

2012 is over and the world is still here — what now?

The big joke at the end of 2012 was the so-called “Mayan Prophecy.” Of course the world did not end! Please look at an article I wrote “2012 Predictions: Should You Be Afraid?” in the Advice Line section of my website. This article explained that major world changes are continuing to happen and the period of most rapid change will last at least until 2016. The Stress Monster is very happy to see all of us suffering. As it’s one of my missions in life to combat the Stress Monster, I’m writing this article to help us all cope with these changes.

This time is the era of a major galactic shift causing disruptive changes in our atmosphere. For all our modern technological advances, it’s important to remember that we live in the natural world. There is definitely an increase in solar flares causing hurricanes and other destructive changes in the world. World leaders understand the threats and have built underground cities and storehouses so that select individuals could continue to live through world catastrophes. There is global unrest, political upheavals and wars which never seem to end. My message today is not “Ha, ha, ha; the world did not end, so let’s party.” We need to pay attention and make our own

Advice Line

by Dr. Betty Phillips



adjustments.

In the previous article I described how we are living in a world of major choice points. Our individual and collective futures do depend upon the choices we are making. Long ago the Hopi made a prophecy about the end of this era: “It depends upon which path humankind will walk: the greed, the comfort, and the profit, or the path of love, strength and balance.”

Since 2010, I’ve spent a great deal of time studying these choice points and observing how humanity is experiencing more and more difficulties. I won’t go on and on about corporate greed, the increasing income gap, the struggles of common people and the increasingly authoritarian but dysfunctional governments. Prophets are now pointing out that we need to see and experience all this “garbage” so that we can begin to make positive changes. I’m definitely not

saying that we should take to the streets with bats and bullhorns. There are many options for peaceful collective activity. Every day I get petitions on my computer. It takes a minute to fill them out and they are starting to become increasingly effective as decision-makers become aware they are not working in a vacuum. People do care.

I choose to follow the choice outlined by the Hopi, “the path of love, strength and balance.” When enough people individually reach the tipping point, positive changes will happen. My articles espouse the path of love, loving kindness, unconditional love, and heart-based living. The prophets clearly state that these choices can change the world. So let’s start with ourselves. When we follow this path we will feel happiness and joy, sometimes even bliss. You can follow the advice in my articles or you can choose to work with me at Forest Garden to develop this life pattern for yourself. The message is for us all to maximize the pure love we each have within ourselves. Kindness and love always trump depression and worry! Negativity cannot take a hold when you maximize your positive vibrations. Although we know that Nirvana on this earth is not possible, we all can choose

the positive road for ourselves..

There is an old saying, “There are many roads to the top of the mountain, but when you get there the view is the same.” Yes let’s ascend separately or together. I’ll just mention a few paths and my articles describe others. Volunteer work can be particularly positive whether it be with little children, animals or hospice patients. Practices such as walking in nature, yoga or tai chi also emphasize the positive path. Spiritual, symphonic or religious music can fortify the soul. I had a wonderful and surprising experience walking the paths of Forest Garden on the solstice December 21, 2012. Walking in my heart space, I suddenly found myself reciting the beautiful words of the 23rd Psalm. How did I know those words so well? I don’t remember ever learning them! Go to those words now and see how they can conquer the greed, profit and natural disasters of the modern world around us.

Need Advice? Send Dr. Betty Phillips questions about individual, relationship, marriage or family issues to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. Betty looks forward to hearing from you!

POPULATION

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our unavoidable dilemma.

Like many of you, I admire the libertarian principles that are credited to some of our philosophical forefathers like John Locke. The freedom to do as you please with your property and environment is basic to American ideology. But Locke also subscribed to responsibility for our resources and the public good.

My argument to those who hope to maintain a “hands off” my affairs public policy is this. John Locke and his 17th Century convictions were formed in much less complex times and with many fewer souls on the planet. He could scarcely envision the challenges with which we are confronted today, and therefore deriving present-day strategies from the interpretation of his philosophies is inadequate to say the least. In fact, those who persist in laissez faire policies endanger our future.

We would all like to live in a world with small governments that content themselves with delivering the mail, defending our coasts and facilitating states rights. In a simple society with a small population that’s possible. However, as populations grow and conflicts amongst us increase, more laws, rules and government are necessary to keep the peace and defend the rights of all. It’s simple: the more complex the society, the more highly organized it must become in order to prevent chaos.

At heart I am an anarchist, but alas, as James Madison said, “Men are not angels”, thus the need for ever-growing authority to govern our increasingly complex society.

So, libertarians, you want government off your backs? Then consider my



Chatham rivers and streams can no longer sustain native species.

proposition for a smaller population.

Let’s bring this discussion down to the local level here in Chatham County. We live in a beautiful area where nearly half of our land mass is still covered in trees; trees that protect the quality of our water and produce oxygen for us to breathe. Despite this wooded abundance, our rivers that once ran clear, can no longer sustain their native species. Mussels, once the filter-feeding guardians of our water quality, are headed for extinction at present rates of decline. Some of these species die of spontaneous abortions because of the filth in our rivers and streams. But this same water’s okay for you drink, right? Many preventable diseases have strong environmental connections. Diseases like cancer.

Yet, our county policy makers take every opportunity attack the basic laws that protect our water and air. They also tout the benefits of more development without giving a single thought to the optimal population that can be carried by our resources.

The dirty secret about development beyond a delicately balanced scale is that it enriches a few at the expense of the

many. Growth, as study after study demonstrates, generally does not pay for itself. Costs of development exceed the revenues they generate. As communities grow beyond optimum populations, the burdens of providing schools, transportation, sewer and water, and other basic services demand one of two things: either an increase in taxes or settling for decreased services and degraded quality of life that includes poverty, higher crime rates and more unemployment. The irony is that a desirable place to live remains desirable only up to the point of its optimum population. And we’re not even trying to find out what that is.

So, we’re at a fork in the road with great and not so great potentials before us depending on which path we decide to take.

If we decide to invite thousands of more people into Chatham County, then we must also make the decision to more intensively manage and restrict the use of our resources, especially water and air. We’ll have to treat our water to a higher standard and we’ll have to protect our air quality by creating reasonable rules for the types of transportation we allow.

That’ll cost a lot of money. Who pays, current residents, developers, or new residents? The way the growth machine is usually designed; current residents suffer the brunt, while developers skate away with the lion’s share.

The subject of quality-of-life-threatening over population is a very immediate question for Chatham citizens. To the east of Pittsboro, Jim Goodnight, owner of SAS, also owns thousands of acres on the shores of our water source, Jordan Lake. Full development of this parcel would practically double the population of Chatham County.

It all comes down to who we want to be. Do we want to manage our growth judiciously while we continue to improve what we already have or must we make the same mistakes that have been made all over this country? Do we buy the grow or die fallacy of the pro-growth minority hoping to be enriched from our pockets, or do we look hard and long at plans to pave paradise.

Tim Keim is a Chatham writer and environmental activist. This article is sponsored by CONNECT: a Chatham based network of civic groups (see ConnectChatham.com).

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