



December 2011

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Forward Perspectives

Happy Birthday to the Samueli Institute

By Jonathan Peck



IAF futurists Clem Bezold and Jonathan Peck joined a remarkable group of leaders and healers to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Samueli Institute in a symposium on *Creating the Future of Healing*. The event was like a birthday party with Samueli giving the gifts of terrific speakers from health and healing and great discussions, including a panel with Clem Bezold on "Equity, Resilience, and Healing in the Community" following a talk by Surgeon General Regina Benjamin. The symposium led me to several insights that will inform the future of health.

Time is precious; people gain more time through health.

We can lengthen our time in this world by being physically and socially healthy. We can also intensify time in the inner world by being spiritually and psychologically healthy.

Healing works through multiple dimensions.

The physical, nutritional, medical, and psychological dimensions have been addressed through science, which has improved over time. However, the social dimension, which has long been recognized as important to healing by nurses, public health, and others, is only now receiving greater attention. The emotional and spiritual dimensions have long been known by religions to be a source for healing, and furthermore the spiritual dimension of healing exists outside of time while the physical and psychological dimensions are experienced temporally.

Healing works by helping a person realize his or her potential for health at a given time.

Healers draw from an internal intention to provide health based on love and compassion as well as external systems and environments to support health. Healers reach into the timeless realm of spirit to touch the love at the core of healing, but they take this into the temporal realm in which health flourishes through human resilience. Most people in the healing professions know intuitively that positive emotions like love are a factor in healing. The scientific evidence can be found in fields such as psychoneuroimmunology and more recently in psychology and neuroscience. The recent experiments showing that rats experience empathy suggest that the understanding of emotional intelligence will grow over the coming years. It may well help us learn about love and healing and perhaps open a new window into the shadow side where negative emotions may operate in health care. In the future we may have new ways to qualify healers and improve patient safety because we will understand how negative emotions can unconsciously drive behaviors that lead to medical errors and all their devastating consequences.

It was said at the Samuelli Forum that what you or I think is possible for a person is as far as they can go in our presence. To promote healing, it is therefore important to make sure that all thoughts support the potential for health. That is why the healing journey starts with acceptance and is never ending. We may need to remove ourselves from the environment if we cannot aid in that journey because either consciously or unconsciously we negate the healing potential that the positive emotions of love, joy, faith, and awe enable.

Society needs a system for healing.

Many leaders in health care who assembled with the Samuelli Institute at the symposium understand that our society needs a better system for health and healing. A sustainable world of health and wellbeing would consist of environments for healing that include the "soft" technologies of meditation and psychology along with the "hard" physical sciences that support the healing of the physical body. Environments for healing also include both systems and the people in those systems. The leaders at the symposium were able to envision a complex set of changes to create systems within systems that support health all the way up from individuals, families, and communities through the state, national, and global levels. In their vision, the dynamic interplay among each of these levels aligns with the intention to be healthy. To make this vision a reality, however, we also have to learn how to be present, whole, and mature in the practice of mindful medicine that incorporates the learning and application of science. People already have an innate spiritual capacity to provide and receive healing as an expression of faith and love. By putting systems and people together for healing environments, we can apply science to the disease and ourselves to the care. *When our objective designs for health care systems integrate and reflect subjective human qualities of love and compassion, we will achieve the individual and cultural healing that could give us more time and help us enjoy it better.*

To realize this vision, we must continue to develop a deeper knowledge about healing that we all can tap into.

Much of this knowledge exists already and is available and accessible to us. We can create soothing environments in our homes, workplaces, schools, and clinics that provide emotional supports so that we are receptive and empowered by healers.

- In 2012 the Samuelli Institute and IAF will work on wellbeing at the community level, which complements the previous work on Total Fitness that we partnered on, as well as IAF's project showing how community health centers are leveraging the social determinants of health to strengthen community, population, and public health.
- By 2021 we may accept in our culture what other cultures teach us about eating and mindfulness. Mindfulness and meditation will be taught in elementary schools so that spiritual and emotional intelligence are strengthened early in life. The addictive qualities of salt, sugar, and fat will be recognized and culinary expertise will enter our schools and worksites as an accepted part of predictive health care.

With this symposium, the Samuelli Institute provided us all with a birthday present on their 10th anniversary, one that holds great promise for the future. It was an honor for IAF futurists to join the celebration and find that the capacity to heal goes beyond doctors, nurses, and shamans as it extends beyond individuals to systems and cultures. Many thanks to all who shared in this learning experience.

News & Events



IAF Announces Winners of International Pro-Poor Scenarios Competition

The Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) has announced the results of its Pro-Poor Scenarios Competition, a global contest that invited policy-makers, futurists, academics, and active citizens around the world to develop scenarios that apply foresight methods to expand social and economic opportunities for poor and marginalized populations.

While many corporations, organizations, and government agencies frequently apply foresight methods, these efforts rarely include those from poor and marginalized populations. As a result, these groups can be dispossessed not only in the present, but in the future as well. To fill this gap, IAF, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, developed a "pro-poor scenario toolkit". This free toolkit is available at www.alfutures.org/pro_poor for use by communities, countries, and regions to develop scenarios of their own futures that explicitly include poor and marginalized populations. Scenarios can help these groups identify actions that can be taken today to avoid feared consequences and to achieve desired outcomes.

IAF offered prizes to encourage people from different regions of the world to include people from poor and marginalized populations in the creation of images of the future that include surprising successes for the world's poor. These efforts could use IAF's "pro-poor scenario toolkit" or other tools. IAF offered to publish the submitted scenarios on its website and award up to \$5,000 for the best submissions. Submissions were evaluated by an international panel of experts from the fields of foresight and international development based on the extent to which they:

- Placed poor populations at the center of concern. That is, the scenarios needed to be well developed based on forecasts that would be important to the future of the global poor.
- Presented at least three different scenarios for the future. This is because one of the key functions of foresight methods is to grapple with the inherent uncertainty of the future.
- Connected compelling and plausible images of the future with present realities to clarify decisions and provide meaningful recommendations for action.

Special consideration was given to scenarios that engaged or included poor or marginalized populations in their development.

The following three scenarios were judged most commendable by the panel of judges and have been awarded a cash prize of \$5,000, \$2,000, and \$1,000, respectively:

1. *Engaging the Shipibo-Coniba Community*, submitted by Gonzalo Alcalde, Romeld Bustamante, and Ruth Llacsahuanga from Peru.
2. *Mineral Extraction and Pro-poor Futures in Afghanistan*, submitted by Umar Sheraz from Pakistan.
3. *Poverty 2039 – Exercises in Pro-Poor Foresight*, submitted by Rex Troumbley and Heather Frey from Hawaii.

Honorable mentions went to:

- *King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality Scenarios 2030*, submitted by Lee Rosenzweig, Geci Karuri-Sebina, Monwabisi Mbana, Louis van der Merwe from South Africa.
- *Pro-Poor Scenarios for Pakistan*, submitted by Mariya Absar and Ali Shah from Pakistan.
- *Visions of Somalia in 2039*, submitted by Tessa Finlev and Aaron Gardner from New York.

Congratulations and many thanks to all! All of the submitted scenarios can be found at www.altfutures.org/pro_poor_scenarios_competition.



Geoengineering for Decision Makers

IAF Senior Fellow Bob Olson, working with the Science and Technology Innovation Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, has just released [Geoengineering for Decision Makers](#), a report dealing with the governance issues involved in developing and using geoengineering technologies to counter the effects of global climate change. The report and a recorded webcast of the November 10, 2011, release event are available online at the Wilson Center's website. It has [also received the attention of the New York Times](#). *Geoengineering for Decision Makers* joins two other recent reports, a *Climate Engineering Technology Assessment* done by the Government Accounting Office and a report of the Bipartisan Policy Center's *Task Force on Climate Remediation Research* in making the case for pursuing research on climate geoengineering.

The report provides an overview of the variety of technologies being considered for cooling the climate and includes a comprehensive review of legitimate concerns about these technologies that decision makers need to be aware of and give due consideration. Critics argue, for example, that we know too little about the Earth's geophysical and ecological systems to be confident we can engineer the planet's climate without making a bad situation even worse. Even if geoengineering is able to counter climate change on a global scale, it might result in droughts, floods, and other extreme conditions in some areas, producing losers as well as winners. Scientists involved in the field worry that if politicians come to believe that geoengineering is a low-cost "tech fix" for climate change, it could provide a perfect excuse for backing off efforts to shift away from fossil fuels. That would pose a grave danger, allowing high concentrations of carbon dioxide to build up in the atmosphere so that if the geoengineering enterprise ever faltered because of wars, economic depressions, terrorism or any other reason, a catastrophic warming would occur too quickly for human society and vast numbers of plant and animal species to adjust.

These and many other concerns reviewed in the report make it clear that the best future would be one in which we rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions so that there is no need to use geoengineering. However, time is short and the challenge is daunting. Limiting global warming to a 2 degree Celsius increase, which many scientists believe may be necessary to prevent passing a tipping point into truly dangerous runaway climate change, requires annual global carbon dioxide emissions to fall to an average of two tons per capita by mid-century and one ton by 2100. The world average emission level today is 5 tons per capita and the U.S. level is 20 tons. The technology exists or is near at hand to meet this challenge, but it will require a societal mobilization at a speed and scale that has few if any peacetime precedents. Slow economic growth, high economic uncertainty, and ideological denial of the reality of climate change make effort on the needed scale all the more difficult.

Olson argues that, as problematic as geoengineering is, there is a strong moral argument for pursuing R&D. If there is even a

modest chance we will fail to prevent dangerous climate change through emission reduction, then a resilient, future-oriented approach must include preparing to deal with that failure before it occurs. If it comes to a situation where geoengineering is the only recourse to a global climate catastrophe, decision makers will almost certainly choose to do geoengineering. They should not be put in a position of either letting dangerous climate change occur or deploying poorly researched, untested technologies at full scale.

While most discussions of geoengineering have focused on "downstream governance" – how to make final decisions about deploying geoengineering technologies – Olson argues in the report that it is just as important to focus, right now, on "upstream governance" to responsibly shape early-stage theoretical studies and modeling, lab work, technology development and small-scale testing. "Governance," as used in the report, refers to decision making by all parties – scientists, governments, companies, and NGOs. Upstream governance includes strategies like voluntary self-governance by scientists, ongoing ethical, legal and social implications (ELSI) studies, lab scale intervention where ethicists or risk assessors are embedded in research groups, and participatory technology assessment (PTA) that incorporates both expert analysis and citizen participation. These and other governance methods outlined in the report have been used at times in other areas such as the Human Genome Project and R&D on nanotechnology.

The report includes a wide range of recommendations for political decision makers. Some of the most important deal with committing to the creation of a 21st energy system based on high energy efficiency and carbon-free energy sources and funding R&D on innovative energy supply options that could be game-changers if a breakthrough can be achieved. Others deal with pursuing R&D on geoengineering, but never treating it as a substitute for emissions reduction. Several focus on the use of upstream governance, the importance of transparency and the value of international cooperation. The report argues that a moratorium should be placed on large-scale or "climate impacts" testing until a legitimate international process for approval and oversight is agreed upon.

Olson says that if we can responsibly meet the climate challenge, "it would be a large step toward becoming a mature technological society in responsible control of its impacts, able to take on growing responsibility for the future of life on Earth."

Geoengineering for Decision Makers is available online at www.wilsoncenter.org/event/report-release-geoengineering-for-decision-makers.

IAF Conducts Webinars on Pro-Poor Foresight

IAF Futurists Jonathan Peck and Eric Meade conducted two webinars on "Using Scenarios to Set Forward-Looking Research Agendas" for 30 participants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in November 2011. Participants were researchers at think-tanks that have been funded as part of the Think Tank Initiative of the International Development Research Center, which is a Canadian Crown corporation that reports to Canada's Parliament through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Exploring Holiday Uncertainty Using Scenarios

As many organizations grapple with what may be a "new normal," they are challenging the assumptions which they have brought with them from the past. Nowhere does the past loom larger than in the traditions of the holiday season. Thus, many may be questioning their own expectations of what will happen this year. To explore this uncertainty, here is a set of scenarios for the 2011 holiday season created using the "aspirational futures" technique.

An "expectable" future – "He's Making a Budget, and Checking It Twice"

As the credits rolled on the last re-run of "It's A Wonderful Life," most Americans reflected on a holiday season that had kept faith with the past. While not as extravagant as in previous years, Santa Claus had managed to appear at a good number of U. S. shopping malls and had delivered a modest yet respectable haul of toys. Many Americans were relieved that consumerism had stayed just above the level required for many Americans to complain that there is too much consumerism in Christmas.

A challenging future – "Rudolph the Unemployed Reindeer"

Bah, humbug. Economic stagnation took all the joy out of the holidays. To save money, Santa laid off his team of reindeer, hoping instead to travel by sea lanes that had recently opened up due to glacial melting. Unfortunately, with oil at \$150 per barrel, he got no farther than Canada and Northern Europe. Children farther south received nothing but lumps of clean coal. The high cost of lighting oil limited Hanukkah celebrations to three days, and Christmas light brown-outs occurred in many U.S. cities.

A surprisingly successful future – "I'm Dreaming of a 'White Elephant' Christmas"

The jobless recovery left many families without the means to celebrate the holidays as they had in years past. However, the reduction in consumerism focused many Americans on the true spirit of the holidays. Within communities, people dug through their closets to find unused items that they could exchange as gifts with their neighbors. At the same time, social networking and electronic greeting cards allowed people to spread the holiday spirit further than they ever had before. Furthermore, the

rise in "virtual goods" as gifts allowed Santa to finish his Christmas deliveries by 9:30 PM on Christmas Eve.

These scenarios capture much of the uncertainty facing the holidays. But IAF's philosophy has always been that you can create your preferred future. There are steps we could all take today that would move us toward a better holiday season. Many of these are what we call "robust" strategies, meaning that they would make sense across multiple scenarios. With that in mind, we would like to highlight a few robust strategies that we hope will help you create your preferred holiday season no matter what – if anything – arrives under your tree on December 25.

Robust Holiday Strategies:

1. Love your neighbor.
2. Spend time with family and friends.
3. Have a happy holiday season!

Upcoming Events

"Community Health Centers Leveraging the Social Determinants of Health," session at the Grantmakers in Health (GIH) Annual Meeting. Clem Bezold. March 9, 2012, in Baltimore, MD.

"Law Enforcement in the Society of the Future," workshop for California's Police Officer Standards & Training (POST) Command College. Eric Meade. March 13, 2012, in San Diego, CA.

The Institute for Alternative Futures is a 501(c)3 non-profit research and education organization based in Alexandria, VA. IAF was founded in 1977 by Clem Bezold, Alvin Toffler, and James Dator. IAF has a long track record of using forecasts, scenarios, visioning, and other futures tools to help leading organizations understand the likely, challenging, and visionary developments that may take place in their environments, and to develop robust and visionary strategies that account for the inherent uncertainty of the future. IAF's past clients include the World Health Organization, AARP, American Cancer Society, and Rockefeller Foundation, as well as a wide range of multinational corporations through its for-profit subsidiary, Alternative Futures Associates. To learn more about what we can do for your organization, call us at (703) 684-5880 or write to futurist@altfutures.org.

We'd like to know what you think! Please send us your comments, questions, and things you would like to see included in future issues to futurist@altfutures.org.

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