

**The Theology
of Economics**

*How our care of
creation will
enliven our theology
and legitimise
our economics*

**Rod Oram's presentation to the
Sea of Faith Conference
Auckland, October 4th, 2015**

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Agenda

- Crises
- Palliatives
- Theology



(The beginning of) **The End**

Weep, Harp, the end of that exquisite Place
That every circling Planet did outface;
Mother of Streams and Mountains, Vales and Trees,
And every Prospect that the Lens could please:
Cradle of Man, and his sustaining Nurse,
Whether for better or, in this case, worse.

Long time that Orb turned tranquilly and bright,
Blue-shining like a Marble in the Night
Long time all hunky-doryish appeared,
But Man was greedier than had been feared:
Flatt'ning the Forests, and, with grasping Hand
Pumping out oil from every Desert Land.

Then anxious Greens announced that Doom was nigh,
Tho' all the rest, uncaring, wondered: "Why?"
And to consumerism blithely turn'd,
Tapping their iPhones while the Planet burn'd;
Checking each Bleep of instantaneous Chat
Until they hardly knew where they were at.
And so, o'erheated and in quite a Tangle,
Poor *Earth* was now beset from every Angle.



Ann Wroe, obituaries editor, *The Economist*

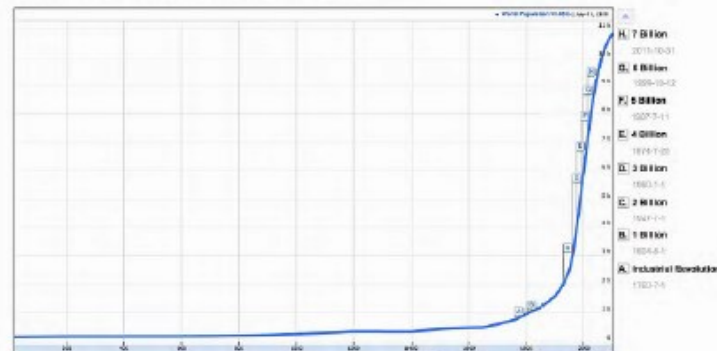


1950

- ...I was born in Birmingham, UK
- Human population of the world:
 - 1950 - 2.5bn
 - ...equal to today's population of China & India...
 - ...as if nobody was living elsewhere in the world)
- 2015 – 7.3bn
- 2050 - 9bn – 10bn



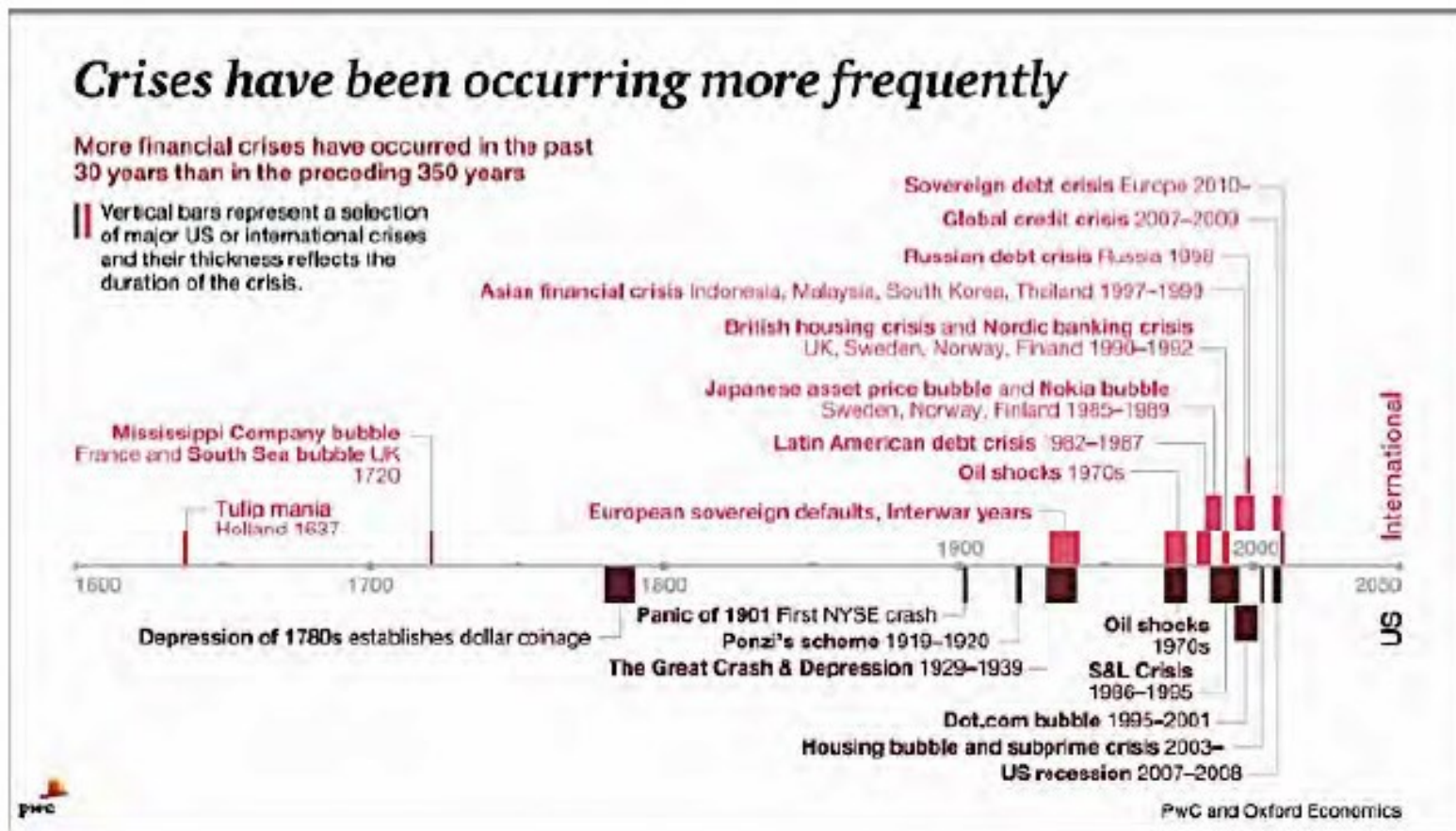
World Population: Past, Present, and Future
(move and expand the bar at the bottom of the chart to navigate through time)





Despair & fury, Pamplona, 2013







“...if you ain’t cheatin’, you ain’t tryin’ ”

Rigging of Foreign Exchange Market Makes Felons of Top Banks

By MICHAEL CORKERY and BEN PROTESS MAY 20, 2015



NEWS CLIPS | By Associated Press | 1:11

Attorney General Announces Bank Fines

Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch said that four of the world’s largest banks would pay more than \$2.5 billion after pleading guilty to manipulating foreign exchange rate markets. By Associated Press on May 20, 2015. Photo by Gabriella Demczuk for The New York Times.



10 banks, US\$400bn of fines...1 person in jail

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POLITICS

From Senate Sideline, Elizabeth Warren Is Face of Attack

By JENNIFER STEINHAUER MAY 16, 2015

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ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL

WASHINGTON — Senator [Elizabeth Warren](#), the Massachusetts Democrat whose vituperations against Wall Street have helped push her party to the left, has no official role opposing [President Obama's](#) trade agenda.

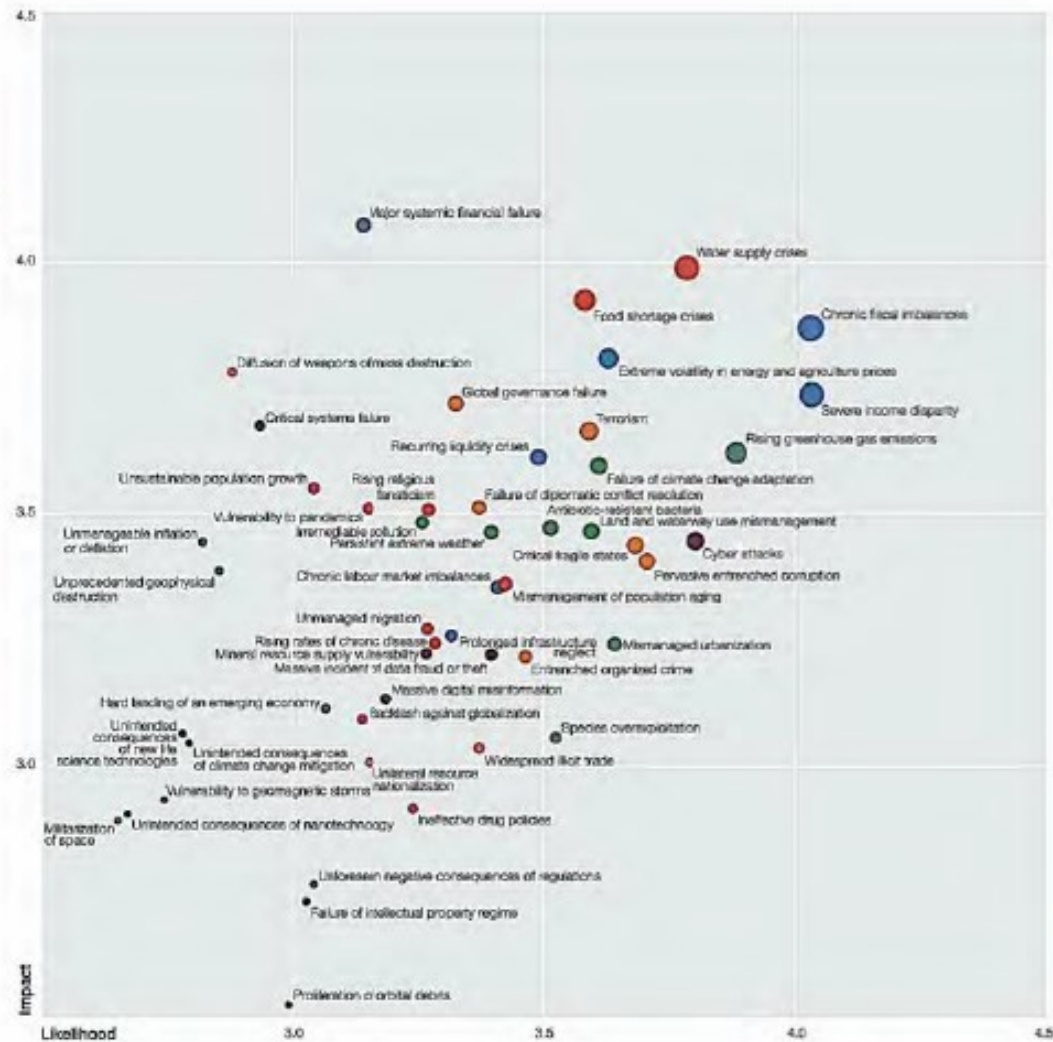
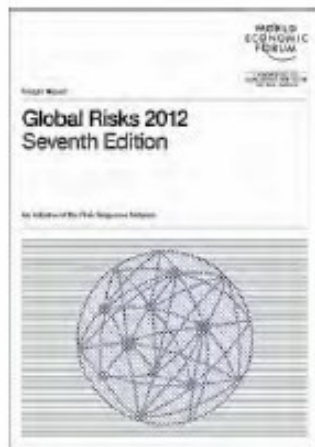
She does not sit on the committee where the trade package was written. She has never taken part in negotiations over its legislative language. When Democrats held a news conference after the measure failed on a procedural vote Tuesday, she was not there, nor did she speak on the floor after it passed on Thursday, as many of her colleagues did.

Yet it is Ms. Warren who has become the



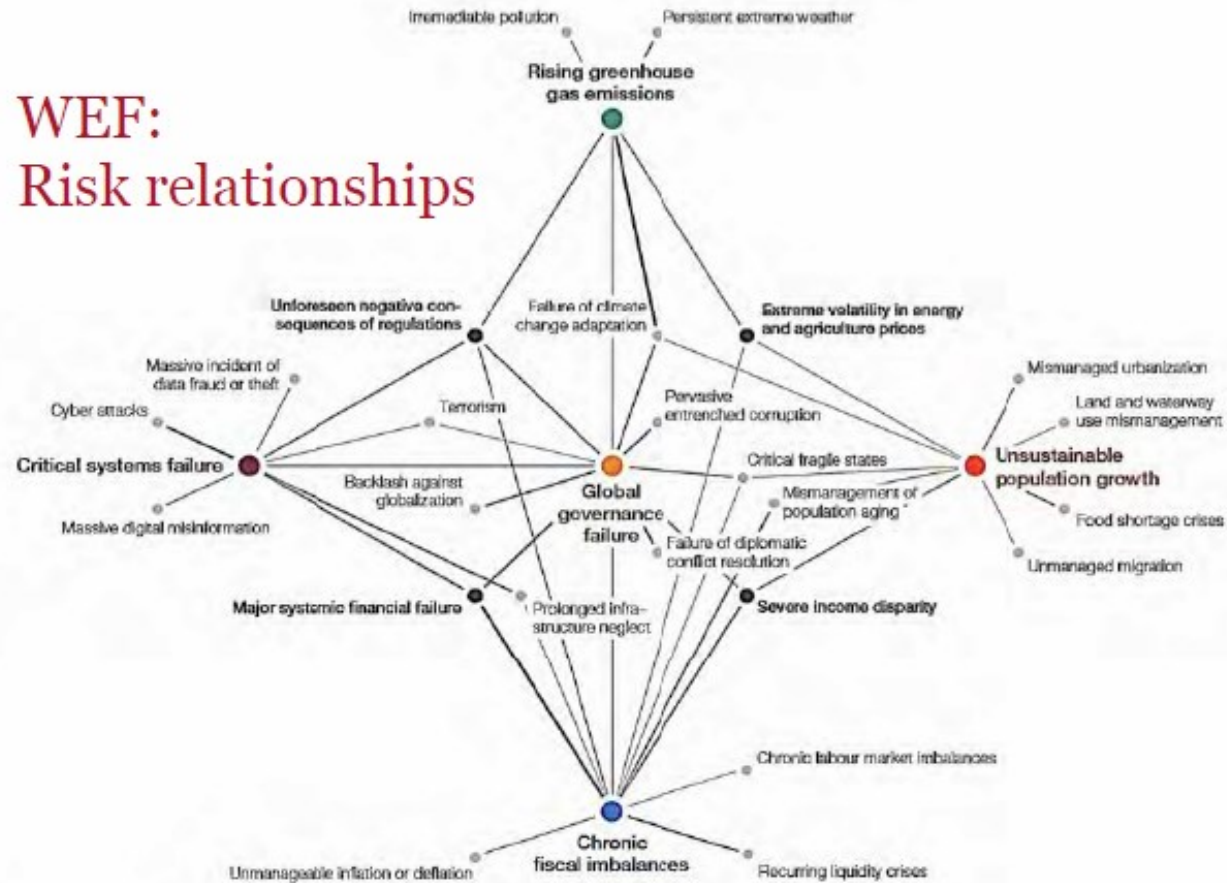


World Economic Forum: Risk map





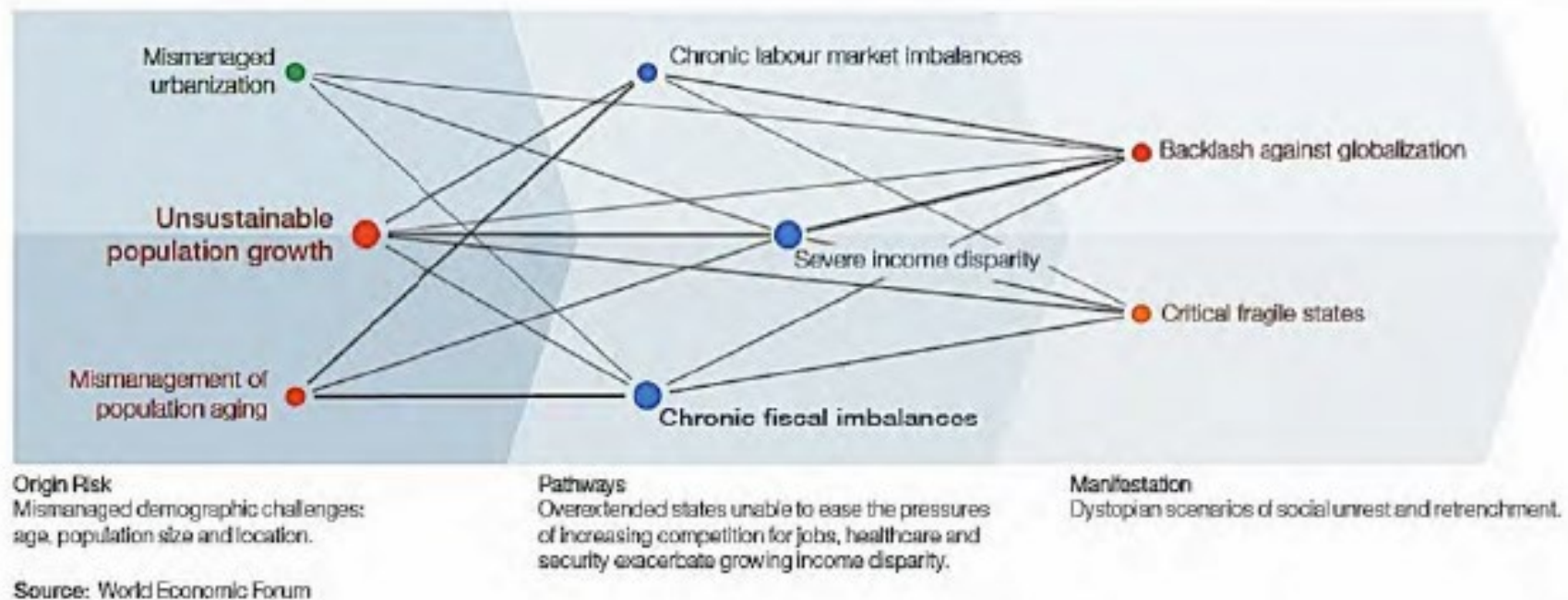
WEF: Risk relationships



Source: World Economic Forum

WEF: seeds of dystopia

- ...e.g. is The Occupy Movement an anomaly? Or a harbinger?
- ...a harbinger, the World Economic Forum concluded



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Stockholm Resilience Centre

Research for Governance of Social-Ecological Systems

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Estimates of how the different control variables for seven planetary boundaries have changed from 1950 to present. The green shaded polygon represents the safe operating space. Photo: J. Lokrantz/Årsta

The nine planetary boundaries

Stratospheric ozone layer
The stratospheric ozone layer in the atmosphere filters out ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. If this layer decreases, increasing amounts of ultraviolet radiation will reach ground level. This can cause a higher incidence of skin cancer in humans as well as damage to terrestrial and marine

RELATED INFO

Quantitative evolution of the boundaries

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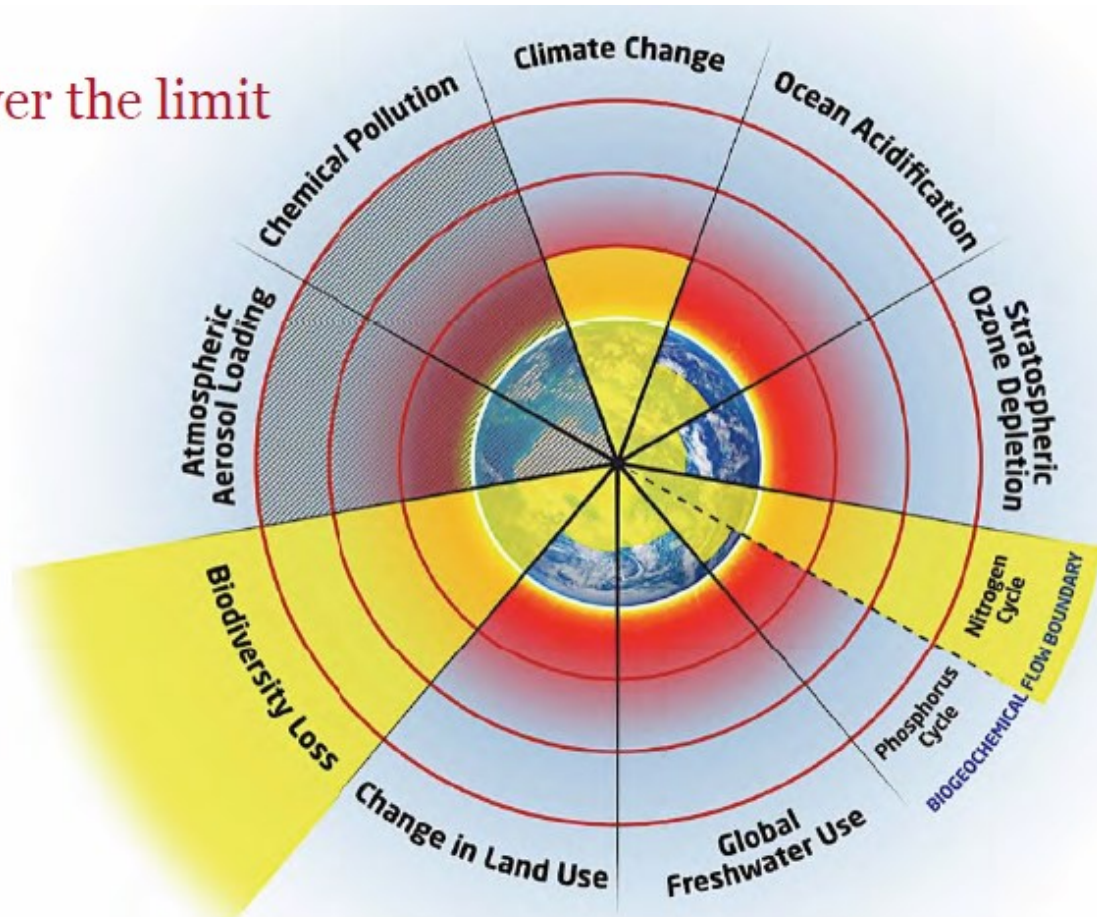
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Planetary Boundaries

What is resilience?

Over the limit





“We scientists don’t know how to do that”

Gus Speth
Professor of Forestry and Environmental Studies,
Yale University
Shared Planet edition entitled 'Religion & Nature',
BBC R4, October 1, 2013

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03bqws7>

“I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss,
ecosystem collapse and climate change.

I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems.

But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are
selfishness, greed and apathy...

...and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation

- and we scientists don't know how to do that.”

Agenda

- Crises
- **Palliatives**
- Theology



...(the middle of) The End

This the wise *Maya* long ago foresaw:
That in the Age of tricky *Seven Macaw*
(Or, to put Finger firmly onto Fact,
In twenty-twelve, Dec. 21st exact)
History's great Wheel would tumble to eclipse
Quicker than e-mail thro' the *Aether* zips;
For fiery *Sun* with *Milky Way* align'd
Would make a pretty Mess of things combin'd.

The *Poles* would flip, and old terrestrial
Time Fade out within *Eternity's* vast clime;
The law of Gravitation, grown effete,
Would scarce secure an Infant in his Seat;
And all that normal seem'd, the Day before,
Would now essay the Air, or hit the Floor.

Then monumental Panick spread abroad,
Skins to preserve, and Groceries to hoard,
For tho' the Mathematicks seem'd obscure,
No Body's Fate might be consider'd sure;
So Petroglyphs of Rockets upside-down
Were scrutinised in every part of Town.



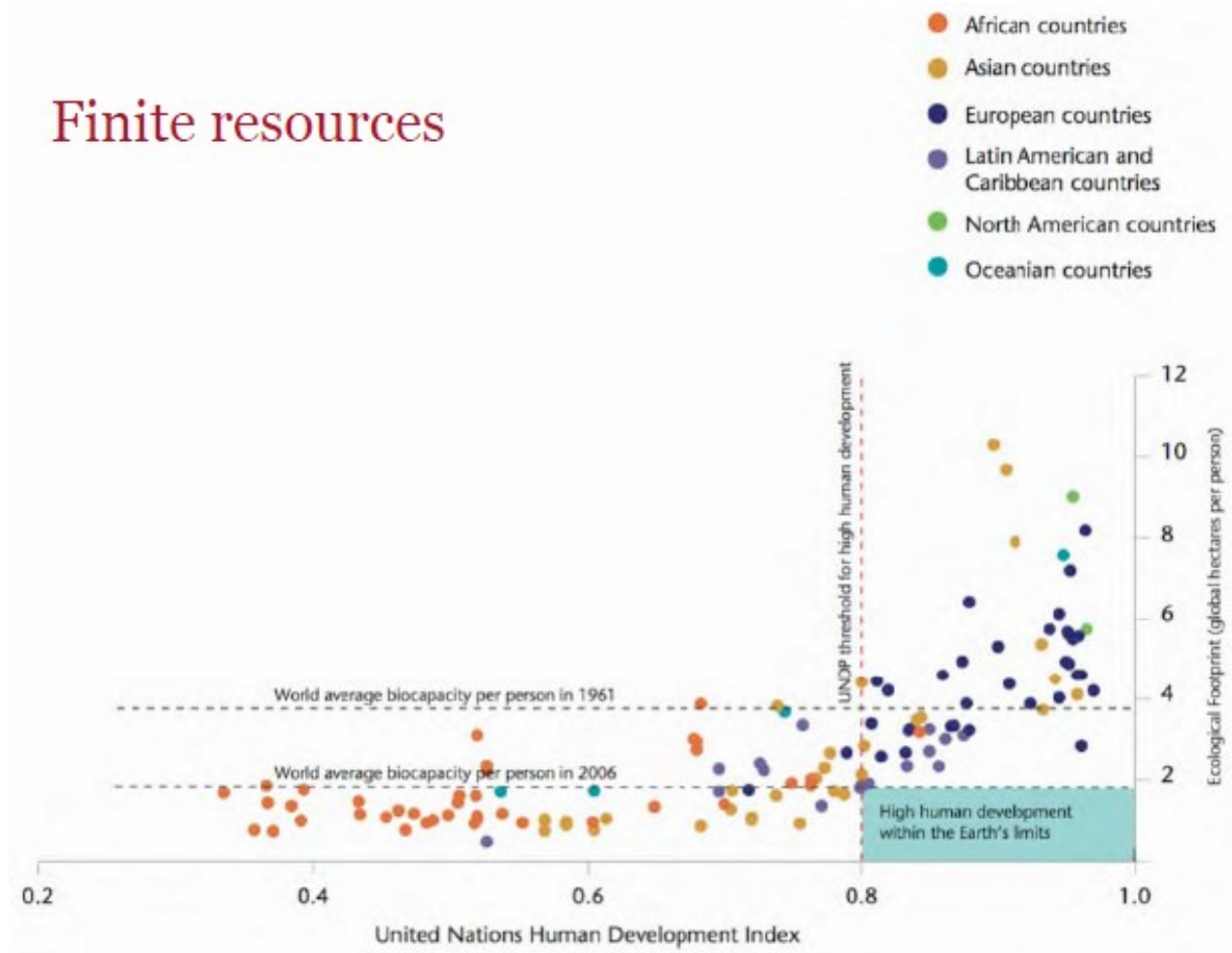
People, planet

- *Vision 2050*
- A very challenging roadmap for corporate development by World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- ...NZ version too



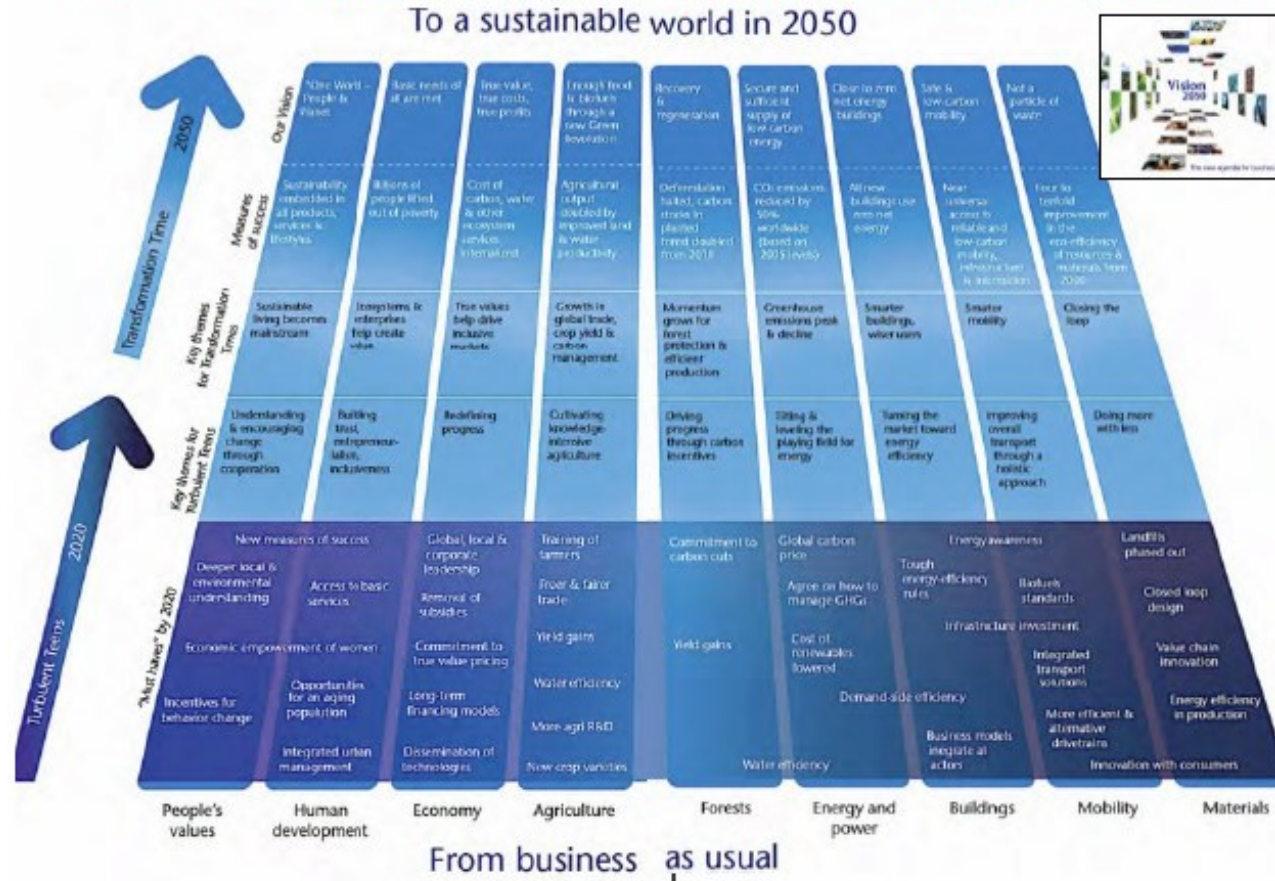


Finite resources

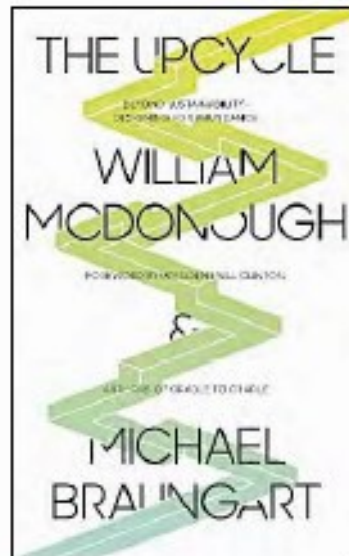


We must have unprecedented scale, speed & complexity of change

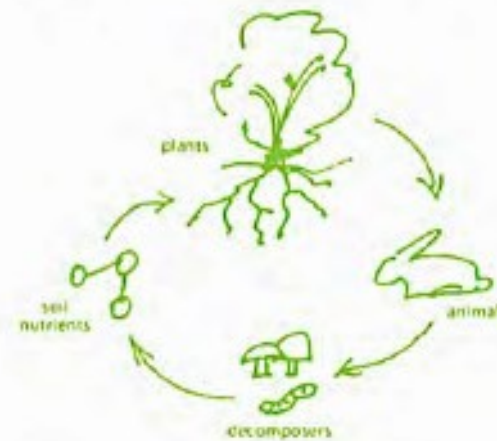
To a sustainable world in 2050



Circular economy



Cradle to Cradle Framework



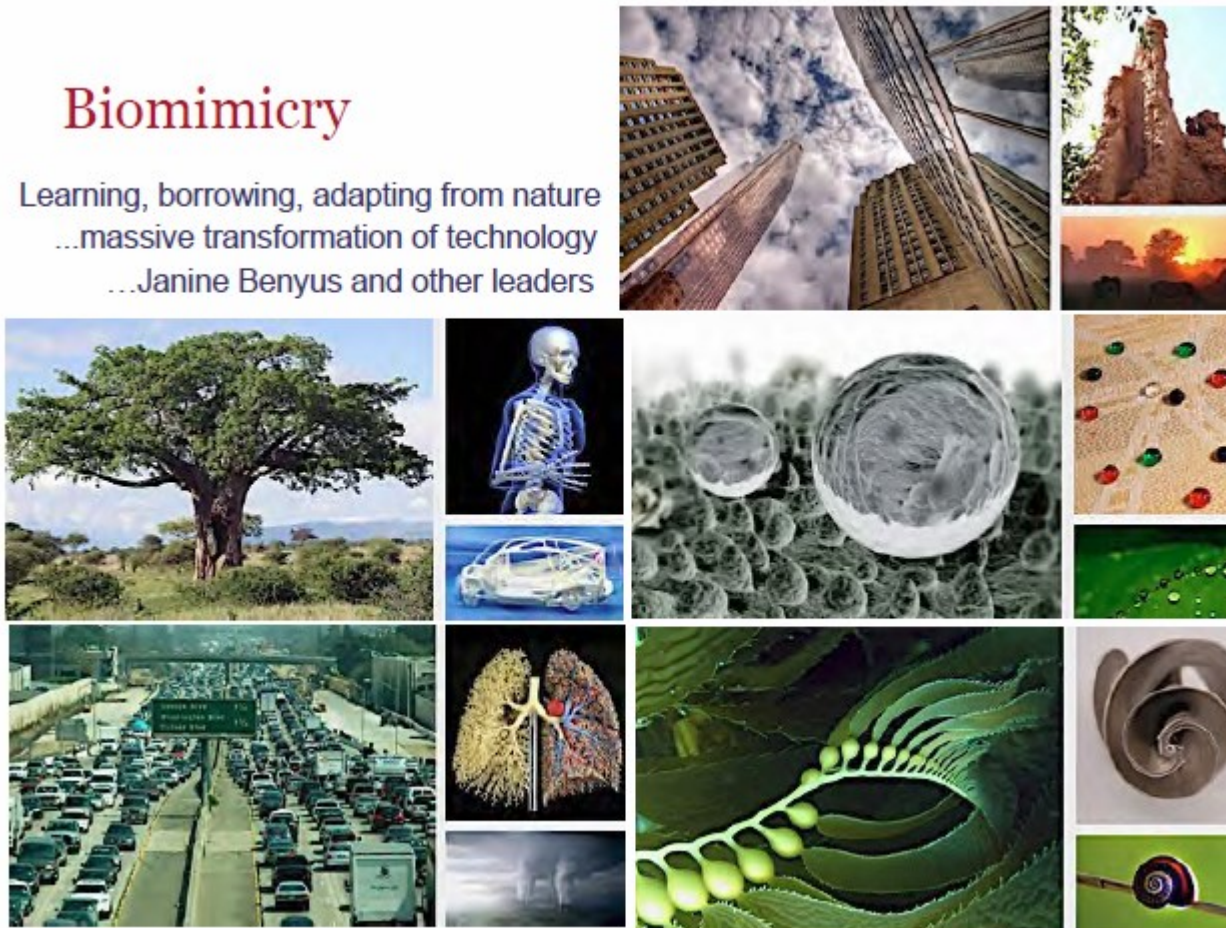
Bullitt Centre Seattle

- The world's greenest commercial building
- Self-sufficient for energy and water
- An exemplar of the Living Building Challenge
- <https://ilbi.org/lbc>



Biomimicry

Learning, borrowing, adapting from nature
...massive transformation of technology
...Janine Benyus and other leaders



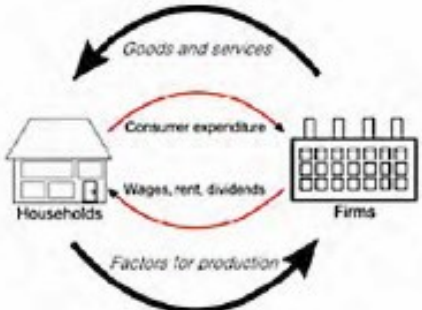


KATE RAWORTH

exploring doughnut economics

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why it's time to vandalize the economics textbooks...



The diagram illustrates the circular flow of income and products between Households and Firms. Households are represented by a house icon, and Firms by a factory icon. The flows are as follows:

- Top flow (black arrow):** Goods and services from Firms to Households.
- Bottom flow (black arrow):** Factors for production from Households to Firms.
- Inner flow (red arrow):** Consumer expenditure from Households to Firms.
- Outer flow (red arrow):** Wages, rent, dividends from Firms to Households.

A hand holding a pencil is shown on the right side of the diagram, suggesting the act of 'vandalizing' or rewriting the textbook.

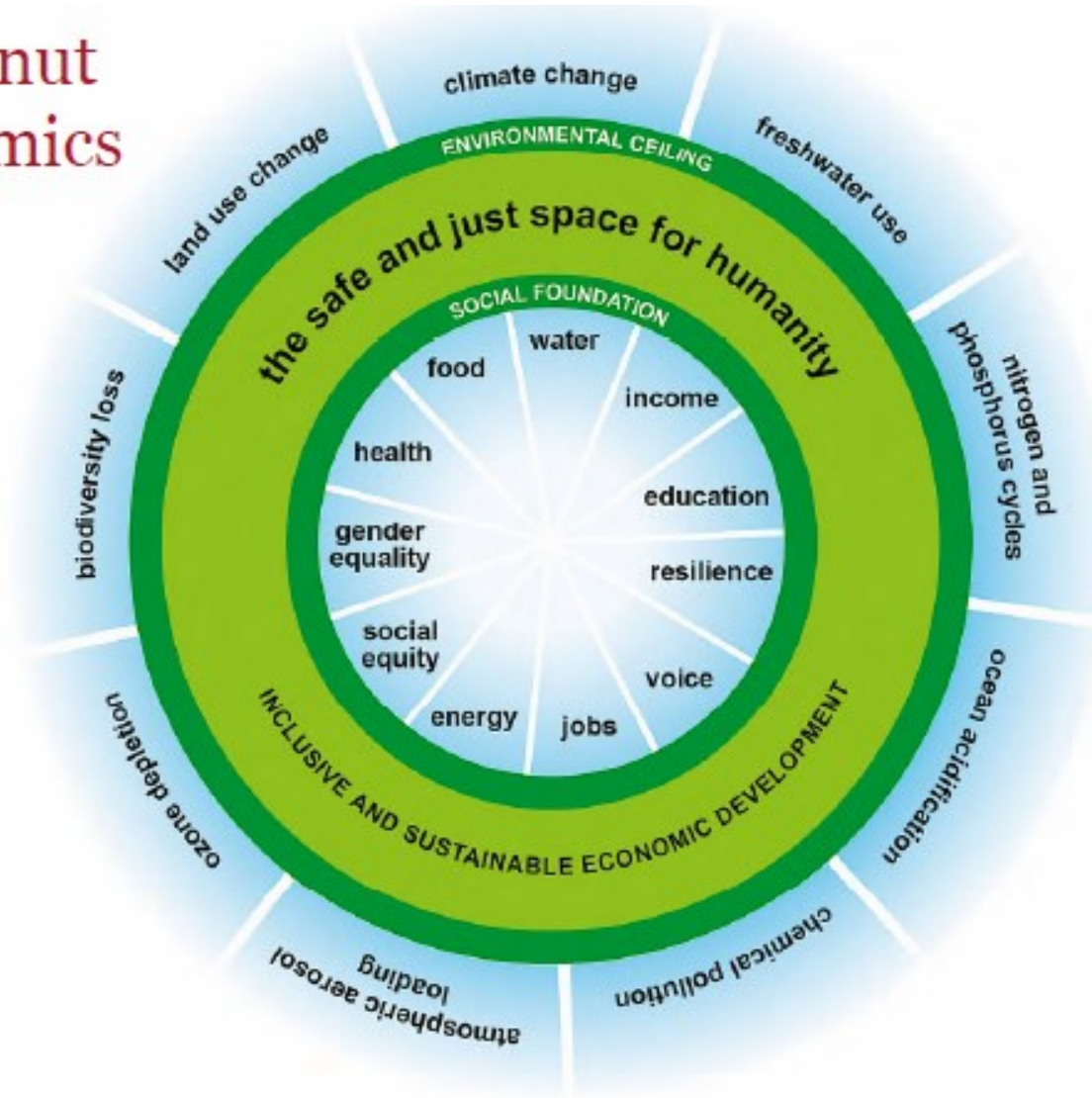
This is the website of Kate Raworth – economist and development re-thinker. My passion is the rewriting of economics to make it a fit tool for addressing the 21st century's social and

What is I

- <http://www.kateraworth.com>
- <http://www.thersa.org/events/audio-and-past-events/2012/doughnut-economics-creating-a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity>

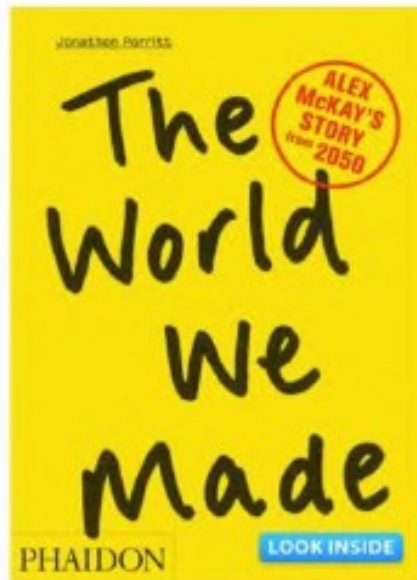


Doughnut Economics



The World We Made

- Jonathon Porritt's view from 2050



The World We Made

Alex McKay's Story from 2050

Our planet's environmental future is usually described in terms of doom and despair. But now, for the first time, *The World We Made* presents a credible, positive vision of our planet that is green, fair, connected and collaborative



ABOUT THE BOOK

This is Alex McKay's story. It shows how the world could look in 2050, if we play our cards right. It's upbeat, dynamic – a world that works well for the vast majority of people.

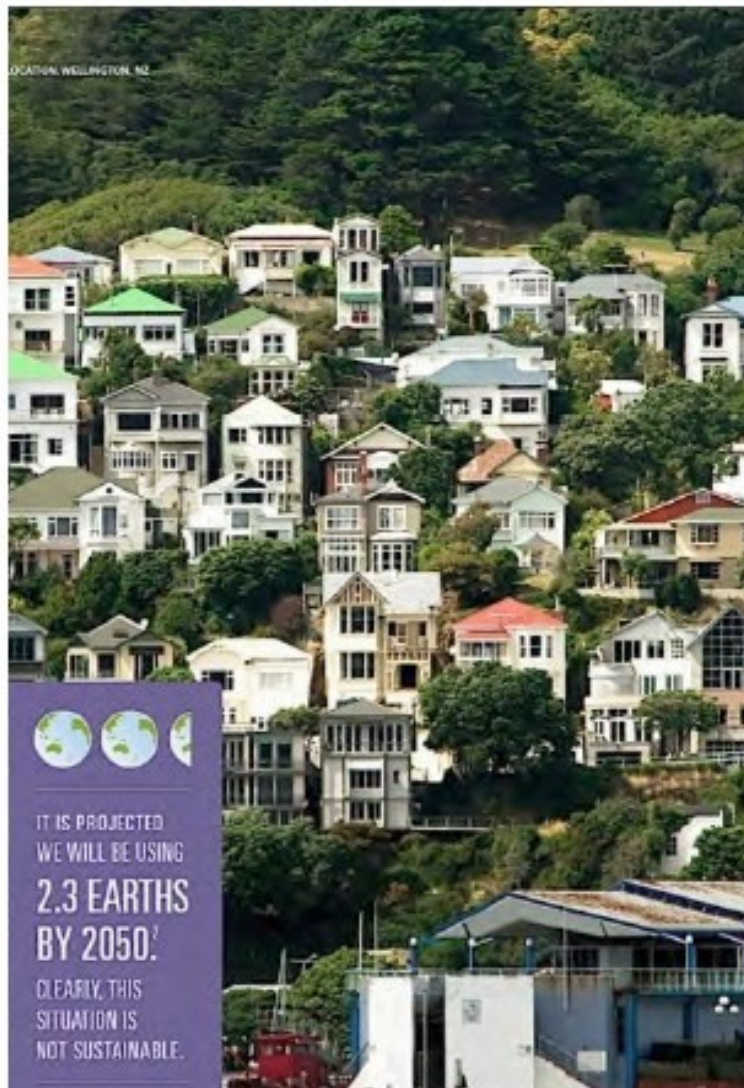
Alex is a history teacher at Ashton Vale Community College, about to move schools, and challenged by the students to leave them with a parting gift: an account of how the world has changed since Alex became a teacher in the early 2020s.



NZ Vision 2050

- ...by a group of young leaders...
 - ...under the NZ Business Council for Sustainable Development...
 - ...which morphed into Business NZ's Sustainable Business Council
- Download at:
 - <http://bit.ly/Vision2050NZ>
- Vision 2050 Global report at:
 - <http://www.wbcsd.org/vision2050.aspx>





THE VISION

VISION 2050 NEW ZEALAND

**In 2050 New Zealand has...
six million people living well and
within the limits of the planet.**

Beyond this single statement is a complex set of issues that our family need addressing. Vision 2050 provides a framework to face these challenges and consider how business can lead the change our country needs.

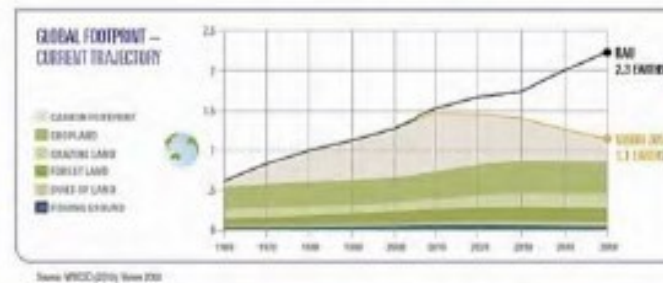
URGENCY FOR CHANGE

We are facing many challenges over the next 40 years that require us to make changes to the way we live and to the way our businesses and other institutions interact with society and the natural environment. Facing up to the challenges means difficult decisions will have to be made now to avoid leaving an unpalatable legacy for our children and grandchildren. Business is a core agent of this change and the urgency must be realised now if we are going to achieve our positive aspiration.

New Zealand's population will increase significantly over the next 40 years. Although the estimated extra one to two million people will not create a densely populated country, this rise will coincide with a world population that has increased by two billion.

How do we meet the needs of a world that is sharing finite resources and overloaded ecosystem services, such as clean air and water?

At our current rate of resource consumption it is projected we will be using 2.3 Earths by 2050.¹ Clearly, the situation is not sustainable.



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Tuhoe's Te Uru Taumatua

- ...the first Living Building in New Zealand



Our future...and the ultimate challenges

- NZ Land: 270,000 sq km
 - *Australia's 28x NZ*
- NZ Oceans: 5.8m sq km
 - *4th largest in the world*
 - *Australia's 1.4x NZ's*
- Huge responsibility:
 - ...to nurture
 - ...to use responsibly
 - ...to sustain us
 - ...we get \$184bn of ecosystem services for free
- We need new values, systems, learning, collaboration:
 - ...to be sustainable
 - ...to offer hope to the world



...and in Antarctica too



Agenda

...(the end of) The End

- Crises
- Palliative

And some to *Bugarach* in *France* repair'd,
Where, it was said, their Lives would all be spar'd
By Alien Beings in a Cave confin'd;
But "Bugaroff" declar'd that Mayor, unkind.

- Theolo

A few were saved. For such Escapes must be,
As shewn forth on Reality TV,
Where jabbing Digit points towards the Door,
But some survive into Round twenty-four;
And so the Wise soared up to Realms of Dreams,
Bathed by Galactic Synchronisation Beams.

The rest, when pulling on their morning Socks,
Ask'd what the *Hell* was wrong with all the Clocks,
And why each Mug would from the Table rise,
Floating about before their bleary Eyes
And why their Phones no Signal would receive
Save the implicit one that they should leave.
Craz'd, then, the uninform'd or unprepar'd
Rushed to the Street, and round them wildly star'd,
Seeing approach an overwhelming Snow
Before they had worked out which way to go;
And they were buried deep, the Ice beneath,
With crumbs of Croissant still between their teeth.

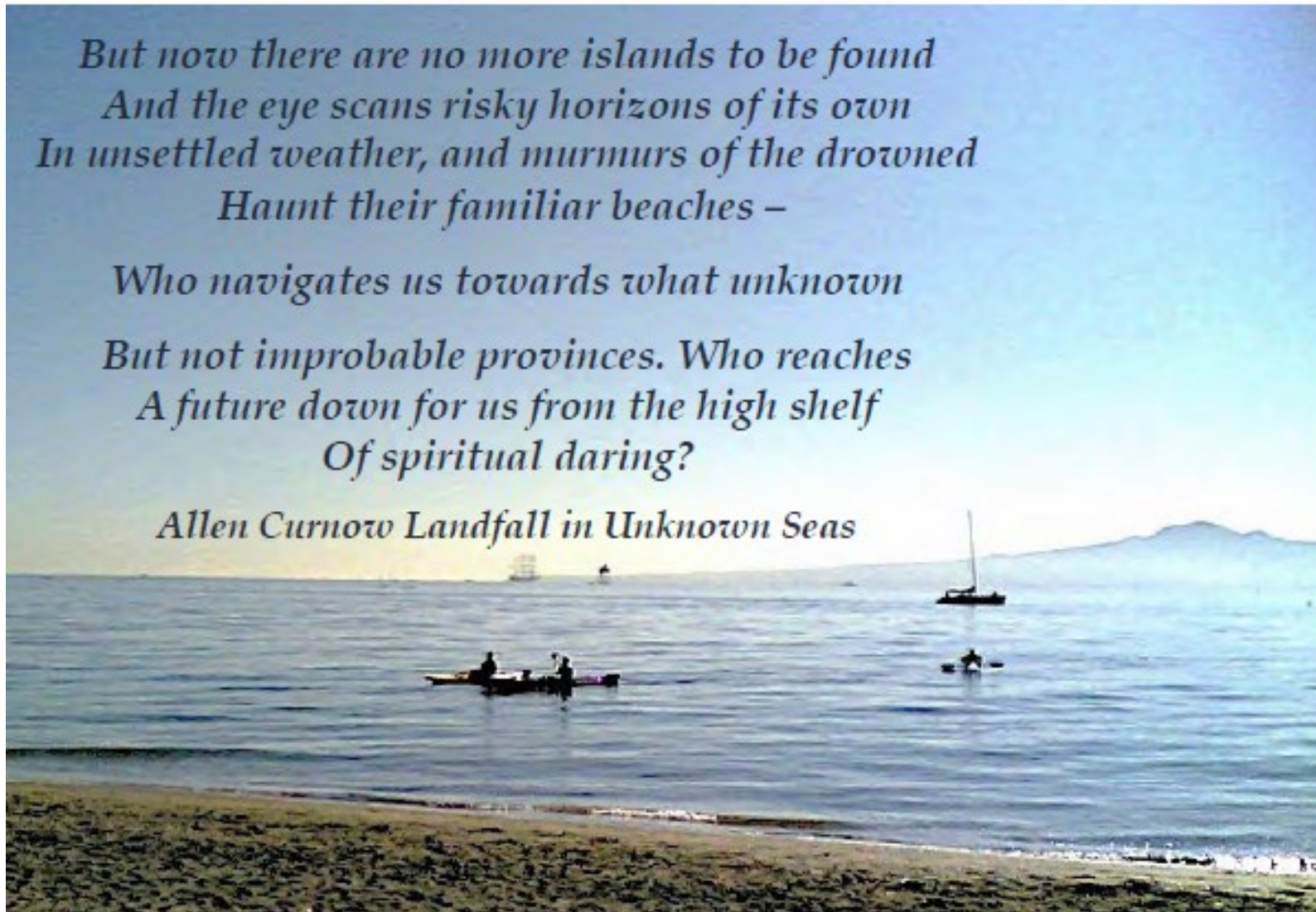




*But now there are no more islands to be found
And the eye scans risky horizons of its own
In unsettled weather, and murmurs of the drowned
Haunt their familiar beaches –*

*Who navigates us towards what unknown
But not improbable provinces. Who reaches
A future down for us from the high shelf
Of spiritual daring?*

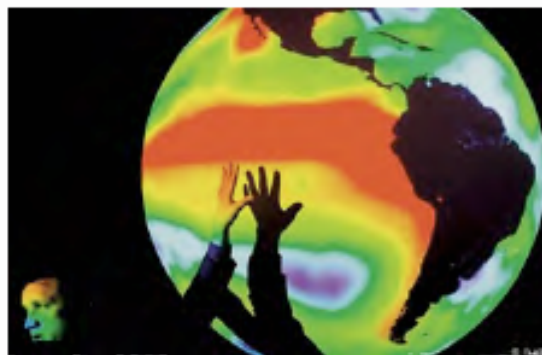
Allen Curnow Landfall in Unknown Seas





Our world...in three words

- Ecology – Home...from the Greek *oikos*
- Economy – Stewardship of a household...from the Greek *oikonomia*
- Ethics – Moral principle... from the Greek *ethos*, nature or disposition
 - Thus, the ethics of ecology...has to be the ethics of economics
 - ...how we look after our ourselves, our place, our planet
 - ...our relationships with each other and the planet





Community

- Issues are increasingly global....solutions are increasingly local
- We need to achieve an absolutely unprecedented speed, scale and complexity of change
- Solutions require very strong, learning communities
- Essential attributes:
 - Common sense
 - Common purpose
 - Common wealth
- Places where individuals are valued, helped, encouraged
- ...in return, they participate, change



Theology

- *Our understanding of God*
- **Gift:** God's radical abundance
- **Relationship:** God -> his creation -> us
- **Redemption:** Being made whole

"We are consumers of what God has made.

We are are in communion with it."

• **Archbishop Rowan Williams**



Faith

- *Our response to God*
- **Belief:**
- **Empowerment:**
- **Enlightenment:**

***“Science without religion is lame,
religion without science is blind”***

• *Albert Einstein*



Community

- *How we act on our understanding of God*
- **Relate:** to each another
- **Discuss:** with each other
- **Understand:** each other
- **Support:** each other
- **Act:** together
 - Inspiration...from the Latin *in spirare*, breath into, as in spirit
 - Enthusiasm...from the Greek *enthous*, possessed by a god



Opportunity

- *We are good at this*
- Bringing people together
- Multiple, inter-linked global crises
- Paradoxically, the best response is local...multiplied across the world

Challenge

- *What we need to do*
- Apply timeless faith (understanding)
- ...to contemporary responses (action)



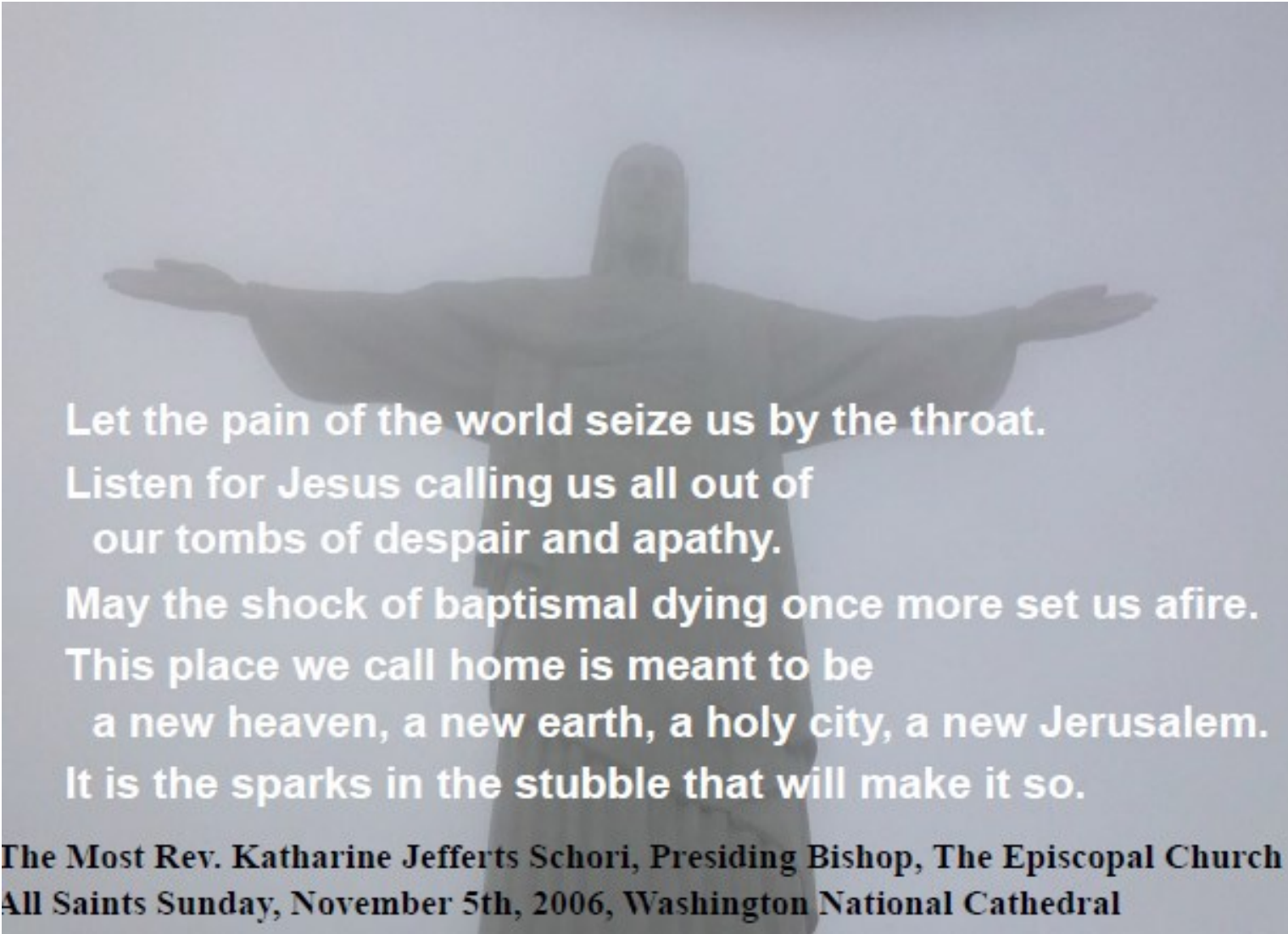
Our future

- Marcus Borg writes in his book “Speaking Christian”:
- **Salvation** has come to mean life after death
 - But in the Bible it is seldom about an afterlife;
Rather, it is about transformation this side of death
- *Imagine* the transformation we need here and now
- **Redemption** is now about being saved from sin
 - But in the Bible it is about being freed from slavery
- *Imagine* freedom from modern enslavements such as inequitable economic systems
- **Righteousness** is now about individual virtue
 - But in the Bible it is often a collective virtue
- *Imagine* a world of justice for all...social, economic, environmental and in all its other forms
 - Above all we must ensure that
we speak truth with power, simplicity and beauty



God's promise

Loving God,
You promise a world
Where those who weep shall laugh;
Those who are hungry shall feast;
Those who are poor and excluded
shall have the Kingdom for their own.
We want this world too.
We renounce despair.
We will act for change.
We choose to be included in your great feast of life.



Let the pain of the world seize us by the throat.
Listen for Jesus calling us all out of
our tombs of despair and apathy.
May the shock of baptismal dying once more set us afire.
This place we call home is meant to be
a new heaven, a new earth, a holy city, a new Jerusalem.
It is the sparks in the stubble that will make it so.

**The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church
All Saints Sunday, November 5th, 2006, Washington National Cathedral**



Rod Oram has 40 years' experience as an international business journalist. He has worked in Europe and North America for leading publications such as the Financial Times of London. His FT career spanned 18 years (1979-1997) as an editor and writer based in London and New York. Rod has also travelled extensively in North America, Europe and Asia.

Rod and his family emigrated from the UK to New Zealand in 1997. They worship at St Andrew's, Epsom. Rod was a lay canon in the Chapter of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland. He is currently a diocesan and general synod representative and active in those bodies on issues such as same gender relationships, the Living Wage and fossil fuel divestment.

Rod is currently a columnist for the Sunday Star-Times; a regular broadcaster on radio and television; and a frequent public speaker on business and economic issues. He was Editor of the Business Herald section of the New Zealand Herald, 1997-2000.

For more than a decade, Rod has been helping fast-growing New Zealand companies through his involvement with The ICEHOUSE, the entrepreneurship centre at the University of Auckland's Business School.

Penguin published in 2007 his book on the New Zealand economy, *Reinventing Paradise*.

He was named the Landcorp Agricultural Communicator of the Year for 2009.

In 2010, Rod was the winner in the individual category in the *Vero Excellence in Business Support Awards* and was Columnist of the Year in the consumer category in the national magazine awards for his columns in *Good*, a consumer sustainability magazine.

Rod was a founding trustee and chairman of the Akina Foundation, which helps social enterprises develop their business models in areas of sustainability. He remains very active with the foundation.

