiously arguing and fighting with each other; there is a church where people pray for forgiveness and salvation; and there are vehicles polluting the chaos with fumes and noise. *And*, in this 1984 drawing Leunig even seems to have predicted a climactic demonstration of all our human excesses and frustrations when, on September 11, 2001, terrorists flew planes into the tall, square-shaped towers of the World Trade Center in New York City!

Well, it is precisely this great mystery of ‘What is wrong with us humans?’ — ‘How are we to understand it all?’ — ‘How are we to make sense of human existence?’ — that is going to be answered. The explanation to be given *is* the ‘UNDERSTANDASCOPE’ we have always wanted, needed and sought.

Indeed, the following picture of endless grey suburbia in California is just another example of what we need an ‘understandascope’ to make sense of, for it depicts the apparent destiny of the world—I suggest—since California sits at the cutting edge of supposed world progress.



An article from *TIME* magazine (2 Nov. 2009) bears out these fears. The cover features the heading, ‘**Why California is still America’s Future**’, underneath which the editors have added the aside ‘**and that’s a good thing too**’ in brackets. This subtext has seemingly been included because arguing ‘**Why California is still America’s Future**’ leaves the reader thinking, ‘Well, if California is at the cutting edge of development and progress, and it is in dire straits, then surely that is a terrifying prospect for us all.’ To avoid that reaction the editors evidently realised they needed to add a pre-emptive, ‘No, no, what we’re trying to say is that it is going to be a positive story.’

Despite the article’s positive spin, about cutting edge developments, like clean technologies, being pioneered in California, it does begin with some honesty: ‘**California, you may have heard, is an apocalyptic mess, soaring unemployment, mass foreclosures and political paralysis. It’s dysfunctional. It’s ungovernable. Its bond rate is barely above junk...The media portray California as a noir fantasyland of over-crowded schools, perpetual droughts, celebrity breakdowns, illegal immigration, hellish congestion and general malaise.**’ It also mentions ‘**California’s wipeout economy**’ [‘Why California Is Still America’s Future (And That’s a Good Thing Too)’, Michael Grunwald, *TIME* mag. 2 Nov. 2009].

While the article goes on to paint a positive picture, its descriptions of an end play situation unfolding in California are closer to the truth. Shortly, however, when the human condition is explained, it will become apparent *why* we have always had to maintain a positive, brave front—for deep within the human make-up, there is an intuitive belief that one day we would be able to find the liberating, redeeming and totally TRANSFORMING understanding of ourselves and although the situation became more and more desperate each day, we have always had to cling onto that hope, keep believing in a positive outcome for the human race.

This situation of needing to find that much hoped-for redeeming understanding of the human condition before we destroyed ourselves and our planet was perfectly summarised by the Australian journalist Richard Neville, when he wrote that **‘The world is hurtling to catastrophe: from nuclear horrors, a wrecked ecosystem, 20 million dead each year from malnutrition, 600 million chronically hungry...All these crises are man made, their causes are psychological. The cures must come from this same source; which means the planet needs psychological maturity...fast. We are locked in a race between self destruction and self discovery’** (*Good Weekend* mag. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 Oct. 1986). This is a precise description of the situation the human race has been in—we have been **‘locked in a race between self destruction and self discovery.’**

Catch phrases of our time such as ‘self-discovery’, ‘human potential’ and ‘self-esteem’ stress this yearning for psychological maturity, self-realisation and self-justification, but the ability to appreciate and love ourselves ultimately depended on being able to understand ourselves—discover *why* we have been less than ideally behaved, in fact capable of horrific atrocities.

So while these cartoons and news articles provide some indication of the dire straits the world is in, it is the ability to turn this dire situation into one where all the problems faced by the world are solved through finding redeeming understanding of the human condition (as we have always hoped, even at the eleventh hour, that they would be) that is the basis of the next proposition.

The Second Proposition is that the seemingly hopeless situation facing the human race is going to suddenly be made entirely hopeful, in fact incredibly exciting.

Improved forms of management such as better laws, better politics and better economics—and better self-management, such as new ways of disciplining, organising, motivating or even transcending our troubled natures—have all failed to end the march towards ever greater levels of devastation and unhappiness. Indeed, as the article on California illustrated, we have entered an end play or end game situation on Earth where the planet cannot absorb any further devastation from the effects of our behaviour, nor can the human body for that matter endure any more debilitating stress and alienation.

Clearly only a change at the fundamental level of human behaviour can redeem the situation, save us from the prospect of terminal destruction. The following are some quotes I would like to read to you along those lines—that we need a fundamental change, that *only* a fundamental change can make a difference, because without the dignifying, reconciling, redeeming biological insight into our species’ good-and-evil-afflicted condition, humanity would forever remain, as it has been, besieged and stalled by the distress of that condition, rapidly festering—dying in fact.

The first quote comes from the British historian Eric Hobsbawm described the stark predicament facing humanity when he wrote that **‘The alternative to a changed society—is darkness’** (*Age of Extremes*, 1994). The 1991 film *Separate but Equal* also accurately articulated our plight as a species through the dialogue of one character: **‘Struggling between two worlds; one dead, the other powerless to be born’**—words which echo those of the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci: **‘The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appears’** (*Prison Notebooks*, written during Gramsci’s 10-year imprisonment under Mussolini, 1927–1937).

Yes, until understanding of the human condition was found we *were* **‘powerless’** to change our society—**‘the new cannot be born’**. The Australian politician Lionel Bowen alluded to the futility of trying to reform our lives and world without first finding the ameliorating understanding of ourselves when he said, **‘I think it’s just impossible to bring about change until such time as some new civilisation develops to allow change’** (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 Sept. 1988).

Only a whole new way of thinking, in particular the reconciling, redeeming and healing way of understanding ourselves, and resulting new TRANSFORMED civilisation could alter our species’ plight. We had arrived at a situation where humanity *desperately* needed clear biological understanding of ourselves, understanding that would make sense of our divisive condition and liberate us from criticism, lift the psychological burden of guilt, give us meaning. There *had* to be a scientific, first-principle-based, biological reason for our divisive behaviour and finding it had become a matter of great urgency. The **‘race’** that Richard Neville so accurately identified we were **‘locked in...between self destruction and self discovery’** had reached crisis point.

Stranded in a state of insecurity about our worthiness or otherwise was to be stranded in a terminally upset, psychologically immature state of arrested development, as Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1868 and again from 1874–1880, recognised, **‘Stranded halfway between ape and angel is no place to stop.’** The Anglo-Irish essayist Jonathan Swift’s anguished cry to **‘Not die here in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole’** (Letter to Bolingbroke, 21 Mar. 1729) did not exaggerate the truth of our species’ plight. The Spanish cellist Pablo Casals similarly emphasised the danger of our stalled state when he said, **‘The situation is hopeless, we must take the next step’** (at a press conference in Madrid, on the occasion of his 80th [approx.] birthday). The Australian journalist Doug Anderson made the same point when he said, **‘Time may well be dwindling for us to enlighten ourselves...Tragic to die of thirst half a yard from the well’** (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Oct. 1994). In saying **‘enlighten ourselves’**, Anderson was intimating that only understanding ourselves, understanding the human condition no less, could make the difference that was needed. In quoting clinical psychologist Maureen O’Hara, the science

reporter Richard Eckersley acknowledged that **‘humanity is either standing on the brink of “a quantum leap in human psychological capabilities or heading for a global nervous breakdown”’** (*Values and Visions: Western Culture and Humanity’s Future*, Address by Richard Eckersley, Nov. 1995; Accessed 11 Nov. 2009 at: <<http://centreforchange.org/webmagart6a.html>>). I think I like this last quote best of them all, but all express the seriousness of the situation.

It is precisely this **‘enlightenment’** of **‘ourselves’** that makes possible a **‘quantum leap in human psychological capabilities’** that I’m asserting is going to be presented—yes, finding understanding of the human condition is the *real* game-changer the human race has been waiting for, such that when only yesterday the levels of human suffering and distress and anger and environmental degradation from the effects of our horrifically troubled, upset human condition seemed irredeemable and irreversible, and all looked hopeless, suddenly people are going to appear who are inspired and TRANSFORMED, *so* inspired and TRANSFORMED in fact they are super-charged on a super-highway to a fabulous future for the human race.

The Third Proposition is that once the incredible opportunity to be TRANSFORMED to a state free of the horror of the human condition (which understanding of the human condition at last makes possible) catches on, support for this WORLD TRANSFORMATION MOVEMENT will sweep the world and carry all before it. In fact, so quick and complete will be the change from a world of conflict and suffering to a world of peace and happiness that it will seem instant—as if one day the human race is living in a state of immense turmoil, bewildering confusion and utter despair and the next day it’s all over: an entirely new peaceful world will have emerged.

The Fourth Proposition is that in the future all schooling will begin with the basic presentation that is going to be given today—and all classes and grades thereafter will simply keep fleshing out the concept, as we will also begin to do today. So instead of lots of different subjects, all information will be integrated under one subject: explanation of the human condition. Instead of learning apparently unrelated subjects like mathematics and history and chemistry and spelling, all knowledge will be taught in the context of the human condition; it will be about understanding ourselves and our world, and be presented in a structured, authentic way, beginning with who we humans are. All knowledge will be integrated properly. We will have a consilience or reconciliation of all knowledge.

The Fifth Proposition is that this information will make sense of and reconcile all the opposites in the human situation. It will reconcile:

- ‘good’ and ‘evil’
- yin and yang
- light and dark
- idealism and realism
- instinct and intellect
- ‘I feel’ and ‘I think’
- soul and mind
- heart and head
- emotion and reason
- conscience and conscious
- ignorance and wisdom
- the pure and the corrupted
- the innocent and the guilty
- the happy and the upset
- the light-hearted and heavy-hearted
- the unembattled and the heroic
- the selfless and the selfish
- altruism and egotism
- the cooperative and the competitive
- the gentle and the aggressive
- the loving and the hateful
- the integrative and the divisive
- the ‘Godly’ and the ‘unGodly’
- the secure and the insecure
- the sound and the alienated
- the honest and the dishonest
- the natural and the artificial
- the non-sexual and the sexual
- the financially poor and financially rich
- the spiritually rich and spiritually poor
- spiritualism and materialism
- young and old
- the unresigned and the resigned
- women and men
- blacks and whites
- religion and science
- instinctualism and intellectualism
- holism/teleology and mechanism/reductionism
- left-wing and right-wing
- socialism and capitalism
- country and city

And we could go on. Basically all the duality of the human situation, all the poles of the human condition, will be reconciled by this explanation. This is because when understanding of the human condition is found, as you are about to discover it now has been, it is as though a great impasse in the human journey of conscious thought and enquiry has been breached, allowing access to an absolute flood of answers to all the fundamental questions we humans have been asking since time immemorial about ourselves and our world—in particular: ‘Does God exist and if so what exactly is God and why does he allow suffering, and why is he referred to as male, and why are we all equal before his eyes; what does our existence all mean; why was I born; what is the point and purpose of our lives; what are we doing on

Earth; who are we and where are we going; what is the meaning of existence; what is “life” and how did it begin; what is our soul, how did we acquire it, and what has happened to it; did the human race once live in a Garden of Eden innocent state and, if so, why did we have to leave it, and most importantly how can we return to it; where does our moral sense or conscience come from; what is consciousness, intelligence and thought; are we shaped by nature or by nurture; how are men and women different; why do we fall in love; how do we explain sex as humans practice it; what is our sense of humour based on; why do we live such superficial, artificial, material lives; why is there so much loneliness, suffering, unhappiness, inequality and hunger and will they ever end; can we ever become truly moral beings; what causes human alienation, aggression, selfishness, competitiveness, envy, greed, hate, lust and egocentricity; how do we explain the dark side of human nature, or, in religious terms, what is the origin of ‘sin’, how do we explain the existence of ‘good and evil’ in the world, and is this duality in the human make-up going to continue forever; what does “left” and “right” wing in politics actually mean, and why do we have politics; why are people racist, sexist and elitist; why are children neglected the world over; why wars and will they ever stop; why did those people fly those planes into those buildings; why are humans religious and were prophets such as Christ humans like everyone else and, if so, why did they become so revered and even deified; what happens and where will I go when I die, and why do I have to die; what and where is “heaven” and “hell”; and are questions of “will the world and even the universe end and if so how” meaningful?’ And as astonishing as it sounds, *all* these questions, and many more, *are* going to be answered and explained in first-principle-based, scientific, biological terms in the presentation you are about to hear.

So, the overall submission is that over the course of the next two hours or so we are going to introduce an understanding that will TRANSFORM the lives of all humans, the effects of which:

- will transform the world for its complete betterment
- will bring complete hope to what can seem hopeless
- gives rise to a movement that will sweep the world
- will introduce a new paradigm of understanding around which all knowledge can be integrated
- will reconcile all the opposites in the human situation

As I said, I will return to these propositions at the end of this presentation to see if you agree with each one.

WTM Patron Tim Macartney-Snape will now give you some background information about the WORLD TRANSFORMATION MOVEMENT.