

Eco-Justice

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Architecture has been moving toward a harmony between man, nature and technology for over a century. Sustainable design is the realization of these universally compelling ethics. The major obstruction to this effort is the overwhelming acquisition of wealth and power by corporations whose agendas are centered about a non-renewable economy through depleting resources opposed to investment in a sustainable global market. The world will demand sustainable enterprise only when it is the vehicle of a convincing economic and social system that promotes peace and human welfare. The foundations for this have already been formed by environmental movements such as Massive Change, Earth Rights Institute and Greenpeace as well as scientific developments such as Biomimicry and Ecology.

Architecture as an association of architects, urban planners, engineers, scientists, sociologists, economists and politicians must focus on advocating a cultural climate that is excited about implementing sustainable elements into a whole. These architectural elements include solar orientation, thermodynamics, clean energy, resource conservation, recycling, waste and water management. They mirror intrinsic values of life including simplicity, harmony, cooperation, conservation, equity, justice and love. Sustainable advance must be brought to the attention of local, regional and global communities by effective publicity such as education, exhibition and policy. It must also be prioritized as an International matter thus requiring public subsidy, similar to the concept and allocation of money to restore peace by waging war. Where war indicates a global failure of politics, a sustainable vision is the renewal of holistic global wellness.

According to WorldWatch Institute, "The world has lost nearly half its forested area in the past 8,000 years, and the majority of that loss occurred in the 20th century, when cultivated area expanded rapidly and consumption of wood and paper jumped dramatically. Eleven of the world's 15

most important fisheries, and 70 percent of commercial fish species are now fully exploited or overexploited. And pollution of coastal waters often contaminates many remaining marine species. Water scarcity may be the most underappreciated global environmental challenge of our time. Over the next quarter century, the number of people in countries unable to meet their domestic, industrial, and agricultural water needs is expected to balloon substantially. The world lives amid the greatest mass extinction since the dinosaurs perished 65 million years ago—and most of this loss is caused by human activities. Habitat loss, the introduction of exotic species through trade and travel, and climate change all contribute to biodiversity decline. The world's freshwater ecosystems are rich but greatly imperiled. At least 20 percent of all freshwater species globally are extinct or at risk; the figure is twice as high in North America. Freshwater systems suffered in the 20th century from huge increases in water withdrawals for human use, extensive pollution, a proliferation of dams, and widespread draining of wetlands."

The depletion of the world's resources has created social, economic, and political inequities as well as global insecurity. America is in a prime position to advocate a sustainable ethic directing the wealth of the world toward the building of local-to-global economic democracies in order to meet the needs for food, shelter, healthcare, and education for all. It is not American tradition to regress. This is a country whose tradition is rooted in democracy, freedom, scientific innovation, global leadership and progress. It is thus our responsibility to our selves, our children, and our tradition to convene as progressive leaders for a globally sustainable ethic. Such responsibility begins with education and transcends our entire culture. This is the most urgent task of the age. Upon it the world's health and economy depend. Any digression from this would mean the squandering of our most valuable possession: earth.