

## **THE THIRD GENERAL EMAIL: DETAILS OF THE APPROACHES MADE TO THE 'TOP 15' EVOLUTIONARY SCIENTISTS**

Dear,

This is the third general email I have sent you about the major cooperative evolutionary transitions and their implications for humanity. My recent paper on these transitions is [here](#). An easy-to-print PDF of this email is [here](#) and a PDF of the second general email is [here](#).

### **Evolutionary science's unique knowledge about future human evolution**

My emails have argued that evolutionary science has a critically important role to play in the survival of human civilization. In summary, this is because:

- Evolutionary science has unique knowledge about how human societies must evolve if they are to survive and thrive into the future;
- This knowledge demonstrates that the survival of civilization demands that humanity must organize itself into a unified, cooperative and evolvable global society that is underpinned by appropriate global constraints/governance;
- Global constraints/governance are essential to support cooperation and to suppress the destructive competition between nations and others that is currently driving the threat of nuclear war and environmental degradation, including global warming;
- The transition to a cooperative global society will continue the sequence of cooperative transitions during the evolution of life on Earth in which smaller-scale living entities have formed larger-scale cooperatives. These include:
  - The organization of self-producing molecular processes into simple cells, of simple cells into complex eukaryote cells, of cells into multi-cellular organisms, and of these into animal societies.
  - The trajectory has continued with humans: kin groups were organized into bands, these into tribes, tribes into city-states and kingdoms, and these into empires and the modern nation-state;
- In each and every one of these transitions, the emergence of constraints/governance that reached across the emerging cooperatives was essential to support cooperation and to suppress destructive competition;
- Evolutionary science can use its understanding of these past transitions to identify how the global society needs to be organised and structured.

### **The critical importance of evolutionary science's unique knowledge**

The discovery by science of an evolutionary imperative for humanity to transition to a cooperative global society has the potential to have a major impact. For the first time in history, science will say something clear and unequivocal about how humanity needs to organise itself socially and politically. This is likely to significantly influence the views of educated, intelligent citizens across the planet about what humanity must do to overcome the threats that currently endanger human civilization.

Of course, this science-based understanding will not easily overcome the vested interests that benefit from the status quo, at least in the short term. But it will irrevocably place the need for

a global society on the agenda, and greatly strengthen the hand of those who support its emergence. It will help establish global society as an attractor for human social organization.

### **The challenge for evolutionary science and for evolutionary scientists**

The fact that evolutionary science possesses knowledge that is critical for the survival of human civilization presents a major challenge for evolutionary scientists. This knowledge will have a far greater impact and be far more resistant to attack by vested interests if it is announced, explained, and defended collectively. However, joining in collective action that is intrinsically political is likely to take most academic scientists out of their comfort zone and beyond their existing skill sets.

### **My initial approach to potential leaders amongst evolutionary scientists**

As indicated in my second general email, I saw advantages in first approaching potential leaders amongst evolutionary scientists in my attempts to help build a robust consensus about the transition to a global society. In large part, this was because scientists with the highest reputations have considerable power and influence in scientific disciplines. This considerable power derives from the peer review system, editorial influence, and the feudal structure of many academic institutions. Its existence is reflected in the old adage that science progresses funeral by funeral. However, this considerable power could potentially be used to establish and enforce a widespread consensus about the evolutionary imperative for a transition to a global society.

As I indicated briefly in my second general email to you, I contacted the evolutionary scientists who are the top 15 or so on the planet (in my admittedly limited estimation). However, this approach failed to find a group that was willing to provide leadership for the kind of initiative that I was proposing.

### **The second approach to the potential leaders**

I also indicated in my second general email that my next general email would provide details of this approach and its outcomes. However, before I finalised this promised email, I decided to again approach the top 15 or so evolutionary scientists. I decided to outline to them in detail the 'bottom-up' strategy I had adopted following their failure to take up leadership roles (including providing them with copies of the general emails I have sent to yourself and over 750 other evolutionary scientists). I invited them again to use their reputations and power to help fulfil the important potential of evolutionary science to advance the evolutionary process on this planet.

This second attempt to encourage and organise a leadership-driven 'top-down' approach was not successful. This was not surprising. The architects of the Modern Evolutionary Synthesis had the vision and the leadership capacity to establish and enforce the Synthesis across the community of evolutionary scientists. However, in providing this leadership, they not only cleansed evolutionary science of 'big picture' thinking. They also created an academic evolutionary science that was unattractive to people like themselves who had genuine 'big picture' cognitive capacities and the leadership capabilities that often go with this.

I will now proceed to provide details of the emails and material that I circulated amongst the top 15 or so evolutionary scientists. You will find these materials very useful if you are

interested in the global governance initiative that I have been promoting. They outline the initiative and associated strategies in much greater detail.

### **Details of the two approaches to the potential leaders**

The key emails and other materials I circulated are:

- A typical example of the introductory email I sent to each of the ‘top 15’ evolutionary scientists is in PDF form [here](#). It includes a list of the recipients.
- A two-page flyer that succinctly summarises the specific proposal that I put to the ‘top 15’ is in PDF form [here](#).
- The most recent email I sent to the ‘top 15’ is in PDF form [here](#). This email outlines in some detail the strategies I have been pursuing. These include the initial ‘top-down’ approach, the subsequent ‘bottom-up’ approach which comprises the emails that I have sent to you and to more than 750 other evolutionary scientists, and the possibility of a combined ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approach.

### **Next steps**

The feedback I am getting from the recipients of the various emails (including the ‘top 15’) indicates the following:

- Lack of support for the initiative is not due to any reasoned critique of the key proposition that underpins it: i.e. that a proper understanding of previous major evolutionary transitions demonstrates that global constraints/governance are essential to suppress the destructive competition that is currently threatening human civilization.
- However, many evolutionary scientists are currently uncomfortable with endorsing such a proposition publicly.

There are several reasons for this lack of comfort, some of which I have canvassed in previous emails. However, a significant reason seems to be that only a small minority of evolutionary scientists have yet developed an overarching understanding of evolution that encompasses not just gene-based biological evolution, but also culture-based human evolution. Most have restricted their thinking to gene-based evolution, although it is obvious that this is just a phase in the evolution of life on Earth. As a consequence, many evolutionary scientists are currently ill-equipped to develop credible positions on human evolution or on the evolution of life as a whole.

It therefore seems that there needs to be a period of debate and incubation in relation to the propositions I have advanced. Hopefully, this debate will stimulate deeper and broader understandings of the evolutionary process. Until these understandings are shared more widely, it appears that it would be counterproductive to attempt to force the development of a consensus.

This is not to suggest that the goal is to build a consensus amongst all or even most evolutionary scientists. The goal is to achieve agreement amongst those who have the cognitive capacity and the willingness to make the substantial intellectual effort that is required to develop an overarching understanding of the evolutionary process, including human evolution (for detail about the requisite cognitive capacity, see this [article](#)). The role

of evolutionary scientists whose interests are more specialised will be to realise the limitations of their narrow focus, and to refrain from acting in ways that might undermine the initiative and will be taken advantage of by the vested interests that will oppose the transition to a global society.

Against this background, my next general email will contribute directly to the debate about the evolutionary imperative to transition to a global society. It will do this by responding to the main criticisms that have been advanced against this proposition. If there are any particular criticisms that anyone wants addressed, their advice would be much appreciated.

Furthermore, any other feedback or suggestions about alternative strategies for pursuing the initiative I have outlined would also be much appreciated.

### **Removal from the email list**

A reminder that anyone who doesn't want to receive any more of these emails should reply with the word 'Remove' in their email.

Kind regards,

John Stewart

<http://www.evolutionarymanifesto.com/about.html>