It is time for humanity to rise to a new challenge. The mounting problems of our world are not due to any irremediable flaw in human nature; they are signs that we have outgrown the present stage of human development. More consumption of outside goods will not make us happy; the ‘conquest’ of others, or of outer space, will not bring a world of peace and security.

What stands between us and a much brighter world is our belief that we are separate from one another and our environment, that we are material beings who need to consume ever more external resources for our fulfillment. This image of ourselves has brought us into dangerous competition with one another and made us a threat to our own existence on this planet. We have come to accept that image in today’s culture is largely through the influence of the mass media.

Where shall we turn for a more realistic and far safer image? As human beings we possess an immemorial tradition of spiritual wisdom and a more recent legacy of enlightened science which, taken together, bring an entirely different picture to light, one that is vastly more encouraging—and challenging.

Both modern science and the most ancient and reliable traditions of wisdom that have come down to us across all human cultures are unanimous that, to begin with, this vast universe did not come about by chance. It is obvious that the grand sweep of evolution has moved from inert matter to the development of life forms with higher and higher consciousness. We human beings are the cutting edge of that long unfolding (at least as far as this planet is concerned). Just as the macrocosm of the
The mounting problems of our world are not due to any irremediable flaw in human nature, rather we have the capacity to grow and evolve along the paths marked by the great souls of our past, and in so doing create a better world.

By virtue of the spiritual dimension of human being, we are deeply interconnected with one another and the surrounding reality of our planet. Our infinite diversity on the surface is not a threat but a natural complement to our deep, inner unity.

Within certain limits we are free to rise above our circumstances and take charge of our destiny. Neither our chemistry nor our DNA nor any outside influences can determine our fate or deprive us of our basic freedom — and responsibility.

We are not condemned to violence. The remarkable rise of nonviolence since the time of Gandhi and King, an important aspect of the unfolding of this new image of human nature, has shown that there is virtually no conflict that cannot be creatively resolved to the satisfaction and higher integration of all parties.

Unlike the world’s material resources, our inner resources of love and wisdom, answering to our higher needs for bonding, autonomy, and meaning, are inexhaustible. To discover them is to relieve the burden that our present economy of consumption has placed on the Earth.

Fortified by this renewed awareness of our real nature, we envision a near future where our key institutions arise from this awareness, for example:

- the criminal justice system converted from a retributive to a restorative model
- our extractive, profit-driven, economy of wants gives way to a vibrant, stable economy of needs
- the war system is replaced by a broad spectrum of peace institutions, ranging from traditional diplomacy to nonviolent intervention (of course, fewer wars arise as we can outgrow our dependency on material resources and sense deep inner security) and perhaps most importantly
- educational systems, including the mass media, take as their purpose the unfolding of the potential of every person

It is entirely within the realm of possibility to create a world free of poverty, violence, slavery, the neglect of our precious children, and abuse of planet earth. We can draw upon the inspiration and the challenge of this picture to begin this great change.