

Fundamental Principles of Human Liberation

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India Chapter

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Everywhere I travel on our planet people speak of political corruption. Many of the politicians who supposedly represent their people in government are really bought and paid for by corporations, wealthy patrons, or criminal enterprises. Everywhere on Earth the wealthiest 1% run the show, the top 15 or 20% live very well, and the other 80% just struggle for survival. This wealthy minority own the mass media that misinforms and manipulates people in the interest of its class domination. They own the giant transnational corporations who use their immense wealth to corrupt and dominate people around the world in the interests of private profit.

They own the banking cartels that manipulate currencies, create dangerous financial instruments based on speculation, and engage in immense risk-taking with other people's money. They dominate once democratically elected governments in the interest of wealthy bankers, investors, and corporations. Everywhere on Earth the climate is changing, stable patterns necessary for survival and flourishing are collapsing, and every thoughtful person knows our collective human future is in great danger. Around the world there are perpetual wars, terrorism, and violence.

The big nations of the Earth, led or threatened by the global hegemon, the United States, spend immense quantities of money and resources of the Earth on military and wars, while neglecting the social welfare and human rights of their own citizens. They continue

to develop nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction along with the speed and effectiveness of delivery systems thereby continuing to keep our planet in danger of devastating sudden death for its human population and much of the planet's higher forms of life. Institutionalized secrecy, mass surveillance, and debilitating security systems encompass our planet, with horrific consequences for public information, honesty, and integrity. Despite some nine human rights conventions passed by the U.N., human rights are routinely violated in nearly every country on Earth.

Part One: Liberation Theory

It is clear to any thoughtful person that there is something fundamentally wrong about our human condition. In terms of the four quadrants that together encompass human life as developed by Ken Wilber (cf. *Integral Spirituality*, 2006), what is wrong embraces all four of these quadrants: the subjective dimension, the interpersonal-cultural dimension, the institutional dimension and basic aspects of the scientific dimension. Human beings are by and large unenlightened and unliberated subjectively, culturally, institutionally, and in terms of scientific methodologies. In Wilber's language, we are unliberated in terms of the I (subjectively), the WE (culturally and collectively), the ITS (institutionally), and the IT (in our scientific study of nature and ourselves).

Any short article, of course, runs the risk of oversimplification, and I refer interested readers to my books where these principles are more fully elaborated. However, there is a need for people to grasp the overall parameters of human liberation because these parameters determine praxis: how we act to establish institutions, cultural forms, subjective attitudes, and scientific methodologies. Understanding the broad parameters of human liberation allows us to engage effectively in the kinds of praxis necessary to make it happen. Contemporary world-class thinker, Jürgen Habermas, distinguishes the ideas of human liberation that emerged from the 18th century Enlightenment from our very different contemporary understandings. The Enlightenment thought of the human race as "constant in its essential nature." However:

Theory now deals with the objective, overall complex of development of a human species which produces itself, which is as yet only destined to attain its essence: humanity. What has remained is theory's claim to providing orientation in right action, but the realization of the good, happy, and rational life has been stretched out along the vertical axis of world history; praxis has been extended to cover stages of emancipation. (Theory and Practice, 1973, p. 253).

Across the board, the social and psychological sciences, as well as critical social thinkers, have understood that humanity is a process of development to higher stages of consciousness, cultural forms, and institutional embodiments. Human liberation requires that we study these processes of development theoretically and the kinds of praxis that make liberating development possible. In this article, I sketch an overview of these stages of development and the praxis necessary to enhance and enable them in the most effective manner possible.

One principle that has developed as a fundament for the progressive liberation of humankind is the notion of humanity as one human family: as universally equal and potentially harmonious. The caste system has been legally abolished in India and the slave-system legally abolished in the West. People today are working everywhere to abolish other forms of slavery such as bonded labor and human trafficking. The poor are realizing their intrinsic human rights that make them equal with the rich and demand actualization in equitable institutions. Women, peoples of color, and minority cultures around the world are beginning to

take their stand on the universal equality and dignity of human beings.

These principles have their roots in ancient spiritualities and philosophies (from the Greek and Roman Stoics to the Hindu Vedas to Buddhist scriptures), but they reached a higher level of awareness during the Enlightenment. Since that time, philosophies of liberation from Marx to Levinas to Habermas have presupposed this equality as the essential starting point for further development. In the 18th century, Thomas Jefferson declared that “all men are created equal.” For Habermas, universal equality is built into the very presuppositions of language. If you speak a language, universal equality is already presupposed. He writes:

Let us imagine individuals being socialized as members of an ideal communication community; they would in the same measure acquire an identity with two complementary aspects: one universalizing, one particularizing. On the one hand, these persons raised under idealized conditions learn to orient themselves within a universalistic framework, that is, to act autonomously. On the other hand, they learn to use this autonomy, which makes them equal to every other morally acting subject, to develop themselves in their subjectivity and singularity. (Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two, 1987: 97)

Today, this assumption of the correlation in development of selfhood between human uniqueness and universal equality has been transferred into the newly emergent holistic paradigm. All these developmental stages involve a paradigm shift from fragmented early-modern paradigms to holism (see my

book *One World Renaissance* 2016). This means that our praxis directed toward liberation in the subjective, cultural, institutional, and scientific dimensions of human existence must emphasize developmental and transformative holism. We cannot erect institutions or cultural forms that artificially attempt to remedy our immense global problems with “sociotechnical controls” that inhibit or limit the collective transformation of humanity to higher, more integrated and holistic forms of consciousness, culture, and institutions. Habermas declares:

A theory which confuses control with action is no longer capable of such a perspective. It understands society as a nexus of behavioral modes, for which rationality is mediated solely by the understanding of sociotechnical controls, but not by a coherent total consciousness—not by precisely that interested reason which can only attain practical power through the minds of politically enlightened citizens. (*Theory and Practice*, 1973: 255)

Our goal must be the global empowerment of a humanity consisting of politically (and spiritually) enlightened citizens, that is, a “coherent total consciousness” of mature human beings. Human liberation will only come from the whole of humanity developing together. Our praxis must be directed toward empowering this global transformation. There are four key principles that must be understood for making this possible.

Human Development Theory. Throughout the 20th century, a number of psychologists and social scientists studied human development in depth, including such well-known figures as Abraham Maslow, Erich Erickson, Eric Fromm, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol

Gilligan, James Fowler, Don Edward Beck, Christopher Cowan, and Ken Wilber. Despite secondary differences, a powerful consensus has developed understanding that human beings move along multiple developmental lines (for example, cognitive, interpersonal, moral, and spiritual) toward higher levels of awareness, integration, autonomy, and fulfillment. There is in addition a broad consensus that human beings also develop civilizationally, culturally, and institutionally through a similar series of developmental stages.

Perhaps the most common model of this development sees proper human growth as moving from egoism (the me, my, and mine orientation, including my family, my nation, my race, etc.) to pluralism (the tolerance and social acceptance of differences in cultures, nationalities, points of view, races, gender orientations, etc.) to a worldcentricperspective (what is important is humanity, human rights, justice, mutual respect, freedom for all, etc.) to an integral outlook (I have internalized and integrated the developmental lines within myself and see human life as a whole, perhaps as a microcosm of the cosmic and divine dimensions of existence, and myself as a living manifestation of this holism). Human liberation requires that human beings grow to these higher levels of self-actualization and awareness. What kind of social, economic, and political institutions best foster this growth?

here are also a number of great philosophers and thinkers who have outlined integral developmental models encompassing civilization as a whole. Sri Aurobindo in India outlined stages of collective human development that move from our current egocentric mind to universal mind to intuitive mind to overmind,

that is, toward ever-more awakened states of mind-consciousness, ultimately including world government and the unity in diversity of all humankind. Jean Gebser understood human civilization as moving from archaic modes of consciousness and culture (in pre-historic times) to magical to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral modes, the integral modes of the future uniting humankind in a universal civilization of peace, harmony, and freedom. Teilhard de Chardin saw evolution as moving holistically on Earth from the geosphere to the biosphere (life holistically encompassing the Earth) to the noösphere in which mind would encompass and integrate the lower levels. The emergent reality of the noösphere moves toward ever-greater integration of unity in diversity, the progressive incarnation of the divine within the cosmos and human life.

Critical Social Theory. This movement is larger than the famous Frankfurt School of social thought from which its name derives. Perhaps the most fundamental idea of critical social theory is that we need to look behind prevailing ideologies and institutions and expose their hidden forms of domination, exploitation, and dehumanization. This includes the tradition stemming from some Enlightenment thinkers (e.g., Immanuel Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?") through Karl Marx, György Lukács, and Antonio Gramsci, to Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Jürgen Habermas, and others in the 20th

It also includes forms of Liberation Theology developed by thinkers such as Gustavo Gutierrez, Jon Sobrino, Juan Luis Segundo, and Enrique Dussel (see Dussel's *Ethics and Community* 1988). Today, thoughtful people are suspicious: suspicious of government, ideologies,

religious institutions and dogmas, economic institutions and their dogmas, as well as many cultural forms. But this suspicion must not result in the paralysis of skepticism or nihilism. It must be creatively and systematically used to further human development toward authentic liberation subjectively, culturally, institutionally, and in terms of the uses and abuses of science.

Critical social theory systematically fosters human growth toward our highest human potentialities through penetrating the deceiving appearances in economic, social, political, and cultural existence with the goal of human liberation. It critiques society in terms of whether existing conditions constrict and repress these potentialities or enhance and foster them. As critical social thinker Evelyn Bologh writes: “Marx shows greed to be an historical as opposed to a natural phenomenon. This is not to say greed is unnatural or deviant, but that its possibility derives not from an ahistorical human nature but from an historical, social development.” She continues: “Marx formulates history from within a form of life characterized by the possibility of self-conscious community.... He reads history in terms of the repressed community (capitalism) versus...a self-conscious community (post-capitalism)...a historical accomplishment not conceived as external to the members and their activity” (Dialectical Phenomenology, 1979: 76, 237, 239).

It is important to reflect on the words “not external to the members and their activity.” Liberation is about our common human destiny on this planet, about our collective level of human maturity and spirituality. It is about our ability to actualize fully the compassion envisioned by the Lord Buddha or the love envisioned

by Jesus Christ and embody these within our economic and political institutions. It has been properly proclaimed that “Justice is what love looks like in the public sphere.” We have the potential to create a world of love, justice, peace, freedom, and sustainability. Critical social theory is not about social engineering or the manipulation of human beings but our collective human destiny. What kind of planetary social, economic, and political institutions can we establish that promote the actualization of our highest human potential? I will say more about these institutions below.

My own critical theory of our human condition and its possibilities has been elaborated in a developed form from my book *Millennium Dawn* (2005) through *Ascent to Freedom* (2008) and *Triumph of Civilization* (2010) to my recent book *One World Renaissance* (2016). These works fit the contention of Marx, Habermas and Bolough that our human situation is fundamentally historical and that we have great potential for transformation that is blocked by current economic and political institutions. All three critical thinkers, as well as my own works, attempt to move humanity toward becoming an ever-more self-conscious community. We are moving into the future with immense possibilities for a world of peace, freedom, community, love, justice, and sustainability. However, we are trapped within global institutional arrangements (primarily the system of sovereign nation-states interlinked with global capitalism) that repress, distort, and block the actualization of our higher human potential.

The world's Spiritual and Religious Traditions. There is much in the world's great spiritual and religious traditions that applies to human cognitive, moral,

spiritual, and interpersonal development. Since the late 19th century, these traditions have been progressively freed from their ancient metaphysical and ethnocentric biases. Their immense wisdom is now available for the progressive development of humanity. As many scholars have pointed out, there is a powerful consensus among the spiritual-mystical traditions of the great religions as to stages of spiritual awakening. We can, therefore, add these stages of awakening to the stages of growth articulated by the social scientists.

We can also reflect on the very important eschatological dimension articulated by a number of great religious visionaries. That is, we can reflect on the power of the divine ground to illuminate and transform our human condition. This involves dimensions of our human situation often neglected by developmental thinkers like Wilber as well as critical social theorists such as Habermas. The more deeply aware we become, the more we access the divine depths of our situation and the more we encounter our potential for deep transformation. What social, economic, and political arrangements can foster access to these depths? Our present global institutions block our potential in this aspect of our human condition as well.

There are different names for the stages of human moral and spiritual development, depending on the thinker. For example, we have seen that proper human growth can be said to move from egoism to pluralism to worldcentric orientation to integral awareness. Or, if we add spiritual stages to this model, we might articulate a commensurate set of stages as “Archaic to Magic to Mythic to Rational to Pluralistic to Integral to Super-Integral” (Integral Spirituality 2006: 90).

“Super-Integral” itself can include a series of ever more profound mystical-spiritual stages involving direct awareness of the divine ground. People have long understood the relation between inner peace and outer peace. These higher stages of development involve ever-greater states of inner peace, fulfillment, harmony, and bliss—with the implication that this potential could deeply transform our social, economic, and political arrangements as well.

Paradigm Shift from Fragmentation to Holism. As outlined above, this holism must be the framework for the first three principles. We embrace the holism of humanity, the holism of our planetary biosphere, and the holism of the cosmos. Paradigm shift requires transformation to a holistic paradigm in all four quadrants that encompass human life. First, the new paradigm promotes subjective transformation to post-egoic, holistic modes of consciousness. Second, this paradigm shift requires cultural transformation to enlightened holism in our collective lives. From literature, to rituals, to song and dance to all the multiplicity of cultural forms, we need to celebrate our unity in diversity, our harmony and holism. Third, the paradigm shift to holism must include transfer of control of science from the military and economic interests of the top 20% to the interests of the whole of nature and humanity. Fourth, our global economic and political institutions (capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states) must be transformed under holistic principles to systems that work for everyone, not just the power and economic interests of the few.

Part Two: Liberation Praxis

The key transformative element at this stage of history is ratification of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth (found on-line in many places such as <http://worldparliament-gov.org/constitution>). In terms of development theory, the uniting of the nations in a universal federation under the Earth Constitution would provide a fundamental stimulus and incentive for moving the people of Earth from the current egoistic and ethnocentric stage of maturity to the necessary worldcentric stage. It provides a holistic framework that will profoundly influence all four quadrants: subjective consciousness, culture, institutions, and science.

The Earth Constitution, for example, joins humanity together under the principle that the life-giving resources of the Earth belong to all of us, not the 20% or the 1% only. The Provisional World Parliament has already enhanced this principle of the Constitution with World Legislative Acts 22, 42, and 51, establishing reasonable global economic equity (<http://www.radford.edu/~gmartin/PWP legis.acts.list.htm>). These institutional transformations will necessarily empower the transformation of people's subjectivity toward worldcentrism. Once the citizens of Earth are primarily at the worldcentric stage of cognitive, moral, and spiritual development, the model of further growth in maturity and awareness will flourish, and humanity will have begun its journey into ever more profound levels of peace, freedom, and liberation.

In terms of critical social theory, the Earth Constitution is designed to take the undemocratic power out

of the hands of the global ruling classes and place governing power democratically within a multiplicity of representatives from around the globe whose mandate is to focus on our common global problems (ending war, protecting human rights, protecting our planetary environment, etc.). The Provisional World Parliament has already created World Legislative Act 57 as an institution that will enhance this process for legislators. Critical self-awareness, as well as awareness of hidden power, exploitation, and domination relationships will flourish evermore widely. Critical social theory in this broad sense will become a standard intellectual and moral praxis of the citizens and government officials of the Earth Federation. The Parliament has also created World Legislative Act 29 for a Global People's Assembly that will enhance this process for citizens.

In terms of the world's spiritual and religious traditions, the Constitution opens up universal protection for the diversity of the world's spiritual traditions which abolishes the current false links of their messages with ethnocentrism and nationalism. Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., are no longer divided from one another because of association with certain nation-states (as political, economic, and military power centers), but the citizens of the Earth Federation are truly free to access and investigate the profound holistic wisdom of these traditions for the first time in history. The model of spiritual development will flourish. Indeed, the Earth Constitution itself is a concrete manifestation of the global vision of spirituality from awakened thinkers like Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi in India, Baha'u'llah in Persia, or Onisaburo Deguchi in Japan. It both fosters and represents a higher level of ethical and spiritual

actualization on the part of humanity.

Clearly, then, the establishment of the Federation of Earth under the Earth Constitution will enhance the developmental, holistic paradigm shift in all four quadrants of human endeavor. It will overcome the horrific fragmentation of a world-system of sovereign militarized nation-states. It will powerfully promote cultural transformation to an enlightened worldcentric holism. It will make possible on a planetary scale subjective transformation to post-egoic, holistic subjective modes of consciousness and powerfully promote the spiritualities of the world's great religious traditions moving people to higher, more integral modes of consciousness. Finally, and extremely important, it will decouple science from the industrial-military-academic complexes of the world and direct the vast potential of science into healing the environment and providing quality of life to all the world's citizens.

To effectively make this transformation happen, it is important that the people of Earth feel the holistic unity in diversity implemented by the Earth Constitution. They must feel the power, freedom, and equality reserved to them and understood as inalienable rights by Articles 12 and 13 of the Constitution. One key to cognitive, moral, and spiritual development is the feeling of empowerment and democratic equality with the rest of humanity, inherent in the very languages that we speak. Any hierarchies of classes, institutional discriminations, or superior political empowerment will defeat the growth of the human population toward evermore peaceful, free, and liberated subjective, cultural, institutional, and scientific modes of existence. Any institutionalized elitism will immediately be

exposed by critical social theorists as a devious cover for hidden power and self-interest relationships.

From the ancient Stoics in the West to the Vedic tradition in the East it has been declared that *vasudhaiva kutubukum*: the world is one family. This is the presupposition of the Earth Constitution and the fundamental principle for human liberation. It is the principle of unity in diversity announced in the Preamble to the Constitution and embodied in the immense holism that informs every article within the Constitution. Upon creation of the Earth Federation under the Constitution, people will immediately begin to feel and assimilate these principles of the holism of humanity and the holism of the biosphere that encompasses the Earth.

The universal equality and empowerment before the law will empower growth to a worldcentric, politically aware, involved, and conscientious stage of human consciousness. The Earth Constitution also promotes universal education for developing worldcentric consciousness. This has been powerfully enhanced by the Provisional World Parliament in World Legislative Act 26, the Education Act. The majority will begin deeply caring about humanity, the Earth, and the future of the divine-human project upon the Earth. It is the framework of an integrated and institutionalized unity in diversity, premised on the universal equality of dignity and rights of every citizen of Earth that will effect this transformation, not some sociocultural engineering attempting to put the supposedly wiser or more highly educated into power over the rest.

In terms of a coherent understanding of the processes

of human liberation, the idea of a “Supreme Council for Humanity,” (proposed recently by some well-meaning people) or any other body of people placed in power over the rest of us because they are wiser or more educated is counter-productive, as well as frightening in its possible totalitarian implications. We need an institutional framework for the people of Earth that encompasses and empowers everyone equally, for it is our general civilizational and common human transformation that will liberate us, not any sociopolitical tools that divide us and attempt to substitute social engineering for genuine transformation.

Currently we are divided from one another (and our common development toward liberation is largely defeated) by the system of sovereign nation-states, most of them militarized, interfaced with a global economic system designed to funnel the wealth of our planet to the top 20% and mostly to the top 1%. The Earth Constitution transforms both these institutions along holistic principles. Under the Constitution the nations are federated with one another, ultimately demilitarized, and joined within a single constitutional framework. Similarly, the global economic system is transformed under the same holism to work for all the world’s citizens, not just the few.

Under the Earth Constitution, the people of Earth will begin energetically and voluntarily educating themselves for participation in this exciting journey into an ever-more holistic and bliss-filled future. On the foundation of human universality and equality we can move into the future developing ever-more integrated forms of unity in diversity. It is all of us together, in equality and freedom, or it will be none of us. This is

the fundamental principle of human liberation at this stage of history. And the key to making it happen is ratification of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth.



Dr. Glen T. Martin is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Radford University in Virginia and founder in 1994 of the Radford University program in Peace Studies. During his twenty-five years at Radford University, Dr. Martin has been active in both national and international work of philosophers focusing on issues of peace. Since 1996, he has been President of International Philosophers for Peace, an organization with members in 25 countries that works to promote the social, political, and economic conditions necessary for world peace. Since 1995, he has also been active in the movement to create non-military, democratic world government under the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. In this capacity, he has been a member of the World Executive Council of the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA, www.wcpa.biz) which coordinates a network of tens of thousands of people from 120 countries worldwide in their work toward these goals. On behalf of the Earth Federation Movement, Dr. Martin has travelled and lectured widely with respect to world peace and the need for democratic world government. Since December 2003, he has served as Secretary-General of WCPA, of which currently is the President.

Martin has published or edited seven books and many articles and reviews on a variety of topics in comparative philosophy, the spirituality of human liberation, economic democracy, and democratic world government....(from www.peacefromharmony.org)