

The World in 2084

A Brief Summary of Paul Raskin's New Paradigm Scenario

Paul Raskin's 2016 *Journey to Earthland* presents six possible scenarios for the world in the latter half of the 21st Century. His most hopeful scenario, the New Paradigm, may be possible, but only if humanity successfully and significantly changes its current direction.

Commitment to the New Paradigm requires understanding what it is, why it is much better than the alternatives, and what we can do today to help realize it. The purpose of this summary is to introduce the scenario, provide an initial basis for discussing it, and encourage people to read *Journey to Earthland*.

Pages 71 to 108 of *Journey to Earthland* present a description of the New Paradigm in 2084. People still face real problems, so the world is not a utopia. It is, however, much more sustainable, just, and secure than today. The dominant values have changed from consumerism, individualism, and exploitation of the natural world to quality of life, solidarity with others, and harmony with the natural world.

The goal of accumulating ever more individual material wealth has been replaced by the goal of having a high quality of life in a world where everyone's basic material needs are satisfied. "Enough is enough" and "enough for all" (page 76). This has led to great reductions in wealth and income disparity through changes in tax policies. It has also led to time affluence through productivity increases, reductions in unnecessary production, and full employment policies. "Workweeks in the formal economy typically range from 12 to 18 hours" (page 97). The desire for money is giving way to the cultivation of artistic skills, personal relationships, and wellness of body, mind, and spirit.

World population has stabilized at just less than 8 billion people, far less than the 10 billion or more peak the UN projected in 2020. Universal education and healthcare, combined with more equitable economic policies, have reduced population growth even while increasing life expectancy.

Raskin divides the Great Transition from 1980 to 2084 into five stages: Takeoff (1980-2001), Rolling Crisis (2001-2023), General Emergency (2023-2028), Reform Era (2028-2048), and Commonwealth of Earthland (2048-2084). The Commonwealth of Earthland begins with the adoption of a World Constitution in 2048. The principle of constrained pluralism balances the need for appropriate global oversight of human rights, environmental protection, regional dispute resolution, and trade with the need for autonomy and diversity at lower levels of government. "All decision-making processes reflect the Commonwealth's core governance principles of democracy, participation, and transparency; any politician tempted to bend the rules can expect to be held accountable by a vigilant public" (page 86).

Raskin's description of the New Paradigm in 2084 ends on page 108: "Victor Hugo once noted that nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come. In the Planetary Phase [Great Transition], the idea of one world had finally arrived, but the reality did not fall from the sky. It took a tenacious few to sow the seeds as social conditions enriched the soil....Living in yesterday's tomorrow, we proudly confirm what they could only imagine: another world was possible!"