

Good morning everybody. Isn't it interesting how things change...

I am here this morning representing two organizations; I am a partner in **Greenbridge** and as most of you know we are building a green building at the corner of Rosemary Street and Merritt Mill Road. It will be a 200,000 square foot building with 35,000 square feet of retail and commercial space and 99 residential units. And it will be LEED certified; our goal is LEED Gold.

I am also here as President of the **Fenwick Foundation**; we are a family foundation with a mission to help children in need and their families; we do this by funding direct service and by investing in organizations that work to change the cultural conditions that foster and perpetuate disadvantage.

My intention this morning is to share my perspective on "sustainability". I will start with a story that describes my thinking on philanthropy and how it intersects with sustainability. I call this story "The Three Legged Stool of Philanthropy". It goes like this:

You have all heard the saying "Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, or teach him to fish and feed him for a life time". This saying describes the first two legs of the stool, charity and empowerment. They are important, but not enough. There is a third leg; we must also to pay attention to what's happening on the river. Does our trained fisherman have access to the river? Are the best fishing holes taken? What is going on upstream; is someone using a fishing net catching all the big fish, is someone dumping toxic waste in the river? This third leg points to the importance of the

context - the culture, policies and practices of the river community. Our trained fisherman, depending on the context, may apply great skill, work very hard, and still struggle to feed his family.

So there it is – the three legged stool of philanthropy; all three are important, all three worthy of our attention. But as one pursues this third leg, a fourth leg emerges: “why do some of us hog the best fishing holes, why do some take more fish than we need without consideration for what’s best for the river, the fish, and the fishermen downstream”?

The answer to these questions is the challenge of the fourth leg. Why do we do this: perhaps because we live in a world where more is better, or perhaps we do it for security, to make sure we have enough to eat, to ensure our well being and the well being of our families. This makes sense within the context of our Newtonian worldview that says we are separate objects, separate individuals in a world of separate individuals, a world view that says we are independent and on our own.

But a new worldview is emerging, born in part by quantum physics, and born in part by our experiences as the river gets more and more crowded. The new world view suggests that my well being is 1) related to the well being of the river, 2) related to the well being of the fish, and 3) related the well being of fishermen up and down the river. This new worldview, says that my well being and the well being of all life on the planet are interdependent. And this interdependency of all life is at the heart of sustainability. I am going to say that again, this interdependency is at the heart of sustainability. It is the driving force behind the sustainability

movement, and incorporating these values into our behaviors and choices is promise and potential of sustainability.

So what is “sustainability”: on the surface sustainability is about the triple bottom line, about the balance between economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and social equity. Some refer to this balance as the three Ps - profit, planet, and people; and some refer to it as the three Es - economics, environment, and equity. At its core, sustainability is the natural response to the interdependence of all life. In practice, sustainability is the aligning of business, environmental and social interests around the shared goal of creating a better future for all.

Sustainability **as a** movement is **huge**, it shows up almost everywhere and is part, I believe, of something even bigger, almost unimaginable in scale. This is the overarching message of my talk, something hopeful and almost unimaginable in scale is happening on the planet.

A lot has been written in the last 8 years about sustainability, I am going to talk briefly about 10 books and at the end of the meeting I am going to give one copy of each away. So if something I say sparks your interest come see me after the meeting.

It all started for me 4 years ago with the book **Natural Capitalism** by Paul Hawken and Amory Lovins. They define Natural Capital as 1) the resources we use – air, water, minerals, oil, trees, fish, and so on..., and 2) the earth’s living systems including: wetlands, grasslands, savannas, oceans, tundra, and rainforests. They argue that the cost of using and

abusing these resources and living systems must be reflected on the balance sheets of our businesses and in the price of the products we buy. The book is full of innovation and new ideas, many of which are now, 8 years later, becoming main stream. My favorite is captured in the tag line “Creating the next Industrial Revolution” which speaks to the magnitude of their vision.

Bill McDonough’s book Cradle to Cradle presents a vision of a human society without waste. Bill and his firm, as some of you know, designed Greenbridge. Bill likes to say design is the first sign of human intention, and in good human design, like in nature, waste equals food. His book is an example, it is not made of paper, it is made with a synthetic material designed to be recycled and re-used again, and again and again - from cradle to cradle to cradle.

Andres Edwards, in The Sustainability Revolution says that “not since the Industrial Revolution has such a profound transformation with worldwide impact emerged on the world stage. He chooses the word ‘revolution’ with purpose and suggests future generations will look back on this time like we look back on the industrial revolution of the 19th century. It is that BIG. The “revolution” he says, is creating a pervasive and permanent shift that will modify consumption patterns and change social relationships, all within a framework of equity.

He presents well the many sets of sustainability principles developed over the last 10 years, from the Hanover Principles presented at the 2000 Worlds Fair in Hanover, Germany to the Earth Charter launched at the

World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, to the US Green Building Council's LEED program, now the standard for green building in the US.

While the context for these many principles differ, a number of common values emerge including; stewardship, respect for limits, interdependence, fair distribution, and nature as a model and teacher.

Edwards also suggests the revolution is changing attitudes at the highest levels of corporate cultural. For example he quotes the CEO of General Electric "To be a great company, we have to be a good company".

The lead article in the latest Kenan-Flagler's **Sustainable Enterprise Quarterly** put is like this: The public's expectation that business will operate in society's best interests is at an all-time high, while the public's perception that business is operating in society's best interests is at an all-time low. Several key factors have caused corporate social responsibility to ***explode*** and make its way into mainstream business thinking: these factors include 1) the rise of technology giving citizens immediate access to information, 2) the increasing number and sophistication of NGOs, 3) workers demanding that their employers contribute to bettering the world, 4) consumer pressure, and 5) generation Y proving to be the most cause-focused generation in decades.

Bob Williard in **The Sustainability Advantage** points to how smart companies are making money on sustainability. He presents seven business case benefits of the Triple Bottom Line including: easier hiring

and higher retention rates of the best talent, increased employee production, reduced expenses, increased market share, and reduced risk.

Stuart Hart in **Capitalism at the Crossroads** makes it clear that the only way we meet the needs of the 7+ billion people on the planet is by harnessing the innovation and technology of business and capitalism. I include his book for two reasons; 1) Hart is the founder of the Center for Sustainable Enterprise at the Kenan-Flagler Business School and 2) I love the book's tag line "Aligning Business, Earth, and Humanity."

Bill McKibben in **Deep Economy** begins his book with this observation, "For most of human history, the two birds More and Better sat side by side on the same branch. You could toss one stone and hit them both. That's why for centuries we have been devoted to the pursuit of maximum economic production". But the world has changed, Better has left the side of More and now makes her nest a few branches over. McKibben suggests it's time to move beyond "growth" as an economic ideal and pursue prosperity locally where towns, cities and regions produce more of their own food and energy. He points to the local food movement as an example; and as this **Carolina Farms Stewards** brochure suggests local food is alive and well in the Triangle.

Blessed Unrest is Paul Hawken's latest book. He begins by setting the context for the book. Over the past 8 years he has given nearly one thousand talks on the environment and after every speech a small crowd would gather to talk, ask questions and exchange business cards. He says these people were typically working on the most important issue of our day:

climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, human rights... They came primarily from the non-profit sector and had dedicated themselves to safeguarding nature and ensuring justice. Through the years he began to grasp the immense diversity of these groups and their impressive numbers. Blessed Unrest is their story.

The Native Americans taught him the division between ecology and human rights was artificial, that the environmental and social justice movements were two sides of a single larger dilemma. The way we harm the earth, they say, affects all people, and how we treat each other is reflected in how we treat the earth.

He describes what he sees as “the movement of movements” and estimates it consists of one to two million and maybe up to ten million diverse organizations all with a common agenda to make the world a better place for all. At their core are two fundamental principles; all life is sacred and the Golden Rule. These organizations fit into one of three categories; organizations working on environmental issues, organizations working on social justice issues, and organizations working to protect the rights of indigenous people. He estimates that 5,000 indigenous cultures are left on the planet, an invaluable resource and connection to our ancient wisdom traditions.

This movement of movement is global and arising from the bottom up. He compares it to the human immune system referring to these organizations as the “white blood cells” of Gaia responding to the dysfunction of their brothers and sisters. He describes it as “an organic, collective human

response to the current global crisis, the largest social movement in history involving tens of millions of people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds to restore grace, justice and beauty to the world”.

David Korten starts **The Great Turning** with a quote by Joanna Macy: “Future generations, if there is a livable world for them, will look back at the transition we are making to a life-sustaining society. And they may well call this time “the time of the Great Turning”. Korten’s book is inspiring and hopeful and not just a little bit political. His message is the “Age of Empire”, the paradigm of power and exploitation is ending and taking its place is a new paradigm he calls “Earth Community”. He says the work of the Great Turning is not to fix Empire. It is to birth a new era that give expression to the highest potential of our nature, and restores to people, families, and communities the power that Empire has usurped. He refers to what Hawken’s calls the “movement of movements” as the evolving “Global Civil Society” whose presence is evidence of higher levels of human consciousness expressing itself in the world.

Eckhart Tolle, in **A New Earth** presents an internal view of this higher level of human consciousness. He says we are more aware today, collectively as a species than ever before, connected by the media and internet in ways unimaginable 20 years ago. And as a result we are beginning to see our own dysfunction more broadly and with more clearly. He says “The greatest achievement of humanity is not our works of art, science, or technology, but the recognition of our own dysfunction, our own insanity. And to recognize one’s own insanity is, of course, the arising of sanity, the

beginning of healing and transcendence. And as we heal and transcend, as we make our way through the Great Turning, we create A New Earth.

And finally, at the heart of sustainability, is choice. Choice, according to Joanna Macy sets us apart from the rest of life; in **Come Back to Life**, She put it like this: In humans the mind is endowed with a remarkable feature: self-reflective consciousness. It emerged by necessity, when our system's internal complexity grew so great that we could no longer survive by instinct or trial and error. We evolved to a higher level of awareness and began to weigh different courses of action; in other words, we began to make choices, and the self-observant "I" arose.

She goes on to say that the locus of decision making remains within the individual, subject to all the erratic notions of what the individual considers to be of self-interest.

Herein lies the problem; decision making dominated by self interests. And the solution, **at the heart of sustainability**, is aligning our interests for the sake of the whole, the solution **at the heart of sustainability** is collective decision making with purity of intention for the sake of the whole. **ME....becomes....WE**, it is our choice and we have to make it **together!**