



## **Glen Jenkins: Where is the leadership we need?**

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On Aug. 23, 1966, the world received its first view of Earth taken from a spacecraft near the Moon.

That photo shows the Earth with no borders, no pollution and no differences in the people who made that place their home.

A quote from Chief Seattle's 1854 speech says it best: "We are part of the Earth and it is part of us."

Today we no longer live in partnership with the Earth but choose to use its resources for financial gain, greed and power. Somehow, we have lost our connection and understanding of our relationship with our home.

The first humans to inhabit the Earth understood that their lives and wellbeing were directly tied to the Earth and its resources. They developed a deep understanding of the natural world and what they needed to survive.

These resources were looked upon with reverence by indigenous peoples who often gave thanks to the animals and plants that gave their lives to sustain them.

Their stories, myths and spirituality grew from their close observations of nature, wild animals and their environment. Their direct contacts and dependence on the Earth's resources were vital to their survival.

In our modern world, we have turned nature into our servant.

We are "apart" from nature and not part of it. Our food comes from the supermarket with little understanding of where it was grown or how it got there.

The sand we stand on only has value if we can sell it to energy companies. We make the small effort to stop using plastic straws while our oceans will contain more plastic by weight than fish by 2050.

There are 405 identified dead zones in oceans worldwide, up from 49 in the 1960s. We use 25 percent more natural resources than the planet can sustain. Global carbon dioxide emissions surged to record levels the year after the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

The challenges we face are "global" and defy boundaries. The question is where will the leadership come from to take on the serious challenges mankind faces.

One has to chuckle when people say we have to “Save the Planet.” The Earth was fine before humans arrived and will be fine when we’re gone. The Polynesian saying goes, you are “standing on a whale, fishing for minnows.” We are the problem and only we can secure the survival of human society.

There are people who look at this situation differently. They frame their position on the idea of freedom. Their concept of freedom is very intoxicating to many Americans. Freedom from government. Free choice. Freedom from taxes. Free to do what they want with our land, air and water. But where is the talk of responsibility to each other, the planet and the future?

Charles Koch told Forbes, “You’ve gotta change the hearts and minds of the people to understand what really makes society fairer and what’s going to change their lives.”

The Koch brothers and their cabal — American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), Americans for Prosperity, Cato Institute, Heritage Foundation, American Future Fund, Federalist Society and Freedom Works— see things differently.

The type of freedom the Kochs want is not what they are selling to the public. They want an “economic freedom.” Free to monetize our natural resources without responsibility. Free to pollute our air, land and water without regulation. Free to exploit the labor of working people. Free to use their wealth and influence to control our democratic government.

The Kochs can achieve this through a “constitutional convention” that they are promoting with the help of ALEC.

States may call on Congress to form a constitutional convention to propose amendments to the Constitution. Congress must act if at least two-thirds of the states (34 states) make the request.

A total of 28 states, including Wisconsin, have now adopted resolutions for a constitutional convention under the guise of requiring the government to have a balanced budget. However, a convention would write its own rules and set its own agenda. This would open the door to potentially disastrous Congressional changes to our Constitution and our democratic form of government.

We have come a long way from that picture of the Earth in 1966.

Today we stand at the crossroads looking to the future of our government and mankind.

“I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion,” said Alexander the Great.

Where will the leadership come from that will deal with these challenges with the fairness, accountability, justice and compassion needed? The choice is ours.