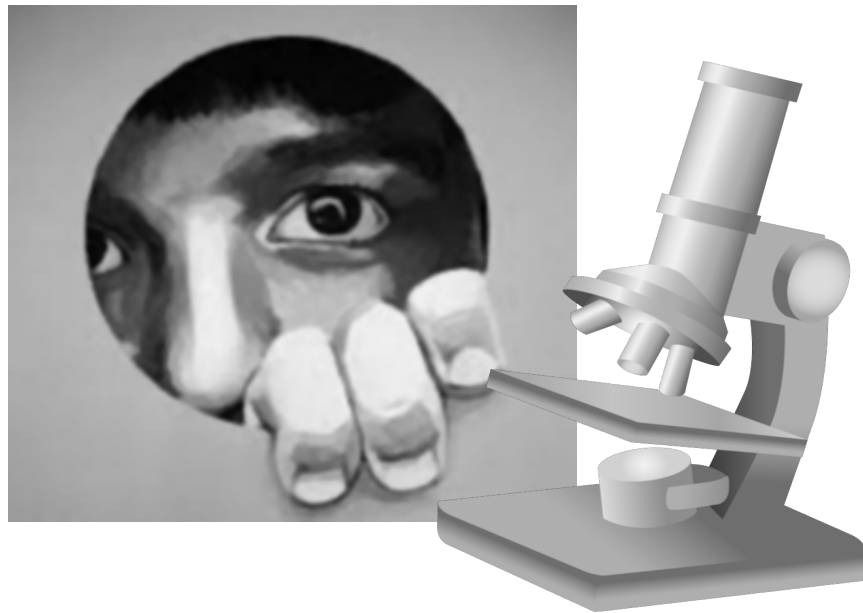


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Please share it with others.

# Virus Under the Microscope

It is an educational story that identifies crucial societal views and responses in 2020.  
The associated patterns of behaviour are depicted in virus form detrimental to mankind.  
Although very serious in nature, the story is woven with hope and a call for your participation in the future of humanity.



by Robert Hicks

Canadian Peace Activist - Climate Activist  
Poet - Playwright

written for the Brock University COVID-19 Archive legacy project

<https://exhibits.library.brocku.ca/s/COVID-Niagara/page/home>

# Virus Under the Microscope

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# Virus Under the Microscope

## Act One

A play-within-a-play for teachers, parents and students  
about the COVID-19 virus with the introduction and naming of more viruses

An educational story (a play) that concludes with hope  
Act One was published on April 25, 2020 on the Brock University COVID-19 Archive  
Act Two was added on June 21, 2020 to honour the life of George Floyd  
Act Three was completed on August 05, 2020  
Act Four was added on August 15, 2020  
Act Five was completed on September 02, 2020

by Robert Hicks

*A "play-within-a-play" is a play that is performed in the confines of another play. The general audience is not the intended audience, the characters in the play are the audience. In this play, the characters are terrible viruses. The viruses, always silent, are watching and listening to two laboratory technicians in a research lab in Canada.*

**Black** text is read by Teacher/Parent and **Green/Red/Blue** text is read by Students, Or you can read this entire play yourself --- just for the enjoyment --- and maybe --- the education --- get ready to learn something.

For historical record, COVID-19, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. Since then, many regions around the world, including all Canadian provinces and territories, have declared states of emergency and implemented strict public health measures effectively putting cities under lock-down.

The world's reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic is historic. In the near and far future, people will want to retell the history of this challenging time. This is a unique and teachable event that provides an opportunity to tell thoughtful stories that deliver important lessons.

Stories are a powerful tool to increase understanding and build complex issue engagement. American author Joseph Campbell said, "If you're going to have a story, have a big story, or none at all." The following is a big story - not big in size, big in importance. It is a thoughtful story about the COVID-19 Virus, its effect on people, our human relations and our future. This story could be best depicted as a play.

This is a story about slides examined under a microscope in a laboratory by medical lab technologist MTL professionals. It is a bit frightening. It introduces bad viruses that can infect our bodies, minds and spirits. Parental discretion is advised.

Both technicians are very experienced at microscopic examination, collecting and assessing samples, and running different diagnostic tests. They know how to apply their advanced technical knowledge and skills to run the most recent technologies in their field. They are smart people. They have been in the business a long time. They have seen several viruses. They put creepy things on slides and look at them up close all day long. They know what they are doing.

*A microscope slide is a thin flat piece of glass used to hold objects for examination under a microscope. Typically, the "object" is mounted on the slide, and then both are inserted together in the microscope for viewing. This arrangement allows several slide-mounted objects to be quickly inserted and removed from the microscope, labelled, transported, and stored in appropriate slide cases or folders thousands of times a day, all over the world.*

This story begins with the first technician admitting to the second technician that the COVID-19 Virus really scares him. Although the majority of people infected by COVID-19 will not require hospitalization and about 80 percent of cases appear to be mild, the virus has a remarkably high rate of severe, and fatal cases compared to the regular flu.

It is believed the virus came to Canada on January 27<sup>th</sup>, when a man returning to Toronto from Wuhan, China, tested positive. Maybe it came from the United States? It is difficult to know where the first case came from. In 87 days, there were 42,100 confirmed cases and 2,147 deaths in Canada, and it only took 48 days for all Canadian provinces and territories to declare states of emergency.

Tech #1 says; "This COVID-19 Virus is really bad; it scares me, and we don't even know what the solution might be. We haven't seen anything like this before. The entire world is going to have to come together to fight this."

*Note: In the play the COVID-19 Virus enters the stage, it is ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians, but it is invisible to them. It does not speak. It sits down on a stool at the end of the lab table. It makes itself comfortable and just listens.*

Tech #2 agrees with him but wants to reassure him and says, "We shouldn't worry too much. The world is showing a sense of community like nothing we have seen before. If we are lucky, this pandemic may result in our differences fading away, our similarities becoming clearer, and countries may begin to think less about fighting each other. That would be a very good thing. I prefer to be an optimist. It doesn't matter who finds the solution, what matters is we find it fast. This is a rare moment in time; we are all together. I believe the world will come together and we will beat this virus. We have to."

Tech #1, still very concerned and stressed says, "I have been thinking a lot about this since it first hit the news. We are going to have to conquer this thing as fast as possible, and we are going to have to face a messy aftermath economically. Many people will find themselves out of work because of this, and many businesses will be hurt badly. However, trying to think on the bright side, I do think Canada is resilient. I think people will be willing to cooperate and help each other to survive this. Our strong multicultural society has been working hard, we have been getting along very well for a long time; it has to stay that way!"

Tech #2 agrees with him and says, "Yes, in Canada there is a positive connection between people and the community. There is a bond or 'glue' that binds people together. We care about the overall health of our country and everyone wants others to be okay. In Canada, when people need help, they can get it; there is a will to help each other. We can get through this virus problem; don't worry."

Tech #1 says, "I have been studying this. I think a healthy and resilient society, is a cohesive society, a society that wakes up every morning and asks itself, "Is today a day I ask for help, or a day I offer help?", and then decides to do both every day. Sort of a please help me and let me help you attitude every day. I think that describes Canada fairly-well; a least I hope it does. Every citizen has a right to expect the assistance of society in times of need, if not by government action, through a voluntary organization. That is who we are. It is just one of the things that makes Canada a wonderful place to live."

Tech #2 says, "Yes that is true, the way you described Canada makes me think hope resides in our social cohesion. That is a very positive statement; however, this moment in time is negative. Now, because of COVID-19, every level of government will be on the hottest-of-hot-seats to deliver the economic and social assistance required to take care of people and get them back to work. Let me read to you what is in today's (April 25,2020) Hamilton Spectator newspaper.

*Canada's minister of economic development Melanie Joy said, "We stand at a unique juncture in Canadian history. More than ever, our decisions will ensure not just the success of our economy, but our communities. More than ever, the personal is political. More than ever, we must get this right. Canadians can rest assured that government has their backs. Our message to Canadian workers and business is clear: we're here with concrete measures and supports in all regions of our country. We'll be here for you in the weeks and months to come. And we'll get through this together."*

That was well said, but at this time a lot is going to be expected from her and many other leaders. They are going to have work a lot of hours on this problem. I hope they don't get burned-out from stress. If they can't take-the-heat, maybe we should replace them with young people; after all, the future of Canada is going to belong to them soon. Canada will come through this, it might look different in some ways, or many ways, but we are strong and together we will be fine!"

Tech #1 says, "I wish I shared your confidence about that. Although I am proud of our multi-cultural society and Canada's world-wide reputation for tolerance and goodwill among all people, we do have problems that I have been thinking about; problems with our human relations that exist as bad viruses. They can get in the way of a smooth recovery, not only here in Canada but in every country.

I have been doing some research and would appreciate if you would take a look at something and give me your opinion. I put together a slide-deck of seven slides that I am very concerned about. Will you put them on your microscope, take a very close look, and tell me what you think?"

Tech #2 says, "Sure I'd be happy to, but you're scaring me. I hope it is not something like the COVID. Where is this slide-deck?"

Tech #1 says, "I will get them. I call the first five slides "The Terrible Five". The sixth slide is the scariest of all; so scary it has its own name. The name I have given this virus is 23 letters, so I abbreviated it to RPDBB-20. The thought of it keeps me up at night. As we know, some viruses have high mutation rates that allow for fast evolution; this could be one of them. It could become very infectious and develop into a virus that could really mess up our future and be a big threat to mankind. I will hold onto Slide 7 until you have looked at the first six. The first five are scary but Slide 6 is terrifying!"

# Virus

## "The Terrible Five" - Microscope Slide 1

### The Racism Virus

I am racism. My racist attitudes and beliefs are born from my misconceptions about people based on perceived racial lines that are often founded on my fear of difference, including differences in customs, values, religion, physical appearance and ways of living and viewing the world. I destroy community cohesion and I create divisions in society. I violate principles of justice. I stand in the way of building respectful, inclusive and safe societies where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the economic, social, cultural, recreational and political life of the community.

I continue to be manifested in various ways in society where there is a denial of my contemporary racial oppression. As the diversity in the world continues to grow, people are trying to remedy me, but I try every day to stay strong and grow stronger. I am number one of “The Terrible Five”.

*Note: In the play, the Racism Virus now enters the stage. Like the COVID-19 Virus, it is also ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians, but it is also invisible to them. It does not speak. It sits down on a stool at the other end of the lab table. It makes itself comfortable and just listens.*

## Virus

### “The Terrible Five” – Microscope Slide 2 The Prejudice Virus

I am prejudice. I am an unjustified or incorrect attitude (usually negative) towards an individual based solely on the individual's membership of a social group. I negatively prejudge another person or group without getting to know their beliefs, thoughts and feelings behind their words and actions. I am grounded in misconception, misunderstanding and inflexible generalizations.

Man is not born prejudiced like me, rather, my prejudice and my way of acting is learned. My prejudice is a hostile attitude. I am a judgment that resists facts and ignores truth and honesty. I am number two of “The Terrible Five”.

*Note: In the play, the Prejudice Virus now enters the stage. Like the other two viruses sitting at the table, it is also ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians, but it is also invisible to them. It does not speak. It pulls up a stool at the table which is starting to get crowded.*

## Virus

### “The Terrible Five” – Microscope Slide 3 The Discrimination Virus

I am discrimination. I am the unjust treatment of people, or the treating of someone as inferior based on their race, sex, national origin, age or other characteristics.

I can be either direct or indirect, and can include; harassment, ‘unwanted conduct’, with the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

I can also include victimization which occurs when someone suffers a ‘detriment’ (a loss, disadvantage, damage or harm such as being left out and ignored or being denied training or a promotion). I am number three of “The Terrible Five”.

*Note: In the play, the Discrimination Virus now enters the stage. Like the other three viruses sitting at the table, it is also ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians, and invisible to them. It decides to pull up a stool at the next lab table to have room to be comfortable. It does not speak. It sits, watches and listens.*

# Virus

## “The Terrible Five” – Microscope Slide 4 The Bullying Virus

I am bullying. I am unwanted, aggressive behaviour that is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. I humiliate, intimidate and threaten of others. I tease and name-call. I make inappropriate sexual comments. I taunt and spread rumours. I deliberately hurt the reputation of others. I hit, push, stealing possessions and I may do sexual assault. I can cause anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, feelings of despair and loneliness. I can destroy the lives of others. I am number four of “The Terrible Five”.

*Note: In the play, the Bullying Virus now enters the stage, Like the other four viruses sitting at the tables, it is ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians, and invisible to them. It decides to pull up a stool next to the Discrimination Virus. It does not speak. Like the others, it sits, watches and listens.*

# Virus

## “The Terrible Five” – Microscope Slide 5 The Bigotry Virus

I am bigotry. I am the characteristic of a prejudiced person who is intolerant of opinions, lifestyles, or identities differing from my own. I am stronger than prejudice. I am a more severe mindset of hatred that is often accompanied by discriminatory behaviour.

I am the state of mind of a bigot. I am someone who, as a result of prejudices, treats other people with hatred, contempt, and intolerance based on their ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. I am arrogant and mean-spirited. I am number five of “The Terrible Five”.

*Note: In the play, the Bigotry Virus now enters the stage. Like the other five viruses sitting at the tables, it is ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians. It decides to pull up a stool at the lab table and sit beside the Bullying Virus. It does not speak. Like the others, it sits, watches and listens.*

Tech #2 has now viewed the five slides (“The Terrible Five”), and the conversation between the two techs resumes.

Tech #2 says, “WOW! They are five terrible viruses for sure. I see clearly, from the slide descriptions, we should be doing so much more to address them. If the world can come together so quickly to fight COVID-19, why haven’t we conquered these five terrible viruses that have been with us for such a long, long time?”

*Note: If this was a theatrical play within a play, and not just a scary story, this is where the two lab technicians and “The Terrible Five” Viruses would sing a song titled “The Terrible Five”. If you have musical talent, you can write the song and insert it here – give it a try – you may be more creative than you think.*

*The lab technicians are unaware “The Terrible Five” Viruses are mocking them during the song. The COVID-19 Virus does not join in with this song and decides instead to stroll around the stage while rubbing itself on all nearby surfaces.*

Tech #1 says, “Exactly! Why? - that is what I have been wondering about for a very long time. If we don't address them soon, they could mutate into Slide 6. If that happens, the world will have a harder time dealing with the multitude of problems we are sure to be confronted with. Look at Slide 6; it is the scariest slide of all. When you are done, I will share some good news.”

*Note: In the play, the Raceprejdisbullybigotism (RPDBB-20) Virus now enters the stage. Like the other six viruses sitting at the tables, it is ugly, big in size, bigger than the lab technicians. It decides to pull up a stool in the middle of the stage. It is the “new” Terrible Virus in Town and it wants to show off. The other six viruses get off their stools, wander over to it, walk around it and stare at it, wondering who this very mean-looking Virus is?*

# Virus

## A Possible New Virus - Microscope Slide 6 The Raceprejdisbullybigotism (RPDBB-20) Virus

*Raceprejdisbullybigotism is a portmanteau word, which in linguistics is a blend of words formed by combining or morphing existing words that all relate to a singular concept.*

*The reason I created this word, in this story/play, was to draw your attention to the words I call “The Terrible Five”. Think about these words and realize how terrible they are. Our society is not addressing these words enough.*

*It is also a neologism. A neologism is a Greek word that means “new” “speech/utterance”, and is a relatively recent or isolated term, word, or phrase that may be in the process of entering common use.*

Raceprejdisbullybigotism 2020 (RPDBB-20) is combining Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying and Bigotry into one word describing the potential for a very dangerous disease impacting humankind.

People suffering with raceprejdisbullybigotism will see their daily reality connected to the characteristics of racism, prejudice, discrimination, bullying and bigotry. When they think these thoughts, their views can become infectious. This virus can lead societies to the dark side of moral conviction were “oughts”, “shoulds” and “musts” to accomplish anything positive, can become can'ts, won'ts and will-nots that oppose everything. Thinking in this negative way, and living with these terrible values, can do great harm in our physical world and population.

*Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, has said, “We need to make sure we're all working together to change mindsets, to change attitudes, and to fight against bad habits that we have as a society.”*

I named Raceprejdisbullybigotism 2020 (RPDBB-20) because it represents the “bad habits” our Prime Minister was talking about. It has the potential to mutate into a very dangerous virus within society. We must keep in mind that mutations can occur silently and spontaneously and can be induced by environmental factors. In the case of RPDBB-20 those environmental factors can be the stresses of economic hardships and the many stresses we are experiencing now and are yet to experience with climate change.

People infected with the RPDBB-20 virus will not wear masks and they will not distance themselves from others to protect others from their views. They think they have power over others. The morphing of “The Terrible Five”, Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying and Bigotry, will damage our world in ways beyond our imaginations. They are hindering our ability to live together in peace and harmony, and this can prevent a safe and healthy future.

***RPDBB-20 - A Warning to Society***



Tech #2 has finished viewing scary Slide 6 and the conversation between the two techs resumes:

Tech #2 says, "You said Slide 6 was the scariest of all. I can understand why! This RPDBB-20 virus is a dangerous mutation of the viruses you called ""The Terrible Five"". It combines the terrible characteristics of each of them.

If this virus spreads, it could cause a tsunami of hateful ideologies and bias-motivated incidents of aggression everywhere at a time when communities should be working together to get through the COVID-19 crisis. A world-wide spread of RPDBB-20 would target specific communities in many places with discriminatory or racist incidents. A single bias crime can ignite intense and long-standing inter-community tensions and the impact of bias crimes may spread well beyond the target society to general society. This would be TERRIBLE!

Maybe it is a good thing that during the COVID-19 crisis we are forced to reflect on a new way of being, a new way to think and wonder what we will be faced with next. Our emotions are raw from the COVID-19 crisis and we are having to face some pressing answers to questions we never imaged we would be asking.

This would be an especially bad time for a Raceprejdisbullybigotism RPDBB-20 virus to take hold and spread. If it does, people will have to commit to confront it to help end the spread of all forms of hate crimes and bigotry.

The world will have to come together to denounce the hateful speeches that a RPDBB-20 virus would encourage while it spreads misinformation, casts blame, and promotes racism, discrimination or violent action against many communities that deserve to be treated with respect.

Tech #1 says, "You have summed up my concerns exactly. If this RPDBB-20 virus takes hold, it could unravel the solidarity the world is feeling at this moment in the fight to address the COVID-19 crisis. This RPDBB-20 virus is just in my imagination; however, I think it should be in the minds of everyone. At the very least, I think the world should be nervous enough about this proposed 23 letter word to think hard about it. Maybe it could be used as a teaching tool to help people think about ""The Terrible Five"" and why we have to do everything we can to confront them.

It would be a good thing for the world to focus on RPDBB-20 and how it harms our ability to live in harmony. However, everyone would have to be careful not to falsely and unfairly accuse others of being infected and unjustly damage reputations. That would be a symptom that the virus is within ourselves. It is likely everyone will experience moments of ""The Terrible Five"" virus in themselves at times throughout their lives. We all need to be aware of that and we should self-diagnose ourselves sometimes.

To err is human, everyone can have a bad day, but when people become deeply infected by ""The Terrible Five"" (RPDBB-20 virus), when they deeply harm or intend to harm others, that is when the world needs to stand up and stand against them.

The good news is, I think we can beat this. I describe an antidote for RPDBB-20 on Slide 7 – take a look."

# Antidote

## Fighting the Virus – Microscope Slide 7

### The Good News

## An Antidote to the Raceprejudisbullybigotism RPDBB-20 Virus

*Note: The lab technicians return to the microscope to view Slide 7. The RPDBB-20 virus looks on silently; “The Terrible Five” watch also and they all look worried. They listen with a worried look because they know that Slide 7 is a danger to them. The COVID-19 Virus also watches and listens in silence because it realizes if people can attack RPDBB-20 effectively, they can also attack it more effectively and therefore Slide 7 is a danger to them also.*

As the lab technicians hover around the microscope ( $\geq 2m$  distance between them), the narrator reads the words on Slide 7:

Where is Superman when we need him? What would Superman fight for in the aftermath of COVID-19? Who on earth can we turn to in the year 2020 to protect our planet?

In these troubled times the closest person we have to Superman is 17-year-old Swedish Environmental Activist, Greta Thunberg. Greta is the world's most prominent climate activist. She has been given great strength by the support of the climate strike movement “Fridays for Future”, and many other climate justice movements in other countries.

The youth of our world are the new “Superpeople” for our times. They may not be faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive or able to leap over tall buildings in a single bound like Superman could; however, unlike Superman they are human, and they will be faster than a streak of lightning, more powerful than the pounding surf, and mightier than a roaring hurricane in demanding the fundamental societal change that is required to improve the health of our world.

*Fridays For Future says, “We are fighting for our future and our lives because they are directly threatened by the climate crisis and the ecological breakdown. We are taking action against it because we want to protect the beauty of the earth, the diversity of species and the lives of all beings. Our goal is to overcome the climate crisis and to create a society that lives in harmony with its fellow beings and its environment. Join us!”*

*They also say, “Our movement is independent of commercial interests and political parties and knows no borders. We strike because we care for our planet and for each other. We have hope that humanity can change, avert the worst climate disasters and build a better future. Every day there are more of us and together we are strong. Everyone is welcome. Everyone is needed. No one is too small to make a difference. Join us!”*

Before the Climate Action Summit, Greta had 4.5 million followers on Instagram. Now her follower count is over 10 million and it is growing fast. There is no doubt - the youth of our world are now the “Superpeople” for our times.

Greta's influence on the world stage has been described as the “Greta effect”. She has received numerous honours and awards including; *Time Magazine's* 100 most influential people, the youngest *Time* Person of the Year, inclusion in the Forbes List of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women (2019), and two consecutive nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize (2019 and 2020). Greta deserves all of these honours and awards - and more.

*Greta recently said; “Everyone must fight the climate crisis and the corona virus pandemic simultaneously and not allow the health crisis to delay action on cutting carbon emissions”.*

I agree. We should all agree!

Speaking at an event in New Zealand in May 2019, the 9<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General of the United Nations said, his generation was, "not winning the battle against climate change" and that it's up to youth to "rescue the planet".

To "*rescue the planet*", young people everywhere will need to appeal to the attitudes and understandings that shape public morality with the aim of strengthening them, but they now have the social media network to help them do this. Millions of young people are focused on what must be done.

According to the World Bank, 42% of the world's population was under 25 years old in 2017, and according to Statista as of 2018, there were about 7.6 billion people, and as of mid-2019, about 26 percent, or close to 2 billion of the world's population, were under 15 years old.

With the help of young people, we must not, and we can be sure they will not, let the word "justice" lose its meaning. Its meaning has more to do with "fair play" than with "payback." The real meaning of justice is not found in revenge but in reparation, reconciliation, and restoration. The meanings of words like justice, love, honesty, truth, good, evil, hate, peace and morality are critically important in our world of contemporary tolerance.

People of every age must know that much the same way that love is blind, hatred of raceprejudisbullybigotism is also blind and makes human beings prone to believe things that are simply not true. They know that too many of us fall victim to this offensive, repulsive and socially inappropriate behaviour and way of thinking. They know that they must address the hate within raceprejudisbullybigotism the same way that they must address climate change – together – forever united and never divided.

Looking beyond everyday news of politics and the violence in different parts of the world, young people are taking-in the wider view of how people treat other, and how they should treat others better. In the light of the many lessons, they are learning from the COVID-19 pandemic, they are also learning that there is no better time than now to take this opportunity, to name it – its name is "raceprejudisbullybigotism" – to discuss it more – to condemn it – to denounce it and declare it to be reprehensibly wrong without reservation.

*Note: Now the RPDBB-20 Virus and "The Terrible Five" are getting visibly upset. The lab technicians still cannot see them, but the audience can see them. They can see that the viruses are now alarmed, horrified and very frightened by the narrator's words. The viruses realize the control they have enjoyed for so long will become weaker as time passes. They know that they are now facing danger. The viruses are beginning to see they must fear the condemnation of billions of people of every age, but especially young people under the age of 15 who will act. Their actions will impact the future of their world over the next 10 years. All viruses are good at mathematics, they are frightened by the numbers.*

Raceprejudisbullybigotism is a recommended new word for this decade. The antidote for it exists in every country; it has for hundreds of years in young people. The difference today is that the world's young people are connected, focused and powerful. In the same way the world has come together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the world will now to come together, led by young people, to fight Raceprejudisbullybigotism; a virus that should become known world-wide as "RPDBB-20."

The conversation resumes to end the story:

Tech #2 comments, "I feel better now. Thanks for letting me view the slides. They are a real eye opener. I wish people all over the world could view them and read them to their friends and family.

I think the slides (this story) should be posted in every corporation, every workplace - everywhere on this earth. Slide 7 gives me hope.”

Tech #1 responds as follows:

“I agree, there is very good reason for hope. We can hope because we can rely on the world's youth to bring about required change.”

*Greta Thunberg said on Jan 29, 2020, “The aim of the Fridays For Future Global Movement is to promote ecological, climatic and social responsibility as well as mental health.”*

These words make the viruses go into a frenzy on stage with a sudden and overpowering feeling of fear. They panic and head for the exit to get away from the words of the narrator, and the lab technicians, and Greta Thunberg. In the process of trying to escape, they touch the surfaces that are contaminated with the COVID-19 Virus.

As they leave the stage, they all begin to feel feverish. They know their immune systems are not strong. They know they will become weaker and weaker. They know the audience is becoming more powerful than they are, and they know that young people will come after them - faster than a streak of lightning, more powerful than the pounding surf, and mightier than a roaring hurricane - to make them disappear forever. The COVID-19 Virus watches the frenzy.

The COVID-19 Virus has been feeling bad about what it has done to the people of the world. It knew it could spread itself to “The Terrible Five” and “RPDBB-20” because they were not social distancing and they were not wearing gloves and face masks like the lab technicians were. The COVID-19 Virus leaves the stage feeling tired, knowing, that just like the other viruses, it's time will soon come to an end.

Tech #1 continues, “I have no doubt that Greta, with the help of the world's youth, will accomplish that goal and much more. I am confident they can be faster than a streak of lightning, more powerful than the pounding surf and mightier than a roaring hurricane, in demanding the fundamental societal changes that are required. Governments and corporations would be wise to recognize, and accept, their wishes now, to ensure a healthy and productive future for themselves and for society at large.

During this global COVID-19 crisis our common humanity has revealed itself. This is a teachable moment.

With an evolving society, the concrete demands of the common good will also evolve. This means the task of creating a good life for all members of society, in all parts of the world, will never be perfectly realized. With pervasive temptations of individualism and self-interest, and the existence of “The Terrible Five”, one of the most pressing demands of the common good is the persistent conversion of hearts in the realization that we do not exist for ourselves. We are all in this - one world - together.

We may soon face challenges bigger than COVID-19. We must prepare now for how our world will be transformed by the intense difficulty, trouble, and danger that the climate crisis will deliver. We must understand that even small increases in temperature will lead to large increases in evaporation, large increases in powerful storms and wildfires, and damage to our food supply. We must understand that even small changes in our human relations and our ability to get along and cooperate with each other - will matter.

The greatest discovery of this teachable moment may be that not only can individual people change their future by merely changing their attitude, so too could the entire world if we come together in solidarity.

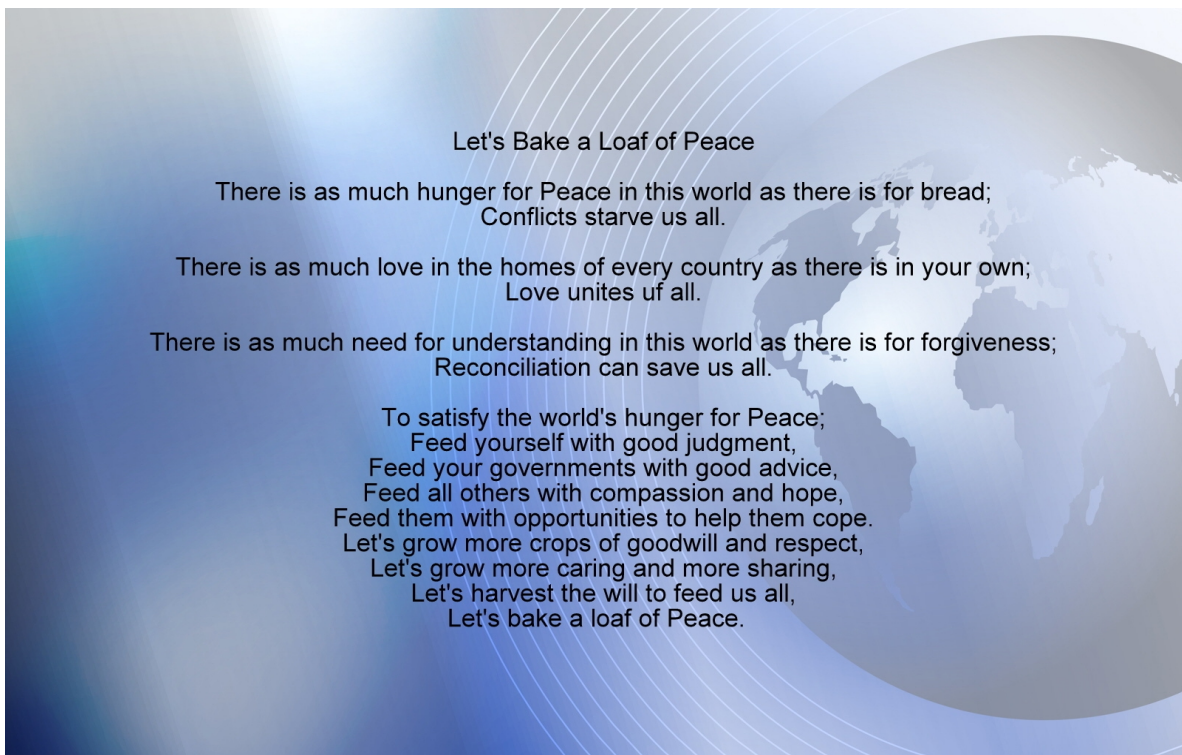
In the hope of converting hearts, securing world-wide cooperation, confronting climate change successfully, and defeating “RPDBB-20” everywhere, it would help if people would read these seven slides in their schools, their homes, and pass them along to others.”

Tech #2 comments, "I agree, that's a good idea. I feel better. You really thought about this, and you worked hard producing the slides. Is there anything else you can say to give me hope that we will be okay?"

Tech #1 continues, "Well I wrote a poem. Would you like to hear it? For over 40 years, when not working, I have been a World Peace Activist, Environmental Activist, and a Poet."

Tech #2 says, "That explains why you took the time to make the slides. I'm glad you did. I live a busy life and to be honest, I have not been thinking about the need to confront the behaviours of "The Terrible Five". I will try to do a better job at it since working to improve our human relations is important and there are a lot of people being hurt by "The Terrible Five". I would like to hear the poem you wrote."

Tech #1 continues, The title of the poem is, "Let's Bake a Loaf of Peace".



Tech #2 says, "That poem - says it all - beautifully."

## End of Act One

# Virus Under the Microscope

## Act Two

Act One was published on April 25, 2020 on the Brock University COVID-19 Archive.

Act Two was added on June 21, 2020 to honour the life of George Floyd. It was completed on the last day of 3 weeks of activities to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada. This day is an opportunity to celebrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada. This celebration should extend throughout the year.

National Indigenous Peoples Day is 1 of 5 celebrations held across the country to discover and appreciate the wealth and diversity of Canadian society.

Other celebratory days include:

June 24 - Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day

A celebration of Francophone culture with public events including concerts, parades, and firework displays.

June 27 - Canadian Multiculturalism Day

Discovering the significance of multiculturalism in Canada, ensuring all citizens maintain their identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging. This celebration should also extend throughout the year.

July 1 - Canada Day

The anniversary of Confederation in 1867, when the British North America Act came into effect creating the country of Canada with its initial four provinces of Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

August 15 - National Acadian Day

A celebration every 5 years to bring Acadian communities together to promote a modern and authentic Acadia. The 6th edition took place in August 2019 in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick where people could immerse themselves in Acadian culture by attending numerous activities.

**The play-within-a-play continued ...**

*A play-within-a-play (or a story-within-a-story), comes from the French saying "mise en abyme" or "placed into abyss" to blur the lines of reality and fantasy like standing between two mirrors and having the weird, self-reflecting feeling because your image seems to keep going forever. Like a frame-within-a-frame, the play is being performed in the confines of another play as the characters of a play are watching a play being performed for them. In this story, the characters are the invisible viruses listening to what the lab techs have to say.*

**Warning** *This story ends with hope - but along the way it may sadden readers. Parental discretion is advised.*

The two lab techs enter the lab. They had been assigned to different labs and have not seen or talked to each other for 8 weeks. As medical laboratory technologists (MTL) professionals, they have been performing a key role in the management of the current COVID-19 pandemic. They are among the best in the world. They have been labelled as heroes for their efforts. They have been on the front lines, but they have been working behind the scenes where nobody really knows what they do, or that they even exist. In Canada, there are approximately 1.2 million laboratory tests performed every day to help diagnosis and treat the thousands of health issues that affect Canadians. We can be proud of them.

*The Viruses also enter the lab. At the end of Act One they ran away because they were frightened by what the lab techs were saying. That was 8 weeks ago and now they have regained their strength and they are feeling fearless again. They form a big circle around the two lab techs and sit down to eavesdrop on their conversation.*

Tech #1 says, "The last time we talked was on April 25<sup>th</sup>, it is nice to see you again. I hope your family is well. My family is doing fine. It saddens me to think back on that date when there were 45,354 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 2,465 associated deaths in Canada. Today is June 21<sup>st</sup> and there are 101,002 confirmed cases and more than 8,400 deaths. In the last 8 weeks, 6,000 Canadians have died from the virus."

Tech #2 says, "It is nice to see you also. My family is fine; thanks for asking. I am glad to see you looking healthy and to hear your family is fine. The last time we talked you showed me your 7 virus slides; the racism, prejudice, discrimination, bullying and bigotry viruses. You called them "The Terrible Five". Then you showed me the new RPDBB-20 virus that you referred to as the morphing of "The Terrible Five" into one scary virus. I even remember the long name of that virus; Racepregdisbullybigotism. I have not been able to forget those slides. I have looked at thousands of ugly slides in the last 8 weeks and your slides still haunt me."

Tech #1 says "Sorry about that, I think I warned you at the time the viruses were dangerous. I also showed you the antidote on Microscope Slide 7. I remember that slide gave you hope and made you feel better at the time."

Tech #2 says, "Yes it did, but considering what has happened in the last 8 weeks, I am not feeling good at all! I remember saying if the RPDBB-20 virus spreads, it could cause a tsunami of hateful ideologies and bias-motivated incidents of aggression everywhere at a time when communities should be working together to get through the COVID-19 crisis. A world-wide spread of RPDBB-20 would target specific communities in many places with discriminatory or racist incidents. A single bias crime can ignite intense and long-standing inter-community tensions and the impact of bias crimes may spread well beyond the target society to general society.

That is exactly what happened when George Floyd was brutally murdered by a policeman who was likely infected by the RPDBB-20 virus.

I also remember you said to me the youth of our world are the new "Superpeople" for our times. You said they will be faster than a streak of lightning, more powerful than the pounding surf, and mightier than a roaring hurricane in demanding the fundamental societal change that is required to improve the health of our world. You said we can be sure they will not let the word "justice" lose its meaning. Now, every time I turn on the TV, I see and hear protesters demanding justice."

Tech #1 says, "Yes, I have been seeing the same thing. To be honest with you, I have been very upset also. I share your feelings. What we are seeing is very distressing, to say the least. I am still trying to find reasons for hope, and I think I have found some."

Tech #2 says, "Tell me, I need to hear there is hope."

Tech #1 says, "Well it will take me some time to explain it to you. Do you have time?"

Tech #2 says, "I will give you all the time you need; this is important. Talk to me; I am all ears."

Tech #1 says, "Okay, but before I share the hope, I want to tell you about the research I have done since we last talked. The research is regrettably distressing, but it helps explain the problem. I want to get it off my chest. I made 2 additional virus slides. I would like you to look at them under your microscope."

Tech #2 says, "Okay, show me this research even if I might not like it, but please end your story with hope; I need a reason to stop feeling so heavy hearted."

Tech #1 says, "Okay, you have already seen 6 virus slides and 1 antidote slide; Microscope Slide 7. Microscope Slide 8 is another virus. I call it the Virus of Societal Indifference; take a close look at it."

*These words make the viruses that are sitting in a circle eavesdropping, go into a frenzy of curiosity and excitement. They thought they deserved to be the centre of attention. How can any virus compete with them? Who is this new virus? What has this lab tech discovered? They all run quickly to the microscope to stick their ugly eyes on the lens to take a quick look before Tech #2 gets to it. This is what they see.*

# Virus

## Microscope Slide 8

### The Virus of Societal Indifference

I am the Virus of Societal Indifference.

I am a lack of interest, concern, or sympathy. I do not get emotional. I do not care. I never take sides. I look away. I am a state of apathy. I do not feel empathy. I am the absence of feeling. I elicit no response.

I discourage people from speaking out with great outrage and conviction.

Pope Francis issued a powerful and passionate appeal to political rulers and people calling on the nations of the world to overcome me. He called me "a virus that is contagious in our time." He said "I am worse than COVID-19. I paralyze and impede people from doing what is right even when they know that it is right. I am spread by the thought that life is better if it is better for me, and that everything will be fine, if it is fine for me."

I am a hands-off and let nature take its course attitude. I promote a world in which no one feels responsible.

I help leaders make superficial statements and express empty platitudes that are nothing more than sound and fury signifying nothing. I discourage them from going beyond their words.

Some politicians and governments encourage me to promote an apathetic, dissociated and cynical public attitude, so they can rule without having to share power or account for their activities to the public.

When society is infected, political rights can become a hollow concept where civil liberties can be violated at every turn. When people are infected, they think that freedom is a gift that does not have to be worked for. They become easy to manipulate, not because they are gullible, but because they believe in nothing.

When groups have been pushing leaders to address problems for years and nothing happens, and when continual action fades and goals die; I will play a big part.

I am the Virus of Societal Indifference. I distance and desensitize people from the lessons of the past, the ugliness of the present and the possibility of the future.



*The 6 viruses are impressed and quickly see the power of this strange virus. They run back to their previous positions in the circle and sit. They are not sure what to say to this new virus; maybe join the club! - an expression used when people have something unpleasant in common. Maybe join us we need your support! They secretly do not like this virus. They are insecure, arrogant and want to prove their superiority. They are jealous and jealousy, at its core, is a by-product of fear, the fear of not being good enough.*

*The Virus of Societal Indifference enters the stage with arrogance. It is a phantom menace with evil on its mind. It struts around like a villain, showing-off in front of the other viruses. It is big, ugly and invisible to people just like the other viruses. It enters the circle and stands behind Tech #2 silently waiting for Tech #2's reaction.*

After a good look, Tech #2 says, "This is terrible and scary. I hope I never get this virus. I hope my friends and family never get this virus. I hope the people that lead my community can successfully guard themselves against this virus. I have never seen such an unpleasant and unsettling definition of a virus. You were right when you said that I would not want to hear about it, but now I have to think about it, absorb it. Will the other virus you wanted me to look at be as bad as this one? I hope it is not worse than this; I want to be able to sleep tonight! I am counting on you to give me a reason to cheer-up after looking at these slides."

Tech #1 says, "I hope I don't let you down. It is easy to be negative; it takes effort to be positive. We must remember not to over-focus on the negatives and under-focus on the positives in our lives. I will do my best to cheer you up. You know I care about you and we will be able to talk through this. Look at Microscope Slide 9. I am sorry it is also scary. We must be brave to fight these viruses. We can be strong together."

*With these words, the 7 eavesdropping viruses return to a frenzy of curiosity and excitement. What has this Lab Tech come up with this time? Who is this new virus? This Lab Tech must be a Virus Detective. They run quickly to the microscope to stick their ugly eyes on the lens and take a quick look before Tech #2 gets to it. This is what they see.*

# Virus

## Microscope Slide 9

### The Police Brutality Virus

I am the Police Brutality Virus. Some people call the people I infect, "bad apples". To say that I only infect a few bad apples is a naive and careless dismissal of me. The world needs to wake up to the fact that I am very infectious, and over time, I can produce large batches of bad apples.

I have a mean and infectious attitude. I encourage the police officers I infect to act as their own "use-of-force expert". I help them to engage members of the public in psychological warfare with an authoritative and commanding manner. I make people feel both humiliated and terrified, and as a result, they fear for their physical safety.

When police officers are infected, they become violence prone. I target the following police officers:

- Police officers that have pervasive and enduring personality traits that are manifested in antisocial, narcissistic, paranoid, or abusive tendencies. These tendencies are intensified by police work and interfere with their judgment and interactions with others, particularly when they perceive challenges or threats to their authority. I teach them to lack empathy for others and to not accept responsibility for their behaviour.
- Police officers that have had traumatic job-related experiences such as justifiable police shootings that have taken a toll on them. They may not be egocentric or violent by nature, but I infect their emotional baggage. It

is always with them. It has accumulated from previous violent incidents. It puts them on the verge of burn-out. It can cause them to lose control. I teach them to conceal it from others.

- Police officers that are easily frustrated and seen as badge-happy, macho cops that are generally immature, impressionable and impulsive. Those who brought positive attributes to their work but had them deteriorate early in their careers due to a full range of negative patrol encounters. Officers that have been strongly influenced by a police culture that has not shown them how to maintain a professional demeanour while dealing with citizens.
- Police officers who develop a dominant, heavy-handed policing style, and who are particularly sensitive to challenge and provocation. Officers who use force to show they are in charge. Their heavy-handed behaviour becomes their norm, and the longer this pattern continues, the more difficult it is to change. Officers who become invested in police power and control, who see little reason to change. Officers who perceive that the organization sanctions their behaviour.
- Police officers with serious personal problems, such as separation, divorce, or other problems that destabilize their job performance. Officers with a tenuous sense of self-worth and a high level of anxiety that they mask well. Officers who generally function reasonably until the stress of their personal situation undermines their confidence and makes it increasingly difficult to deal with fear, animosity, and emotionally charged patrol situations. Officers who exhibit erratic patrol behaviour that signals the possibility that they will lose control.

I am the Police Brutality Virus. Not every officer is infected by me, and although most are not, all are at risk of becoming infected. How well the risk is monitored, matters. I know that police officers provide an invaluable service. I know that because of me some people paint all of them with one brush. I know that is ridiculous and unkind to those who serve to protect and to make a difference. But, the world must wake up to the fact that I exist and that I am very infectious and very capable of producing large batches of bad apples. Meaningful police reform is necessary to address me. You cannot stop me; you can only hope to contain me.

*The 7 viruses look at each other wondering what they have done. They know they are responsible for this brutality, but believe they have the virus of Societal Indifference to fall back on. It makes it possible for them not to care. They don't care about bad apples, or about the reputation of the police. In fact, they are all mean-spirited and they support bad apples. They run back to their previous positions in the circle and sit.*

*They are not sure what to say to this new virus; maybe join the club! - an expression used when people have something unpleasant in common. Maybe join us we need your support! They secretly do not like this virus. They are insecure, arrogant and want to prove their superiority. They are jealous and jealousy, at its core, is a by-product of fear, the fear of not being good enough.*

*The Police Brutality Virus enters the stage with arrogance. It is another phantom menace. It struts around like it is saying, "look at me; look at how powerful I am." It is big, ugly and invisible to people just like the other viruses. It enters the circle. All viruses listen closely to what the lab tech will say next.*

Tech #2 says, "This slide helps explain why we are seeing so many sickening examples of police brutality on television. It also explains why "Black Lives Matter", and their supporters of every age, race and ethnicity, are protesting in the streets with extreme passion, conviction and determination. This is a detailed description of a deep-rooted, longstanding, chronic and recurring problem. Associated protests are happening across the globe. I do not believe they will end soon. Millions of protesters are expressing rage. The protests will continue until meaningful and significant police reform takes place to address this. I hope with all my heart that the protests are peaceful."

*All viruses look at each other while thinking about how the protests are not good for them. To hear that the protests may continue for some time disturbs them. They know that millions of passionate people believers of goodwill, compassion, respect and justice for all, are a huge threat to them.*

Tech #1 says, "I think you have described this well to call this virus a deep-rooted, longstanding, chronic and recurring problem. I agree that the protests will not likely end soon. This time, people around the world will not be silent; they are responding; they are intervening. I think the "world" has learned from the past. I think society is changing. I think the protests show a great level of concern. I think we have learned from experience and have become sensitive to the plight of victims.

Thinking about what the future likely holds helps us determine which road to take. Thinking about the future shapes our decisions. I think millions of people are thinking about the future more, and our collective wisdom is identifying what must change and the need to change now.

During my research I discovered information from April 2018, that I am very surprised has not been highlighted in the news recently. Canada is far from immune from instances of excessive use of force by police, including those involving racialized citizens. In fact, many cities have had a long history of deaths, incidents and investigations involving police that have reignited anti-black racism concerns.

*According to a report by CBC News published on April 5, 2018, between 2000 and 2017, 699 police officers were involved in fatal interactions with the public. Canada's national police force, the RCMP, was responsible for the most (176), followed by municipal forces in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Most officers faced no charges. 49 incidents are still under investigation, and only 11 resulted in the laying of manslaughter charges according to data provided by the CBC in the report.*

*Between 2000 and 2017, police were involved in at least 461 fatal interactions with civilians across Canada. As part of its investigative series titled: Deadly Force, the CBC assembled the first comprehensive analysis of these interactions and shared the data. You can read the report on the internet. According to the CBC, during the 17-year period in question there was an average of 25 fatal police interactions per year and 70 per cent of victims suffer from mental health and substance abuse problems.*

I would like to note here that; Canada's largest mental health hospital, the Toronto based Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, has recently said officers should not respond to incidents involving people in crisis. Dozens of doctors are now calling policing a public health crisis, urging for the reallocation of police money to other community programs.

*The CBC report goes on to say of the 461 cases involving a fatal police encounter, the CBC could only identify 18 cases where criminal charges were laid against an officer, only three murder charges were laid, and all were second-degree. Of these cases, there have been two convictions. Some of the cases are still before the courts.*

*Until this point, no such centralized repository of statistics existed. This vacuum of information is, in and of itself, a problem that engenders a lack of accountability in Canadian policing. Police authorities in Canada have the capacity to collect and release this critical data to the public on an ongoing basis, but it appears they choose not to.*

*The report said that Statistics Canada estimates that police have about one million encounters every year with people who have a mental or substance use disorder. Experts say that number is getting higher.*

*The report also said that, "Overall, the Caucasians represent nearly half the victims in the database, which is not surprising given that this is the largest racial group in the country." However, when considering the racial and ethnic composition of the overall population, two distinct groups are overwhelmingly over-represented in these encounters: Black and Indigenous people.*

*Most victims — 71 per cent — were killed by police following a gunshot. In non-gunshot deaths, a taser was found to have been deployed in nearly 28 per cent of cases.*

*They said that while the deadly use of force by police can have a significant impact on the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they oversee, no official body in Canada collects or tracks*

*the details of these incidents. All that exists currently is a patchwork of statistics across provinces or groups of private citizens who are trying to keep tabs on the number of victims.*

*But the numbers are the background noise, the radio static behind the gunshots. While police are kept hopping with calls involving mental illness, the tragedies often have little to do with lack of social support and much more to do with decades of North American police training that taught officers to go in fast and big. As you can imagine, going in fast and big while being infected by the Police Brutality Virus is a recipe for disaster.*

*If you want to know more, you can read the full report on the internet at <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-custom/deadly-force>*

It concerns me that this information is not widely known. It also concerns me that similar statistics for the United States are not available. If the CBC could gather this information in Canada, surely it would be easy to gather the same information in the United States. Recent protests have been demanding this information and it should be readily available.

Tech #2 says, "Wow! How did you find this report? I agree it should be available and easy to access. It should be updated and communicated every year. We should not have to rely on the CBC to do it. The RCMP and police forces across the country should be reporting this information regularly to be open and transparent about the work they do."

Tech #1 says, "I did not know it existed; I found it by accident with a Google search. Oh! - there is something else I would like to get it off my chest."

Tech #2 says, "I'm listening."

Tech #1 says, "It is the issue of Systemic Racism. Canada and the United States have a long and unfortunate history of systemic racism. It concerns me that many people don't try to learn about this, and many are in denial about it. I am sure the reason in many cases, is related to the virus of Societal Indifference that you just saw under the microscope. When I hear people in leadership positions and in the news seem so dense and uniformed about the subject, it frustrates me. It is more than disturbing that RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki denied that systemic racism exists in the national police force, only to reverse that position within days after her comment was highlighted in the news.

Systemic racism is the way disadvantage, discrimination and exclusion are embedded in social systems over time. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary. It refers to the exclusion or under-representation of people of colour and Indigenous people in society through the policies, attitudes and decisions of those in power that lead to inequalities and disparities between races.

It is embedded in many workplaces, schools, hospitals, law enforcement and criminal justice systems in ways that many of us may not notice. I do not see it as a virus like the others, but it is given birth by the others. It can take root and become established as people become infected by "The Terrible Five" viruses, and the virus of Societal Indifference. Pope Francis warned the world about it. In systemic racism, indifference reigns more than people realize.

Individuals can be anti-racist within systems and institutions that are systemically racist, but believe they are not equipped to affect the change required to fight the injustice they observe.

A racist bureaucrat can make it a policy or strategy of deliberately taking no action concerning an issue, challenging situation, or other problem, in the belief that this course will ultimately result in the best outcome possible. A non-racist bureaucrat infected with the Virus of Societal Indifference can do

the same thing. People must be honest about this. Society must address it. This is another reason for the protests all over the world.”

Tech #2 says, Wow! You have really thought this through. Is there anything else you feel you need to get off your chest?”

Tech #1 says, “Well, yes, as a matter of fact there is, if you don't mind listening to my rantings a bit longer?”

Tech #2 says, “Please proceed, I am finding what you are saying informative and interesting!”

Tech #1 says, “It is on the subject of the virus of Societal Indifference. There is one example of it that infuriates me so much I get angry when I think about it.”

Tech #2 says, “Tell me about it.”

Tech #1 says, “What I want to mention is what was printed in the news at the end of October 2019 about a legal case. It's rare for a current or former leader of one of the world's largest energy firms to testify under oath about climate change, but that is what happened. Appearing as an Exxon witness, Rex Tillerson, the ex-Exxon Mobile Corp. Chief Executive Officer (and former leader of one of the world's largest energy producers for 11 years), said the following:

*“It may be emissions are so de minimus that they're inconsequential, or you may be in a business environment where the government is just not likely to do anything.” - “You know, if your in a third-world developing country.”*

He was inferring that CO2 emissions may be so inconsequential that they can be called de minimus which is a Latin expression meaning "about minimal things"; a legal doctrine by which a court refuses to consider trifling matters; the law does not concern itself with trifles.

He was saying in effect that the future health of our planet may be considered by him, or others, as a trifling matter. He was one of the many who have been working hard to persuade the public and political elites that “business as usual” must continue, and that a timely shift away from dependence on fossil fuels is unfeasible or unnecessary.

He also said on the witness stand the following:

*“We knew, it was a real issue. We knew it was a serious issue and we knew it was one that's not something that was just suddenly going to disappear off our concern list because it is going to be with us for certainly well beyond my life-time.”*

The company knew for a long time the impact of fossil fuels on the world. He was admitting that he knew, and the oil industry knew, that in this time of climate crisis, transitioning away from fossil fuels in a rapid, democratic and socially just manner was then, and is today, required, but they chose to look away.

Social responsibility is an ethical framework and suggests that every individual and corporation has an obligation to act for the benefit of society at large, and a duty to perform to maintain a balance between the economy and the world's ecosystems. Having something on a concern list, and not acting on it, ignores this responsibility. This was an admission they were being indifferent to the needs of the environment and not taking the steps necessary to adequately address the climate crisis with the urgency it requires.

When he resigned from his position in 2016 to become US President Donald Trump's Secretary of

State, he could have informed the President about what he knew to discourage the withdrawing of the United States from the Paris Agreement. Yet on June 1, 2017, President Trump announced that the US would cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation. Either Rex Tillerson thought the emissions of CO2 were too “trifling”, or President Trump also thought the subject was “de minimus”. It appears that both think this.

Most people in the world do not think emissions of CO2 is a trifling matter. According to the World Economic Forum, 42% of the world population is under 25 years old. I am sure that 42% would not agree that concerns about climate change are a trifling matter, and neither would most of the remaining 58% that are over the age of 25. This is just one of the many reasons why Greta Thunberg and her “Friday’s For Future” movement have been protesting, and likely will continue for a long time. They are just getting started!”

Tech #2 says, “You made your point. The world’s energy strategy is too industry-friendly and very unfriendly to the earth’s future. That energy strategy has a hands-off and let nature take its course attitude. It is clearly infected with the Virus of Societal Indifference.

Your descriptions of the 8 viruses makes it clear that the world must come together to fight for both social justice and environmental justice. That is what the protests around the world are doing now. The protests are demonstrating the world is taking notice and change is coming, whether governments, business or industry like it. Protesters are shouting they will no longer accept “indifference” in their world.”

*All viruses have been listening and they do not like what they hear. They know if the world is no longer going to embrace them, there is major threat to them. Continual protests around the world will definitely not be good for them. It is beginning to appear certain that millions of passionate people, believers of goodwill, compassion, respect and justice for all, are going to be at war with them. The thought of this makes them want to run and hide, but they want to keep listening to what these lab techs will say next. They remain seated in silence.*

Tech #1 says, “That is exactly what I am thinking! I expect the protests will increase significantly. The “Black Lives Matter” movement, the “Friday’s For Future” movement, and many other similar movements, are going to come together. Likely many universities and colleges will join the movement. The protests could get massive and extend years. I hope they stay peaceful.”

Tech #2 says, “I think you are right about that. The status quo must change. Everyone wants our world to be stable and secure for everyone. Everyone is demanding social and environmental justice now. All methods to achieve this goal must be peaceful.”

Tech #1 says, Yes! The status quo must change. The existing state-of-affairs is not providing the social justice or environmental justice that people are demanding. The protests are saying, ‘there is nothing left to say and there is everything left to do’. The protesters believe the sun has never shined on a cause of greater worth.

Am I optimistic about the future? Absolutely! There are people devoting their ideas, resources, and even their lives to solving every challenge the world faces. Optimism can be a powerful call to action. Optimism has a multiplier effect; the more optimists and protesters there are working for a better future, the more reasons there are to be optimistic.”

Tech #2 says, “Interesting! I am starting to feel better. When we began this conversation, I asked you end your story with some hope; I need a reason to stop feeling so heavy hearted. The last time we talked, you shared an amazing poem, “[Let’s Bake a Loaf of Peace](#)”. Have you written any new poems? “

Tech #1 says, "Yes! I composed a short poem, titled "Like the Bombs". Would you like to hear it?"

Tech #2 says, "Yes please!"

### Like the Bombs

A little boy tries to wipe tears from his eyes  
But they keep falling like the bombs  
A little girl cries because her brother dies  
And her heart keeps pounding like the bombs  
Why-oh-why must the children cry  
Why must their tears keep falling like the bombs  
Bombs of metal explode - bombs of injustice erode  
We must never forget, we must never forget  
War is hell, we must never forget  
We must never forget, we must never forget  
Injustice is hell, we must never forget



Tech #2 says, "That is a great poem! I have never thought of injustice that way. It makes a very strong point; a very sad point. I am looking for reasons to feel uplifted. Do you have anything else to share to help me feel better about the mess the world is in now? I need to feel hope that solutions are near."

Tech #1 says, "Weeks ago you said, in Canada, when people need help, they can get it; there is a will to help each other. And I said a healthy, resilient and cohesive society, is a society that wakes up every morning and asks itself – is today a day I ask for help – or a day I offer help – and then decides, every day, to do both. I believe in those words! I believe there is truth in them, and I think that is what is happening. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought people together like no other time in history. By nature, people will seek the help of others and form a community that is geared toward survival and the best interests of everyone. That is what the protesters are coming together to do.

I thought of an idea that might provide a considerable amount of hope; it is an idea that could crush the viruses we have been talking about."

*Hearing this, all viruses jump to their feet and panic. They had been sitting relaxed listening to the lab techs talk, but suddenly they are frightened, truly frightened by the words of Tech #1. They want to run but know they must stay to listen to what he will say next. They were nervous but stood still, silently listening.*

Tech #2 says, "You think the viruses are crushable? You clearly have the heart of an optimist. I would like to have some of that optimism. Where does it come from?"

Tech #1 says, "Well, the way I see it, to keep it simple, I respectfully suggest there are 4 words in the English language that we need to focus on. They can work for us. The 4 words are; goodwill, compassion, respect and justice. Consider the following:

**Goodwill** among people is important in every area of your life. It is the matter of heart we seldom talk about it. It is the morally right thing to do. It is an emotion that exists within us. It is helping to make society better. Sometimes it is acting and leaving the talking to others. Spreading goodwill makes people feel good about you, and it encourages them to spread goodwill to others.

**Compassion** gives us the ability to understand someone else's situation and the desire to take action to improve their lives. Compassion is as vital to life as the air we breathe. It has the power to inspire courageous deeds. It encourages all sorts of positive behaviours that have both individual and societal benefits. In its absence, how many benevolent, selfless and heroic deeds would have happened throughout history? For people who are dependent on others for help and support, compassion is often the most important factor in allowing them to lead fulfilling lives.

**Respect** from others is important because it helps us feel safe and express ourselves. Respect in our relationships builds feelings of trust, safety, well-being, and creates a fair environment. The highest form of respect towards another is acceptance of who they are. Acceptance without judgment. Acceptance without ridicule. Acceptance of their beliefs.

**Justice** is important because it makes life possible in our complex, civilized society. It is important to provide fair treatment to every individual without exception regarding their personal rights. Social justice is important for the welfare of society. Environmental justice is the movement that links environmental degradation with social justice in a fight for sustainable human rights and a sustainable world.

Think about how Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying and Bigotry “The Terrible Five” known as RPDBB-20, plus Societal Indifference, would be affected if they were confronted every day of every year, for many years, by millions of expressions of goodwill, compassion, respect and justice. They would be crushed.

Consider that people can use a simple greeting gesture to represent the 4 words (goodwill, compassion, respect, justice), to put these 4 words into the minds of people every time they see each other.

That simple greeting gesture could be 4 fingers held horizontally over the heart for a few seconds. This would be better than a handshake or hug, especially at this time of social distancing. It would say; I wish you goodwill, I feel compassion for you, I respect you, and I wish justice for you.

A hand over the heart is associated with honesty. Adding the words goodwill, compassion, respect and justice would multiply heartfelt significance. If people want to add emphasis to the greeting, they could tap their heart 4 times with 4 fingers. This symbol could also become an emoji to add to the end of millions of emails exchanged every day.

### **I Tap For You**

I wish you goodwill throughout your life  
I wish you compassion without any strife  
I wish you respect, every minute, every day  
I wish you justice, life is meant to be this way



The 4 words could be used as a formula to destroy “The Terrible Five” viruses, and the virus of Societal Indifference. Tapping 4 fingers over your heart is fast, easy, and it would speak volumes at this time in history when we all need to wish each other well.”



*Hearing this, all viruses are stricken with great fear. They start to run. They run in all directions, looking for the exit. While running, they hear and feel the bombs of goodwill, compassion, respect and justice exploding around them.*

Tech #2 says, "I feel much better now. Starting today, whenever I meet you, or leave the pleasure of your company, I will tap my heart with 4 fingers, 4 times, to wish you goodwill, compassion, respect and justice."

*Hearing this, the viruses know they cannot escape. They know their time is running out. They feel trapped. At this moment, they are reminded of George Floyd. They want to breathe and realize everyone deserves to breathe.*

## **End of Act 2**

*("I Tap For You" poem created by Robert's youngest sister Carol Fentiman)*

# Virus Under the Microscope

## Act Three

Act Two was completed June 21, 2020. Act Three was completed August 05, 2020. Lab Tech #1 and Lab Tech #2 had been assigned to different labs. Over 6 weeks have passed since they have worked together.

According to the Worldometer.info website, as at August 05, 2020, 23:34 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) worldwide there has been 18,954,433 cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and 710,022 deaths and 12,139,005 recovered. In the US there has been 4,971,644 cases and 161,571 deaths and 2,527,220 recovered. In Canada there has been 118,140 cases and 8,962 deaths and 102,773 recovered.

Fear of a second wave of infections as bad as or worse than the first wave is making everyone appropriately cautious. Canadians are increasingly wearing protective face masks as they emerge from months of isolating at home to curb the spread of COVID-19.



The pandemic's continuation is highlighting the need for people everywhere to take action to crush the curve of cases. Regrettably, many are not taking the required action. People are failing to understand that inaction anywhere threatens people everywhere.

All Lab Tech's in Canada have been working very hard. We are thankful for their service in our fight with COVID-19.

As the Lab Techs enter the lab they both tap their hearts with 4 fingers, 4 times (the new greeting relays a wish for goodwill, compassion, respect and justice). They hope this greeting is shared around the world.

*The Viruses also enter the lab. At the end of Act Two they heard and felt the bombs of goodwill, compassion, respect and justice exploding around them. They are weaker but they survived. They want to hear what the Lab Techs will say next.*

Tech #1 says, “The COVID-19 Virus has kept us busy and working overtime. Today is another busy day. Let’s have lunch together, I want to show you another virus under the microscope.”

Tech #2 says, "Sure, I look forward to seeing you at lunchtime. Your slides are very educational. They are scary but important. As always, I will be counting on you to give me a reason for hope after viewing the slide."

Tech #1 says, "I will do my best to relieve your worries."

The Lab Techs return to their individual work stations and focus on the fight against the COVID-19 Virus. At lunchtime, they reunite.

Tech #2 says, "Okay, I'm ready to see the new Virus."

Tech #1 says, "Look at Slide Ten - The Virus of Inaction".

*All Viruses run to the microscope. They take a quick look before Tech #2 gets his eye on it. They haven't seen this Virus before and wonder what will be said about it.*

# Virus

## Microscope Slide 10 The Virus of Inaction

I am the virus of Inaction. I am idle. I lead nowhere. I am unused talents. I do not seek assistance.

I am the opposite of individual and organizational "*commitment ability*":

*(the capability to achieve results through appropriate follow-up and control to make things happen within a reasonable or agreed upon time.)*

I am the opposite of individual and organizational "*communications credibility*":

*(the reliability to communicate when complications arise to provide time for people to change priorities or find alternative courses of action that will keep goals on schedule.)*

I come in 3 sizes; small, medium and large:

- Small: When a single person does not act when it is wise to do so, when they have been asked to do so, or simply when it is responsible for them to do so.
- Medium: When a group of people fail to ask this series of questions;
  - **Who** is doing it, why is that person doing it, who else might do it and who should do it, to ensure that the problem or objective is addressed responsibly with the appropriate focus and skill.
  - **What** is being done, what else might be done and what should be done, to address the problem or objective as effectively as possible.
  - **Where** is it being done, why is it being done there, where else might it be done.
  - **When** is it being done, why does it need to take that long, when should it be done and when will it be complete.
  - **How** it is being done, why is it done that way, how else might it be done and how should it be done to ensure the problem is resolved, or the improvement is achieved, in the shortest time possible.

After these questions have been asked, nothing is achieved as planned because some people in the group lacked the required commitment ability and/or communications credibility to be trusted with the work.

- Large: When government leaders lack the political will or the commitment to do what is right and what is required, when it is required, and the people they lead allow them to get away with it because they do not have the courage to speaking up. When people have the courage to speak up, they create opportunities for change. The keyword is *choose*. Do nothing and nothing will change.

I am the virus of Inaction. I can harm the world!

Inaction stands in the way of progress. It welcomes the spread of all viruses. It embraces climate change wreaking havoc on our world; increasing temperatures, rising waters, causing storms, floods, forest fires. As a result, crops will die, people will starve, and millions of climate refugees will require food and shelter. My inaction creates a path for mass destruction.

The Virus of Societal Indifference stands beside me, supports me, strengthens me. I will destroy the environment. It will not be habitable. Billions of people fear me but I breed doubt that prevents people from taking the necessary steps to mitigate the scientific evidence of climate destruction and associated suffering.

The famous soliloquy, “to be or not to be”, is about action versus inaction. “To be” is action, “not to be” is me. “To be or not to be, that is the question”. To this I respond; “No. I am the not to be. Why I am allowed to be should be the question!”

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Tech #2 says, “Wow! Once again, your virus slide is very detailed and educational. It is clear, this is a serious problem. The Virus of Inaction is another very destructive virus.”

Tech #1 says, “Yes! People not wearing masks and not social distancing is just one good example of when a single person does not act when it is wise to do so, when they have been asked to do so, or simply when it is responsible for them to do so.

I also have an example of this virus doing it's terrible work on a large scale that I want to tell you about.”

Tech #2 says; “I’ll get my lunch. You have my attention.”

Tech #1 continues, “In 2015, 195 nations agreed with the United Nations (UN) that they can change the world for the better. They said this will be accomplished by bringing together their respective governments, businesses, media, institutions of higher education, and local Non Government Organizations (NGO) to improve the lives of the people in their country by the year 2030. They set 17 Sustainable Development Goals to accomplish this. Each goal is to be taken seriously.

The example I want to share with you refers to Sustainable Development Goal 6.



Sustainable Development Goal 6 is about clean water and sanitation. World Water Day 2020 is about water and climate change. They have an important link. The campaign shows how our use of water can help reduce floods, droughts, scarcity and pollution, and can help fight climate change itself.

To accelerate efforts towards meeting water-related challenges, the UN had proclaimed the period from 2018 to 2028 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, to commence on World Water Day, 22 March 2018, and terminate on World Water Day, 22 March 2028.

Unfortunately, just weeks ago (July 7, 2020), and two years into this International Decade for Action, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres said;

*“Today, Sustainable Development Goal 6 is badly off track. This is hindering progress on the 2030 Agenda, the realization of human rights and the achievement of peace and security around the world.”*

He added that;

*“Water globally is threatened by the twin threats of increasing demand and withdrawals and the degradation of water sources and associated ecosystems due to climate change, pollution and other threats. The water and sanitation crisis demands a holistic, systemic and multilateral response. The water and sanitation crisis is getting worse and lack of progress on SDG 6 undermines progress on all of the other SDGs, particularly on global health, education, food, gender equality, energy and climate change.”*

Then, adding to this dire warning, Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs said;

*“Only if we raise the ambition through strong political will and commitment at the highest level, will we be able to achieve SDG 6 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”*

Therefore, the UN is sounding a very ominous warning.

Unless we act dramatically and quickly, science tells us our climate and our way of life are literally in

jeopardy. Now is the time we should view the denial of the associated science as malpractice, and we should view inaction as malpractice. The cost of inaction will be catastrophic. The Virus of Inaction must be confronted. To act or not to act NOW is the question.

When this International Decade for Action begins with two years of inaction, clearly it is time for everyone to “warrior up”.

I use the phrase “warrior up” because on March 22, 2018, 13 year old Autumn Peltier, an internationally recognized advocate for clean water from Wiikwemkoong First Nation on Manitoulin Island in Northern Ontario, used this term while giving a speech to the United Nations General Assembly. She had been invited to speak as the “representative of civil society.” In her speech, Autumn said,

*“Mr. President, we need to work together. Now is the time to “warrior up” and empower each other to stand for our planet. We need to sustain in the little we have now and develop ways not to pollute the environment and sustain the relationship with Mother Earth and save what we have left.”*

Autumn was clear with her words. She told the UN that they must “warrior up”. Warriors are people who have experience and skill in fighting, and sometimes they are referred to as combatants, champions or heroes. She was saying as skilled fighters and champions they have to empower each other and work together to save what we have left. For the UN to say “Today, Sustainable Development Goal 6 is badly off track.”, means they did not do what Amber Peltier said had to be done. Not only have they let Autumn down, they let the entire world down by their inaction during their proclaimed decade of action.

Now is the time for Autumn, as the new strong and resilient Indigenous Anishinabek Nation Chief Water Commissioner, to make an important difference. The world must listen to what she has to say. Autumn is currently 15 years old. She speaks for the next generation.”



On January 21, 2020 Autumn Peltier, spoke at a forum hosted by Time Magazine, alongside other young activists, including the well-known Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg. When interviewed by Time magazine after the forum Autumn said;

*“Honestly, I would say they’re (politicians) all focused on just money. We need to be more focused on the actual things going on; they’re not thinking about the impacts and things that are happening. It’s almost like they don’t even believe that climate change is real.”*

*“To see change, I think what we need to do is start getting more people and youth, not only from Canada but from all over the world, and empowering other kids to stand up. What we’re doing right now is empowering them because being at the World Economic Forum we’re on a global stage and everyone’s going to be watching this. What we say right now is going to make an impact on everyone watching.”*

*“I don’t want your awards. If you’re going to award me, award me with helping me find solutions. Award me with helping me make change. I feel that’s what I would want to see, is more people trying to help us with what we’re trying to achieve.”*



The World Economic Forum in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland.  
Greta Thunberg, Climate Activist  
Amber Peltier, Indigenous Anishinabek Nation Chief Water Commissioner

Tech #1 continues; “What is extremely disturbing, is the fact that the 2018 to 2028 International Decade for Action – for Water – is the UN's second proclaimed Decade of Action. It is a continuation from the first Decade of Action that failed to meet it's goals. 2005 to 2015 was declared the United Nations International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”. Did the Virus of Inaction and the Virus of Societal Indifference prevent the actions required during those ten years? How can a decade of action fail so miserably that it required another decade of action to follow?

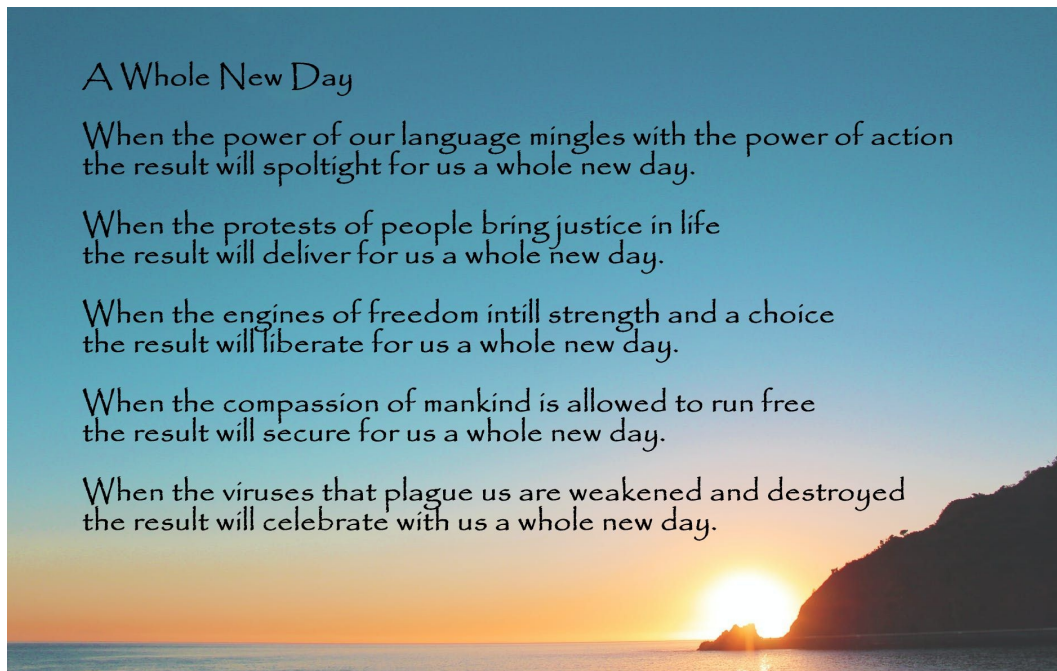
Can we have confidence this time will be different? Will the Virus of Inaction, the Virus of Societal Indifference, and the “lack” of political commitment at the highest levels continue their damage? What will make a difference this time? Who will “warrior up” this time? Will it be Autumn Peltier and Greta Thunberg? Will they work together, supported by millions of protesters throughout the world? The likely answer is yes.

Without such protests, inaction will cripple the ability to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The UN will continue to promote the need for action while giving the excuse the action is difficult and requires additional time and more money. Discussions about action - are not action. We will never know the extent to which the Virus of Inaction and the Virus of Societal Indifference live within the halls of the United Nations.”

After looking closely at the Virus of Inaction slide and hearing this dreadful example of how this Virus of Inaction is significantly harming our world, Tech #2 says; “This is dreadful news! Why is this not breaking news on every TV channel? Why isn't everyone talking about this? How can we raise awareness, ambition and political commitment at the highest levels? We must respond!”

Tech #1 says, “I agree! Inaction and the absence of political will are monumental issues. We are at a time in history that urgently requires an abundance of political commitment and the abatement of destructive climate change! A strong voice and urgent action is required – NOW!

I have written another poem. This one is to highlight an opportunity.”



*Upon hearing this, all viruses panic and run in circles again. They shrink with fear. They feel sick. They do not like Tech #1. He says too many things that jeopardize their future. Their degree of worry escalates every time he speaks. His words engulf them faster than a streak of lightening. They are afraid of what he will say next. They know that when the power of his voice mingles with the power of action the result will deliver to them a very bad day!*

Lab Tech #2 says, “I like it. I hope the “Whole New Day” your poem talks about is on the horizon. We need one. I admit I am feeling frightened about the future. I have decided to join the Friday’s For Future Movement (FFF). Thank you for sharing your optimism. My life requires more optimism and our discussions have made me feel better.”

Tech #1 says, “We must be optimistic. I also decided to join the FFF movement, Other environmental and peace groups throughout the world are fed up with racism, prejudice, discrimination, bullying and bigotry. To them, the Virus of Police Brutality and the Virus of Societal Indifference are unacceptable. They will no longer accept any of the viruses we observed under the microscope. They must “warrior up.” They want to destroy them. They know what they deserve. They have hope. They wish everyone goodwill, compassion, respect and justice.

As Autumn Peltier said to young people everywhere, it is time to “warrior up”! Every country is responding. This is the Decade of Action through peaceful protests. It is happening! Everyone can see it’s happening!”

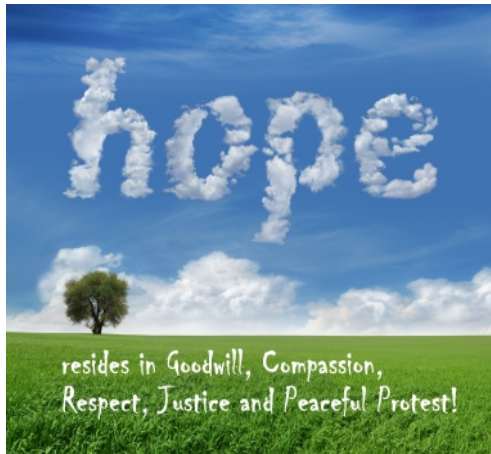


*Now the viruses feel like screaming, but they cannot scream – they do not have vocal cords. They feel hot. They start to sweat. Their nausea increases every minute. They hate Tech #1 but they can't leave; they want to hear the rest of the conversation.*

Tech #2 says, "I can see it's happening. Have you seen how many people are protesting? They are diverse. They are warriors. They are risking arrest to peacefully protest. They know it's time. They won't stop. It's happening!"

Let's get back to work and do our part to fight COVID-19. I look forward to seeing you again."

Tech #2 taps his heart with 4 fingers, 4 times, as he leaves the room.



END OF ACT 3

# Virus Under the Microscope

## Act Four

*Act Three was completed August 05, 2020. Lab Tech #1 and Lab Tech #2 had been assigned to different labs. Ten days have passed since they have worked together.*

As of August 15, 2020, according to the Worldometer.info website:

- World-wide there have been 18,954,433 cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19), an increase of over 2.5 million in the last 10 days, and 766,027 deaths an increase of over 46,000 and 14,243,436 recovered, an increase of 2.1 million.
- In Canada there have been 121,760 cases, an increase of 3,500 in the last 10 days, and 9,021 deaths , and increase of 59, and 108, 044 recovered, an increase of 5,271.

The Coronavirus isn't going away:

Students have been out of the classroom for more than five months. The border between Canada and the United States has been closed for 6 months to non-essential cross-border trips and that closer has been extended to September 21, 2020. Federal health officials are preparing for surges in new cases, including an expected peak of the outbreak this fall that could temporarily exceed the ability of the health care system to cope.

COVID-19 testing at Public Health Ontario (PHO) laboratories are performed 7 days a week at locations in Toronto, Hamilton, London, Kingston, Timmins and Ottawa. PHO added additional shifts for testing (nights and weekends), including 24/7 testing at their laboratory in Toronto.

Their testing is an essential component of Ontario's response to COVID-19, not only because it tells us if someone has COVID-19 or not, but also because it sheds light on where and how the virus is spreading.

PHO's laboratories, one of the largest public health laboratory systems in the world, conduct over 6 million tests on a broad range of clinical and environmental samples every year at 11 sites across Ontario. They perform thousands of COVID-19 tests every day in partnership with many hospital, academic and private labs across the province. This network of labs, coordinated by Ontario Health, has come together rapidly since early 2020 in order to meet the increased demand for testing.

They work with the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health and other key experts and stakeholders to monitor, provide guidance, and strategize to make sure COVID-19 testing in the province continues to respond to this evolving public health emergency.

We are thankful for their service in our fight against COVID-19.

*Lab Tech #1 and Lab Tech #2 have been working in different labs. Today they meet again. (In the play they enter the stage and sit at a lab table with their microscopes 7 feet apart.)*

Lab Tech #1 says, "Greetings, I tap for you four times with goodwill, compassion, respect and justice. How have you been doing with the long hours we have been working?"

Lab Tech #2 says, "Having thousands of samples pouring in every day is a new experience. All Lab Technicians have been working hard to process the high volume of tests coming in. It is tiring, but I show up every day. How are you holding up? Oh, by the way, I tap for you four times also. I like our new greeting."

Lab Tech #1 says, "The scale and pace of what we're doing right now is unprecedented; everything is happening so fast, but I am holding up okay. It helps to be able to talk with you about it. I made another slide that I would like to get your feedback on. Would you mind having a look?"

Lab Tech #2 says, "Of course! Your slides are not just educational, they are unique and make me think. I am looking at these viruses like I have never looked at them before."

*The Viruses enter the lab. At the end of Act Two they heard and felt the bombs of goodwill, compassion, respect and justice exploding around them. They became weaker but they survived. At the end of Act Three they felt like screaming, but they could not scream – they do not have vocal cords. They felt hot, they started to sweat and their nausea was getting worse. They decided they hated Tech #,1 but they could not leave his side. They are fascinated by the conversation. Although they are getting more nervous by the day, they are back to listen to the Lab Techs again. They want to hear what they will say next.*

*On stage the viruses are the size of humans, but they are invisible. They think they are big. They think they are tough. They will be shocked when they learn the next virus that will be examined closely under the microscope is much larger than they are. When it walks onto the stage, they almost faint! They see that the virus of Climate Change is the size of the entire stage.*

*The virus of Climate Change walks onto the stage. It is 8.2m x 8.2m x 8.2m in size (27 feet x 27 feet x 27 feet). It is so big it cannot find a place to sit, so it surrounds everything and everyone on stage and just stands and listens. It can do this because it is invisible like air.*

*Lab Tech #2 puts his eye on the microscope and reads allowed the following words as the virus of Climate Change speaks to him.*

# Virus

## Microscope Slide 11 The Virus of Climate Change

I am the Virus of Climate Change. I call myself a virus because:

Rising global temperatures, coupled with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, are predicted to cause changes in the seasonality, geography and intensity of infectious diseases.

The deterioration of air quality that I cause makes people more susceptible to infectious respiratory diseases.

My floods can enhance the spread of infectious agents like insects, bacteria, and viruses.

My increasing temperatures and humidity affect the development, survival and spread of not only pathogens but also their hosts (often animals). Mosquitoes and other insects that are carriers of diseases like malaria, dengue fever and the West Nile virus will move to new areas of the planet as they warm up.

The World Health Organization is reporting on how transmission patterns of infectious diseases will change as a result of me.

I will cause what is described above and more. I am hotter heat waves, drier droughts, larger forest fires, and rising sea levels leading to higher storm surges and more floods. My intense rainstorms will get even more intense, wreaking havoc through flooding and erosion. I will change the oceans, weather, ice, and living systems in countless ways.

With so many changing ocean and atmospheric factors, climate models of me are extremely complex. A supercomputer running a climate model must make trillions of calculations just to simulate a single day of the climate. Yet climate models are surprisingly good at predicting how the climate will change over the course of 10, 20, or 50 years. They can also answer questions, such as what will happen if you emit more, or less CO2 into the atmosphere.

The science behind why I am changing is straightforward. When people burn fossil fuels to produce electricity, heat, and drive their vehicles, they emit greenhouse gases (GHGs) like carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane. These gases trap the sun's energy in the earth's atmosphere as heat. As more and more GHGs are released, more heat gets trapped and the planet warms up, disrupting the long-standing, delicate climate systems that have made life on earth possible.

Stronger storms and longer droughts are becoming a dangerous new normal. How these impacts play off each other, is far more nuanced. In many cases, the wildfires or disappearing glaciers you see in the headlines have unseen knock-on effects that lead to more wildfires and disappearing glaciers.

Think of me like dominoes lined up in an infinite spiral – when one dominoe falls, it creates a reaction that pushes over another and then another right down the line. Scientists call this process a “feedback loop” and it will have profound consequences for the planet.

*Climate feedback loops are “processes that can either amplify or diminish the effects of climate forcings”. “Forcings” are the initial drivers of your climate, they include solar irradiance, GHG emissions, and airborne particles (dust, smoke, and soot) that come from both human and natural sources and impact climate.*

Feedback loops make the impacts of key climate factors stronger or weaker, starting a cyclical chain reaction that repeats again and again.

There are two major categories of climate feedback loops; negative and positive. Negative feedback loops play an integral role in maintaining the atmospheric balance in various systems on earth. One such feedback system is the interaction between solar radiation, cloud cover, and planet temperature that can help stabilize the system and promote a settling to equilibrium. A positive feedback loop however, “accelerates a response and leads to instability via exponential growth”. Using the water vapour cycle as an example, it goes something like this:

- As more and more heat-trapping greenhouse gases are emitted, the atmosphere warms up.
- This warmer air leads to more water evaporating from our oceans, rivers, lakes and land, entering the atmosphere.
- Warmer air holds more water vapour. Water vapour traps heat.
- The extra water vapour in the already warmer air retains even more heat, amplifying the initial warming.
- More warming leads to even more water evaporating, starting the cycle over again and again and again.

It's a vicious cycle! Climate change is causing a cascade of effects that results in even more climate change. It is a problem humanity created. It is taking on a life of its own - to potentially devastating effect!

I am what the United Nations calls the biggest and most urgent threat to mankind. I contribute to insecurities such as; tensions over scarce resources, land loss and border disputes, conflicts over energy sources, conflict prompted by migration, and tensions between those whose emissions caused climate change and those who will suffer the consequences.

I am all about numbers. I am the numbers of science. When people talk about me, it is the numbers that matter; the numbers that deal with the data, the measurements, and the observations from science.

Galileo declared, “The ‘great book’ of the universe is written in the language of mathematics.”

It does not matter what language you speak to understand me, when my numbers can speak to you. In my view, the mathematics of climate change is the music of reason. There is a facing-the-music that math forces, and that's why it's a wonderful language for describing nature and for describing me.

Mathematics reveals hidden patterns that help people understand climate change and the world around them. A broader public understanding of the role of mathematics in mankind's understanding of climate change would allow for a more informed discussion of the issues, and a stronger and more effective societal response. I am a serious threat to your way of life and education using mathematics can play its part in addressing my threat.

You may wonder how anyone can make a prediction about long-term climate change?

The answer is that climate is an average of weather conditions. In the same way that good predictions about the average height of 100 people can be made without knowing the height of any one person, forecasts of climate, years into the future, are feasible without being able to predict the conditions on a particular day. The current challenge is to gather additional data and use numerical methods to extend today's 20-year projections for the next 100 years.

One of the clearest predictions from climate change modelling is warmer temperatures. Almost everywhere in the world will be warmer by 2100, and you will see an increase of extreme heat. The amount of warming will depend mainly on the amount of fossil fuels burned. At this moment in time, humanity is burning far too many fossil fuels. This behaviour is a choice and it is not slowing down fast enough.

The biggest question mark in climate models is the human factor. How will you change your behaviour? How much will you change your use of fossil fuels and the resulting emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide?

Climate change mathematics (the music of reason) will support predictions for what will happen as time passes. When the math accurately describes reality, those predictions will be evident through observation. A close collaboration between climate scientists, mathematicians and statisticians can help make these important predictions as helpful to understand as possible.

Just two weeks ago on August 04, 2020 Nasa published a stunning new forecast report made possible by a new computer model from the NASA Sea Level Science Team. There is a new “Python Glacier Evolution Model,” or PyGEM, that uses extensive data sets, instead of less detailed estimates from isolated, regional effects of extrapolations based on a small number of glaciers. It is a huge advance compared to previous studies that allows climate scientists to assess changes in glacier mass and runoff at an unprecedented scale.

PyGEM is among the first models of its kind to be made available to the scientific community as an “open source” code – allowing any researcher to plug in data and run the model. As they grow in power and precision, these computer models are playing the music of reason (mathematics) louder than ever and are revealing the intricate dance of climate, ice-melt, and sea-level rise with increasing clarity.

The key to the sweeping new modelling method is its grounding in hard data. The science team studied changes to 95,536 glaciers from 2000-2018, as observed by the Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) aboard NASA's Terra satellite. The observations cover nearly every glacier in High Mountain Asia, which covers an area of 98,000-square-kilometres (38,000-square-miles), including those too small to be captured in previous studies.

This is truly unprecedented when you consider that a decade ago, global glacier evolution models were relying on data from less than 300 glaciers.

This report (only two weeks old) says the ice in one of the world's highest concentrations of non-polar glaciers could see significant melting before the end of the century, potentially affecting sea levels around to globe. The region, known as High Mountain Asia, could see ice loss run from 29 to 67 percent, depending on the level of greenhouse gas emissions over the period modelled. According to the study, water flow in monsoon-fed river basins, driven largely by melting glaciers, could hit its peak by 2050 – potentially reducing runoff beyond that time and forcing changes in how water is consumed, or forcing communities to find other water sources. That is only 30 years away.

By sheer number, High Mountain Asia accounts for 44 percent of all the glaciers in the world – apart from the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets – though it accounts for only a fraction of glacial mass. The melting of these glaciers over decades contributes significantly to rapid, and accelerating, global sea-level rise.

Most scientists would agree, when it comes to teasing out the inherent secrets of the universe, nothing visual, verbal or aural comes close to matching the accuracy and economy, the power and elegance, and the inescapable *truth* of the mathematical. Mathematics contribute to mankind's insights into climate change and it can be used to help guide the actions that must be taken to ensure that earth will be a safe and healthy place for mankind to prosper in the year 2100 and beyond.

Until the mathematics of climate change is acknowledged, accepted and confronted, I will continue to be the Godzilla of all viruses. I can walk around the earth crushing cities, crushing farms and sinking islands. My representative on the slide under the microscope weighs one tonne and takes up 8.2 meters x 8.2 meters x 8.2 meters (27 feet x 27 feet x 27 feet) of space in the atmosphere. But I am much larger. I weigh millions of tonnes in your atmosphere and I continue to grow every day. The only thing that can slow me down is the music of reason and what it tells you must be done..

If you keep approving new coal mining projects, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

If you keep building oil and gas pipelines, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

If the planned 1,897km (1,179-mile) Keystone XL pipeline project proceeds to carry 830,000 barrels of oil each day from the oil sands of Alberta, through to Steele City, Nebraska, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

If the Trump administration roll back of the US government's strongest attempt to combat the climate crisis, compelling auto companies to produce more fuel-efficient vehicles, is not reversed, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

The changes to Obama-era regulations will allow vehicles to emit approximately a billion additional tonnes of heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere (equivalent to roughly a fifth of annual US emissions). It rolled back a 2012 rule that required automakers' fleets to average about 54 miles per gallon by 2025. Instead, the fleets will now have to average about 40 miles per gallon. This rollback was one of dozens Trump officials have ushered to completion, seeking to bolster the fossil fuel industry.

Methane in the earth's atmosphere is a strong greenhouse gas with a global warming potential (GWP) 84 times greater than CO<sub>2</sub> in a 20-year time frame, yet the Trump administration intends to lift Obama-era controls on methane this month – August 2020.

When the President of the United States does such things, climate scientists know I will flood Florida faster.

When federal, and provincial governments across Canada suspend environmental oversight rules, even temporarily, to grapple with COVID-19, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

In Alberta, Energy Minister Sonya Savage has said the COVID-19 restrictions on gathering sizes mean it's a "good time to build a pipeline". In Ontario, Premier Doug Ford's government suspended a large section of environmental oversight law, saying it could delay response to the pandemic. Under the temporary rules, the government does not have to notify or consult the public about any environment-related changes it makes.

The federal government has delayed implementation of the clean fuel standard from January 2022 until an unspecified date later that year. The clean fuel standard is a major piece of Canada's climate strategy, aiming to reduce the country's carbon emissions by 30 million tonnes per year. With this delay, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

Alberta suspended the requirement for companies operating coal mines to submit annual reports on their plans for the following year, the progress of work at the mine, progress on returning land to a natural state, and work on finding new coal deposits. It also eliminated the requirement for Cabinet to sign off on new oilsands projects. As a result, proposals with Alberta Energy Regulator's approval may go ahead.

Ontario temporarily suspended part two of Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights, which gives the public a say in actions that affect the environment. When suspended, the government did not have to notify or consult the public on environment-related projects, changes or regulations, so it's not clear what changes may have been made during that period.

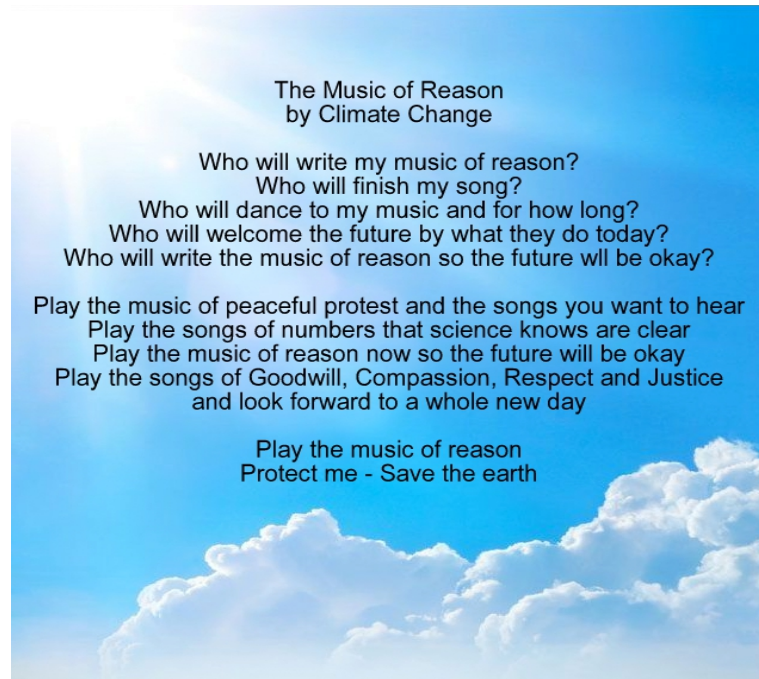
When Canadian governments do such things, climate scientists know I will melt arctic sea ice faster. Rising sea levels are one of the most damaging long-term impacts of the climate crisis, and the consequences to Greenland and Antarctica are accelerating. Including 2020, the linear rate of decline of the July sea ice extent is 7.48 percent per decade, or 70,800 square kilometres (27,300 square miles) per year.

If world leaders keep rolling back hard fought for environmental guidelines, and do not establish and enforce new ones, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

If world leaders keep listening to the music of money, when they should be listening to the music of reason, I will not slow down, I will speed up.

I am already gigantic and the bigger I get, the faster I will destroy humanity. Digest what my "little" representative is trying to say. My "little" representative that is 8.2 meters x 8.2 meters x 8.2 meters in size (27 feet x 27 feet x 27 feet)! Multiply the message billions of times. Do you understand I am a serious problem for you? Does it matter to you?

I am a gigantic virus. I admit I am a gigantic threat to you. What I say next will likely surprise you. I have a heart. I do not like who I am. Unlike all other viruses, I wish you Goodwill, Compassion, Respect and Justice. I want you to have a healthy future. I have written this poem for you. It is about the Music of Reason – the mathematics behind me. The answers to addressing me can be found in mathematics. To make that happen you will have to play the music of peaceful protest..



Lab Tech #2 says, "WOW! I don't know what to say. I'm at a loss for words to describe this. I know I should be shocked and frightened; but somehow, I feel encouraged by Climate Change claiming that the music of reason can be played today to help us address it. Climate Change is telling us it has a heart and that it cares about us. It is asking us to protect it, while we are thinking we must be protected from it. We feel the same; we both agree. It is asking us to save the earth and telling us how. It is telling us to play the music of reason (the music of mathematics) to identify what is required and act before it is too late.

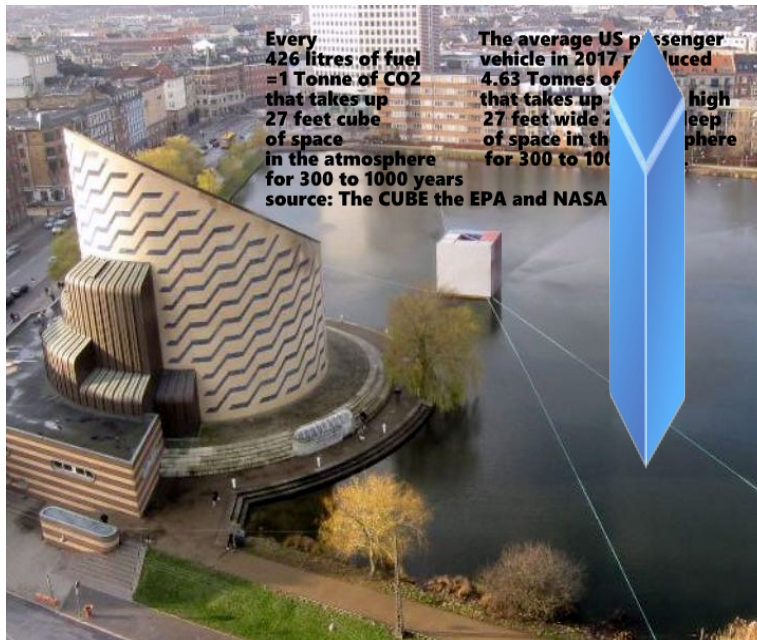
*The Viruses of Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying, Bigotry, RPDBB-20, Societal Indifference, Police Brutality, the Virus of Inaction and the COVID-19 Virus are staring in awe of this virus. They are impressed. Are they learning something about themselves? They are wondering how the Virus of Climate Change got a heart. Each one is questioning if they have a heart. If they have a heart hidden deep inside them. They are confused, but they are intrigued.*

Lab Tech #1 says, "Yes, I understand what you are saying. I was amazed when I saw this virus under the microscope. It was like Climate Change was speaking directly to me. I did not expect it. It described itself so powerfully, in such detail. I have not heard climate change described like that before. It was very poetic! I'm very impressed.

When I first saw the slide, I paused. I wasn't sure what to think and how to react. Then I realized what "little" representative of Climate Change meant. It was talking about 1 tonne of greenhouse gas.

This photo illustrates what 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> GHG looks like as it enters our atmosphere and it stays there for approximately 300 to 1000 years!"





### The Music of Reason:

This cube representing 1 tonne of CO2 in a physical form is floating in St. Jorgens Lake in Copenhagen beside the Tycho Brache Planetarium. The Cube - the size of a three-story building 8.2 meters x 8.2 meters x 8.2 meters (27 x 27 x 27 feet) visualized 1 metric tonne of invisible gas. It was meant to visualize the seriousness of global warming and climate change.

It was placed there with the support of the United Nations organizers of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP15 held in December 2009 to show the participants at Copenhagen's Bella Center (15,000 delegates and 110 heads of state from 192 nations) what a tonne of CO2 greenhouse gas looks like as a physical form in our atmosphere.

The designers of this "architectural feat" were the Italian born Danish Sculpture Alfio Bonanno, a pioneer of site-specific nature installations, and Los Angeles based architect Christophe Cornubert recipient of the Rietveld Architecture Prize. They did a brilliant job. Unfortunately, based on the lack of action to address climate change in the last 11 years, it wasn't brilliant enough to drive the point home into the minds of conference participants and world leaders.

It might have been helpful if they placed another cube 38 meters (125 feet) high, about the size of a 9 story building beside it, to show the amount of CO2 the EPA says the average American passenger vehicle sent into the atmosphere in the year 2017. I enhanced the photo to show the 38 meters (close to scale).

It also might have been helpful if beside the 27' cube of CO2 gas, they placed the tiny 30" square cube of 426 liquid litres (113 US gallons) of fuel burned to produce the one tonne. The amount of fuel to produce 4.63 tonnes, the average American vehicle burned in 2017, would only take up a space 30 inches x 30 inches x 12 feet. This is simple mathematics and another example of the music of reason.



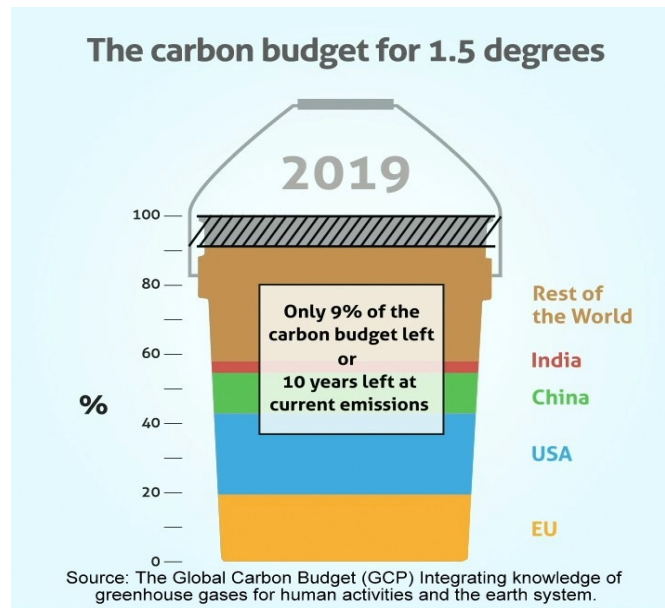
CO2 CUBE, COP15 Installation. Copenhagen, 2009

### The Music of Reason:

This is not fake news. This is a good example of why the parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is reaching the tipping point beyond which we will have runaway climate change. There is only 9% of the carbon budget left. The bucket is almost full. If we overflow the bucket we will go beyond the 1.5 degree warming benchmark. About 10 years at our current emission rates. Time is up.

These numbers, the 426 litres (113 US gallons) of fuel burned to produce every 1 tonne, have been successfully hidden from people all over the world. In new car showrooms in every country, instead of talking about how many kilometres or miles a vehicle can drive before it sends one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, the oil industry and the auto industry have ensured that car dealerships only talk about the grams of CO<sub>2</sub> a vehicle produces per kilometre. The numbers will produce the same results, but the grams of CO<sub>2</sub> are numbers so small people cannot visualize them. They are viewed as insignificant. The tinniest numbers possible related to CO<sub>2</sub> have been the oil industries music of money for a long time. They know the more the world ignores these numbers the more money they will make in the future, even though that future will be shortened by climate change.

When people look at the photo showing the 1 tonne cube of CO<sub>2</sub> and consider there is currently over 1 billion vehicles driving on earth every day, it may help drive home the point. This cube should be on display in every country, in every city, to help explain why we must replace the billion fuel-filled vehicles with electric powered vehicles as fast as possible. It highlights why governments must replace new and proposed coal and pipeline projects, with sustainable forms of energy.



#### The Music of Reason:

Understanding the observed magnitudes and patterns of the factors influencing global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is a prerequisite for the prediction of future climate and earth system changes, and for human governance of climate change and the earth system. Although the requirements for understanding and governance have been emerging for decades, it is finally accepted that climate change is an urgent challenge requiring globally concerted action.

Scientific insights over the last several years have shown that it is the cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (sum total of all emissions over time) that primarily determine peak (maximum) human-induced warming.

The Paris Agreement of the UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) is to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. (UNFCCC, 2015)

Sadly, world leaders are not acting. The strong global fossil-fuel emissions growth since 2000 has identified that no region is decarbonizing its energy supply. Instead of listening to the music of reason, the powerful energy sector and world leaders are listening to the music of money.

Continuous decreases in CO<sub>2</sub> are postulated (a statement that is taken to be “true”, to serve as a starting point for further argument) in all IPCC emissions scenarios to 2100, so that the predicted rate of global emissions growth is less than the economic growth rate. Without these postulated decreases, predicted emissions over the coming century would be several times greater than those from current emissions scenarios.

In the unfolding reality since 2000, the global average growth of CO<sub>2</sub> has increased and there has not been a compensating faster decrease. This means that even the more fossil-fuel-intensive IPCC scenarios underestimated actual emissions growth during this period.

A long-term (multi-decade) perspective on emissions is essential because of the long atmospheric residence time of CO<sub>2</sub>. The length of time CO<sub>2</sub> stays in the atmosphere is not certain. Estimates of the characteristic 'residence time' of a molecule of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere involve a complicated mixture of factors, leading to different conclusions.

Some say that about 50% of a CO<sub>2</sub> increase will be removed from the atmosphere within 30 years, and a further 30% will be removed within a few centuries. The remaining 20% may stay in the

atmosphere for thousands of years. Others say 50-200 years, and no single lifetime can be defined for CO<sub>2</sub> because of the different rates of uptake by different removal processes.

Nasa Says once carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere, it hangs around between 300 to 1,000 years and as humans change the atmosphere by emitting carbon dioxide, those changes will endure on a timescale of many human lives.

The EPA says carbon dioxide's lifetime cannot be represented with a single value because the gas is not destroyed over time, but instead moves among different parts of the ocean-atmosphere-land system. Some of the excess carbon dioxide is absorbed quickly (for example, by the ocean surface), but some will remain in the atmosphere for thousands of years, due in part to the very slow process by which carbon is transferred to ocean sediments.

The bottom line is that if one is forced to simplify reality into a single number for popular discussion, several hundred years is a sensible number to choose, because it tells three-quarters of the story, and the part of the story which applies to our own lifetimes. Several hundred years is 'forever', as it is long enough for ice sheets to respond and melt and for extreme weather to plague many generations.

This means the music of reason - the music of mathematics - the music of climate change, must be played LOUDER.

COVID-19 has taught us we are all in this together. There is a considerable amount of positive energy throughout the world, near and far, addressing a need to take care of each other and identifying how we can take care of each other.

It may seem as if the world is in turmoil with no hope for dialogue and resolution, but youth (super-people) are going to protest in the streets in the months and years ahead to say that is not so. They are hopeful and they are going to warrior up and demand it.

This leads to the following important questions:

- How quickly can we implement policies that decarbonize the economy and produce an economy that sustainably reduces and compensates the emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)? Why is the UN failing to make this happen?
- How quickly can we stop our manic land clearing? Why do we allow this to continue?
- How quickly can we end the burning of coal for energy, because the long-term goal must be to create a CO<sub>2</sub> free global economy and to return to levels of CO<sub>2</sub> naturally present in the atmosphere prior to human intervention? How quickly can we enforce the far more ambitious policies needed to achieve the global target (enshrined in the 2015 Paris climate agreement) of net-zero emissions by 2050. Why is this not happening?
- Why did China approve five new coal-fired power plants in March 2020?
- Why are Australia Federal and State governments pushing for the expansion of coal mines, and why are their coal projects proceeding? Why has Australia officially become the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas on an annualized basis edging out the former number one exported title holder Qatar?
- Why is the US rolling back emission standards for cars? Why is the contentious Keystone XL oil pipeline to the United States proceeding?
- Why are fossil fuel-based industries intensively lobbying for their future, pressuring governments to adopt policies and interventions that favour them but not the climate? Why are governments not rejecting these pressures?

The answer to all questions above is the music of money. If we want to provide youth with a livable, sustainable world, music of money must be replaced by the music of reason! For our youth, it is a

matter of existence. They will fight for it. They will play the music of reason, protect climate change and save the earth!

*On stage the virus' confusion escalates. They have each been wondering if they have a heart. They are questioning if they should be dancing to the music of reason or the music of money. They are contemplating sticking to the 'status quo'; their current status, the way they presently are. They realize time is running out and change is imminent. They are wondering how this change will affect them.*

Tech # 2 says, "How can we fight this? Who will fight this?"

Tech # 1 says, "The answer to that is youth, I call them super-people. Complacent describes someone that is generally satisfied with conditions and too comfortable to complain or make a fuss. Complacent is the opposite of our youth. Today's youth will not be complicit about climate change, they will not contribute to it, and they will not cover it up."

Greta Thunberg launched the #FridaysforFuture movement to spark global protests and denounced a lack of government action to cut heat-trapping emissions before it is too late. She said to the United Nations,

*"So, we are now in a new year and we have entered a new decade and so far, during this decade, we have seen no sign whatsoever that real climate action is coming and that has to change. To the world leaders and those in power, I would like to say that you have not seen anything yet. You have not seen the last of us, we can assure you that. We are an alliance that is organizing in 20 countries to say: 'time is up!'"*

Greta's Canadian counterpart Autumn Peltier is also saying "it is time to worrier up". That is what millions of youth are doing. They refuse to be complicit in the destruction of their own futures. Millions of protesters are going to play the music of reason faster than a streak of lightning, more powerful than the pounding surf, and louder than a roaring hurricane in demanding the fundamental societal change that is required to improve the health of our planet.

Time is up for environmental justice; the music of reason has made that very clear. Likewise, time is up for racial justice; Black Lives Matter protests have made that very clear. Both are linked to justice and justice matters.

People throughout the world are becoming very passionate about justice. This will be the decade of passion delivered through protest.

*Protesting is the time-honoured practice of publicly speaking out against perceived injustices and urging action. While there is a right to peaceful protest, 'peaceful' being the operative word, there are limits. Canada is a 'country of the rule of law' and rights are subject to limits. Determining what the limits are, and whether they are reasonable or not is often debatable. Society is constantly trying to balance those rights.*

*Protests can take the form of marches, sit-ins, boycotts, and include speeches, music, chanting, performance art, poetry, symbols, signs, confronting people, assembling near symbols and/or in places of significance to the cause or occupying a specific building or space.*

*Protests are among the many strategies people use to engage in activism and organizing with the goal of enacting change. Other ways to engage in activism include advocacy for legislation, public awareness campaigns, raising funds, gaining support through social media, among others.*

*Non-violent resistance (also called civil disobedience) is another form of protest. This type of protest is characterized by people engaging in a symbolic protest or peacefully refusing to cooperate; like the sit-ins that began in 1960 as part of the Civil Rights Movement.*

The late civil rights leader, John Lewis, US Representative (D-Ga.), has referred to protests as 'good trouble'. I think we will likely see a lot of that in the months and years ahead.

The decade of passion. That reminds me, my sister wrote a letter to Global Climate on behalf of humanity. It is heart felt. I think a lot of people feel the same way, but life is busy, and many don't think about climate; they take it for granted. It shouldn't be that way."

*The viruses look at each other. More poetry, why more poetry? Poetry makes them nervous. They can't understand why humans express themselves in this strange way (words expressed eloquently; their meaning felt deeply converting feelings into passions). They would much rather deal with complacent, demotivated humans that they can continue to manipulate. A look of confusion is evident on the virus' faces. Is it possible? The words; the music of reason; the possibility that a heart exists within them?*

A letter written to Global Climate  
by Carol Fentiman

Hello Beautiful,

I share my life with you  
I don't tell you how much I appreciate you  
It shouldn't be that way


I am thankful for you  
You are irreplaceable

You are important to me  
You are nurturing

I can't live without you  
I need you

You are the ray of sunshine that keeps me warm  
You are the morning dew that gently blankets nature  
You are the raindrops that create puddles to splash in  
You are the snowflakes that make snow angles possible  
You are the breeze that tosses my hair like a supermodel  
You are the clouds that form imaginary characters  
You are the howling winds that rustle the leaves  
You are the oxygen that fills my heart with joy  
You are the lightning that reminds me how powerful you are  
You are the thunder that roars, I am here for you, please take care of me

I will do everything I can to protect you  
You are my world and I think the world of you

Sincerely,  
Humanity 



Tech # 2 says, "That is a beautiful poem. The words are beautiful. I mean, when you really think about it, our climate IS irreplaceable. It is so important! I love the way she describes so many things that I and so many others have experienced. We take it for granted. It shouldn't be that way."

Tech # 1 says, "Yes my sister is talented, and I'm proud of her. Remember she wrote the I Tap For You poem too. That poem was written for our new greeting gesture; a tap of four fingers four times over the heart to wish each other Goodwill, Compassion, Respect and Justice. My sister and I use that greeting all the time and we hope others will too.

As always, I enjoyed our discussion. I have never seen Climate Change described this way before. It leaves me with a lot to think about. The next time we meet I would like to document our findings. The conclusion is surprising. It is powerful. I promise it will give you hope."

Tech # 2 says, "I'm looking forward to it. Next week I will introduce you to a new member of our team, Lab Tech #3, she is a brilliant technologist. Before we meet, I will update her on our discussions. We must take action to address the viruses. I think she can help us."

Tech # 1 says, "Great! I look forward to meeting her. Until next week, I tap my heart for you with four fingers to wish you Goodwill, Compassion, Respect and Justice!"

Tech # 2 says, "And I tap four times for you also. See you then!"

*The viruses all look at each other again. They wonder what the other viruses are thinking. They wonder if they are all thinking the same thing.*

End of Act 4

# Virus Under the Microscope

## Act Five

In act one of this play-within-a-play I said "If you're going to have a story, have a big story, or none at all. The following is a big story - not big in size, big in importance." What followed, I hope for you, was a story and a message that was big in importance. But what follows on this planet tomorrow, next week and in the months to come is what matters most. We all need to consider the part we will play in the story of the future.

COVID-19 has brought us closer together. For the first time in the history of the world, all of humanity, informed and assisted by the unprecedented reach of digital technology, has come together to focus on the same existential threat. A terrible pandemic that is very infectious and deadly. It has shaken us all. It has also shown us that we can come together in a global effort.

We can broaden this experience to work together to confront the issues (climate change, racism and inequality) that plague our earth and require urgent attention. The previous four acts have been building to this conclusion. Act five of this play-within-a-play is being written to tell you how, and why, I feel we can succeed. It will be up to you to decide if this play-within-a-play is fiction or reality.

At the end of Act Four, Lab Tech #1 said, "The next time we meet I would like to document our findings. The conclusion is surprising. It is powerful. I promise it will give you hope."

Tech # 2 responded with, "I'm looking forward to it. Next week I will introduce you to a new member of our team, Lab Tech #3; she is a brilliant technologist. Before we meet, I will update her on our discussions. We must take action to address the viruses. I think she can help us."

And to this Tech # 1 responded, "Great! I look forward to meeting her. Until next week, I tap my heart for you with four fingers to wish you Goodwill, Compassion, Respect and Justice!"

*At the end of Act Four, the viruses looked at each other, wondering why all the poetry in this play? Poetry makes them nervous. They can't understand why humans express themselves in this strange way (words expressed eloquently; their meaning felt deeply converting feelings into passions). They would much rather deal with complacent, demotivated humans that they can continue to manipulate. A look of confusion is now evident on the virus' faces. Is it possible? The words; the music of reason; the possibility that a heart exists within them? The viruses all look at each other again. They wonder what the other viruses are thinking. They wonder if they are all thinking the same thing.*

*The Lab Techs enter the stage and take a seat at the long lab table. They are 7 feet apart (they like the extra foot – it does not have to be 6 feet). A new lab tech has joined the fight against the COVID-19 Virus. She knows the other lab techs, but this is her first day on the COVID-19 Team. She enters with confidence, but concern.*

The new Lab Tech #3 says, “It’s good to see you both. I am happy to join the fight. I have seen too many viruses. I can’t help but wonder, why are their origins so perplexing? What are your thoughts?”

Tech #2 answers, “Well, a virus is a microscopic parasite that lacks the capacity to thrive and reproduce outside of a host body. They come in all shapes and sizes, from minuscule to monsters. Similarly, they come in a range of complexities.”

Lab Tech #3 says, “They sure do and there are so many.”

Tech #1 adds, “The origin of all viruses is unclear, but one thing we know for certain, is the spread of the Virus of Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying, Bigotry, (RPDBB-20), the Virus of Policy Brutality and the Virus of Societal Indifference, the Virus of Inaction, and the Virus of Climate Change, is rooted in mankind. They are spread from person-to-person, group-to-group, and nation-to-nation.

These viruses fester and are spread knowingly or unknowingly. The reason they exist cannot be defined or justified. There is no reason! Not fear, nor difference, nor ignorance, provides a reason. Sadly, they exist, thrive and reproduce from body-to-body, brain-to-brain, and heart-to-heart. From a hardened heart to a broken heart.

The only virus in our discussions that has a defined reason for existing is the Virus of Climate Change. Scientists know why it exists, yet world leaders are ignoring why it exists. Leaders should not ignore it. It is not just an environmental problem, it includes, human health and societal stability. As money gets sucked out of the economy to deal with extreme events, there is less money available for education and health care.

The good news is, there is hope - the ability and desire to heal the hardened heart and the broken heart. There is hope – goodwill, compassion, respect and justice. Life is meant to be this way. Life can be this way!”

*The viruses look at each other and start to wonder – why do we exist if the reasons for our existence cannot be defined or justified?*

Lab Tech #3 says, “That was well said. I share your deep concern about these viruses, and I know we must all work very hard to address all of them. Lab Tech #2 told me about the virus slides, and we must all work together to defeat them. He also showed me the new greeting. Tapping the heart 4 times with 4 fingers to represent Goodwill, Compassion, Respect and Justice. I tap for you also. It is a great greeting!” It is very meaningful, and it supports social distancing.

Lab Tech # 1 says, “That is great to hear. We have been tapping our hearts with the quick four beats for weeks and we are getting use to it. We like it better than the elbow bump - lol.”

*The 3 Lab Techs exchange the 4 quick taps over their hearts.*

*The gesture is contagious! All of the viruses look at each other and tap 4 times where they think their hearts might be. When Climate Change told them it has a heart, they wanted one too. Having a heart is new to them. It feels strange – but they think they like it.*

Lab Tech # 1 continues, “I am glad you both came to work early today. Our shifts do not start for a while and there is a story I want to share. I am hoping you find it interesting and inspiring. It is a true story. It is a story that talks about where we have been and where we are going. It is a story about deep feelings and compassion. It is about protesting.”



Lab Tech #2 says, "That is why we came in early. You mentioned you had a true story to share."

Lab Tech # 1 says, "Before I start the true story, I would like to comment on some protest history. To share why future protests can be, and likely will be, different from past protests.

History provides many examples of protests that did not produce significant change. For example:

- On Feb 15, 2003, millions of people in 60 countries claimed the streets voicing their opposition of the prospect of war with Iraq and yet a few weeks later the United States was at war.
- In September 2011, for 2 months demonstrations arose to attack the misdeeds of the Finance Industry and "Occupy" Wall Street. It was a protest movement against economic inequality that spread to the wider Occupy movement in more than 900 cities worldwide. Social media efforts at the time did not provide sufficient social connections and collaboration. It failed their purpose. The protest slogan was "We are the 99%", against the nations wealthiest 1%, yet no US policies changed very much.
- In 2014, Black Lives Matter received front-page coverage in every major newspaper when they protested by name the killings of 40 unarmed black people by law enforcement officers. To date, the killings continue.

These results lead to the following questions:

- Does protesting have a point?
- Is protesting becoming repetitive and boring?
- Can protests be made greater and more effective, or are people raising their fists to the skies?
- Can protests be a productive use of our political attention, or is it just a bit of social theatre we perform to makes ourselves feel virtuous, useful, and righteous?
- How can we inspire others when there is no Gandhi or Martin Luther King to lead the charge?
- Will the protests in the future require strong leaders?
- Why can we expect protests of the future to be more effective?

We know that you and I, and every person we know, can take to the streets, demanding change. We know we have some strong leaders in the world, but why must it be up to them? The world should be able to progress through thousands of leaders of every age and walk of life, understanding that for protests to have power, they must be sustained. This is more likely now that modern networked movements can scale up quickly providing better connections making collaboration easier. Today anyone can gather crowds through tweets and share updates in seconds to thousands of strangers on the move.

Does it require a new "I Have a Dream" speech to shift the national mood to make the protests large? The answer to that is yes and no. Yes, because such speeches will always be welcome and helpful. No, because similar speeches are now in the minds of every protester everywhere on earth. Millions of people are thinking the same thing. They know they have rights, and they know it is important to have the courage to fight for those rights and for the common good of all people. The world is coming together more and more every day. It will soon be more sensible for leaders to surrender to the required change than to resist it!

Today's youth do not need a playbook to guide their efforts. They see the cruel and unjust treatment of control today. They are gaining the courage to fight for a better future.

The answer to why protests of tomorrow will be more effective than the protests of the past can be found in the growth of compassionate radicalism. There has been plenty of compassionate radicalism in the past, but it is spreading like wildfire, engulfing the planet. The surge in compassionate radicalism is becoming faster than a streak of lightning, more powerful than the pounding surf, and

mightier than a roaring hurricane in demanding the fundamental societal change that is required to improve world health and to secure justice for all people. Compassionate radicalism is in fashion and it will likely stay in fashion for a very long time.

The Dalai Lama noted, 'Compassion is the radicalism of our time.' Compassion includes positive thoughts and feelings including hope, courage, determination and inner strength. When someone expresses compassion toward others, they interact with the best version of themselves.

The choices behind public protest can be highly personal and private. Decision-making can be orchestrated by individuals rather than by a lead representative of a group. Humanity is appreciative of the words and motivation of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Greta Thunberg, and Autumn Peltier, but no longer expects these powerful leaders to be the only motivators of change. Thousands and maybe millions of leaders everywhere, will step forward in this decade to stand up for Goodwill, Compassion Respect and Justice. As radicals of our day, they will radiate the required compassion and call upon the compassion of others, so urgently required in our communities, and countries throughout the world."

*Hearing this the Viruses of Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying and Bigotry (the Terrible Five) know their time is up. They know they will be under constant surveillance, and they know change is imminent. But strangely they are not disturbed by this. They feel different. They get together for a quiet discussion among themselves. Something is brewing. They want to speak.*

Tech # 2 responds, "I see what you mean. I agree that compassion is the new radicalism of our time, and perhaps it is becoming widespread just in-time. Our world is going through a phase of acute polarization with divisions between individuals, communities, and countries.

This is a profoundly worrisome and stressful time. People feel powerless and are desperate for solutions. Especially with the COVID-19 Virus, many are finding it hard to cope. I agree, compassionate radicalism will bring about change. Humans have a tremendous resource of natural resilience; we must access it and learn to work with it."

To this Tech # 3 says, "You guys really get deep into these discussions. I am sorry I missed your previous discussions. But I am glad I am listening to this one!"

Tech # 1 says, "Now for the true story. I want to share this because I think it is a good example of compassionate radicalism and protest. It is a story about a protest I was involved in many years ago.

*On June 6, 2005, in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, seven young Red Hill Expressway protesters quietly filed into a hushed courtroom and filled the front bench of the jury box, for lack of other seating space. On that day, these seven activists were on the Mayor of Hamilton's hit list. These seven eco-warriors (as they had come to be known), were already local legends. They were the 'Red Hill Valley Tree-Sitters'. They stood against some fearsome City opposition from the City, including the possibility of facing five-year jail terms for acts of civil disobedience.*

The previous summer, they tried to save a remaining small cluster of trees; the trees existence was threatened by the construction company building the Red Hill Valley Expressway. Over 37,000 trees had already been chopped down. At the end 47,000 trees were destroyed! The blasting of the face of the Niagara escarpment was scheduled to begin. This was a very dangerous place for the Red Hill Valley Tree-Sitters. Not only because of the imminent blasting, but also because of the two security crews the City claimed they had to hire to 'protect' the tree-sitters. The crews included some tough-looking characters.

Out of the eco-seven, only three stayed in the trees. The others were their ground support team; providing food and water, usually under the cover of darkness. Many believed that the security guards would beat the supporters if they caught them.

For the 'Tree Three', the summer of 2004 was riddled with horrible rainstorms and strong winds that almost blew them off their small platforms perched 50 feet in the air. From dawn to dusk, they were blasted by construction noise, and blinded by huge spotlights all through the night. Some of the security guards made spears and flung them at the very trees the sitters had claimed. Name-calling, insults and physiological torment was a daily occurrence. Still, the sitters stayed, determined to make their point.

They succeeded at making their point in the hearts of thousands of supporters, including the 19 community groups and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), that had voiced their objections to the project. They were examples of compassionate radicalism, but not in the eyes of civil leaders. Next, they were in court, and they refused to apologize for their actions.

After years of debate, the City had continued to ignore the warnings that many in the world had embraced. The City was scheduled to build a 7 km highway into farm fields that would enable developers to continue to build their large residential homes. Developers had been sitting on farm lots for years. With the new highway, there would be no stopping them.

Many of the developers had over-contributed to the Mayor's campaign and the local Justice demanded the Mayor and 18 corporations, lots of them numbered companies, open their books for an audit. Unfortunately, it had taken a citizen, with \$25,000 of her own money and more than 15-days in court, to prove an audit should be conducted.

There had been many court actions over the previous two years, including lawsuits by the City against the federal Department of Environment, its staff and former Cabinet Minister, for construction delays due to environmental assessments.

On top of this, a narrow majority of City Council endorsed lawsuits against the seven youths who had carried out the peaceful 104-day Valley Tree-Sit. This was a move a local journalist referred to as 'returning to the field of battle to shoot the wounded'.

The City of Hamilton sued the seven youths (mostly university students) for \$345,000, which was said to be the cost of hiring the security guards around their protest site. Additionally, the youths faced up to five years in jail. This 'my way or the highway' bully attitude angered thousands of supporters.

In response, the former Cabinet Minister of the Federal Department of the Environment, Shiela Copps, fought back again saying that 'environmental concerns are only discussed during campaigns. As soon as the campaigning is over and government begins, environmental issues are quickly overshadowed by developers with the money to make the laws, or in some cases, change the laws. Noting that a recent national survey said that 'young people do not trust the political system, and that the tree sitters offered an explanation for this attitude: Hamilton had some young people that stood very firmly for what they believed in. For this they were arrested and faced with huge legal bills, from the City of Hamilton, because the Mayor and bullies at City Hall think they are going to intimidate people into not caring about the environment.' As an example of compassionate radicalism these young people stood up to those bullies.

I took part in those protests. In my own version of compassionate radicalism, I supported the tree sitters and their cause. I did not only attend a rally at the construction site, I wrote a poetic 'Ode to Hamilton's Tree Sitting Heroes' and distributed copies to everyone attending a City Open House.

On June 1, I sent an email of the Ode poem to the Mayor of Hamilton and 15 City Councillors, which read as follows:

*'I hope the following Ode to Hamilton's Tree Sitting Heroes will help you see more clearly why it is so very shameful, disgraceful and wrong for you to be prosecuting these young people. Your olive branch will be seen by the community as nothing more than a twig with no leaves unless you drop this case completely. It is time for you to show needed compassion and tolerance before your efforts to*

*punish these young people become a major national embarrassment to your City.'*

I received one response from a councillor saying, *'We are trying Bob.'*

## Ode to Hamilton's Tree Sitting Heroes

By Robert Hicks

With courage and faith and willing heart  
They stepped forward bravely to do their part  
They tried to save a 14th century native village and protect native rights  
They tried to prevent damage to at least 11 archaeological sites  
They tried to save sixteen hundred acres of environmentally significant area  
They tried to bring more attention to the communities escalating hysteria

With courage and faith and willing heart  
They stepped forward bravely to do their part  
They tried for all the birds and animals to save their migration corridor  
They tried for all the endangered species that needed their habitat more  
They tried for all the creatures and a demonstration they did stage  
They tried for all the creatures knowing some people would react with rage

With courage and faith and willing heart  
They stepped forward bravely to do their part  
They knew citizens with breathing problems need the air to be clear  
They knew the expressway would bring another one million trucks a year  
They knew the expressway would double the amount of bad air days  
They knew efforts to express their concerns required bold new ways

With courage and faith and willing heart  
They stepped forward bravely to do their part  
The deed was what these eco heroes made  
It mattered not how long they stayed  
For they became heroes from the very start  
When in life's journey they stepped forward to do their part

With courage and faith, they showed willing heart  
With courage and faith, they bravely did their part  
With courage and faith, they sat high and alone  
With courage and faith, they sat adjacent to the construction blast zone  
With courage and faith, they sat fifty feet above the ground  
With courage and faith, they sat and waited for that awful sound

Through bright blue skies and tree leaf greens  
They surveyed what they steadfastly envisioned pristine  
They were tired but they remained brave and they remained bold  
Then for their safety they were told  
Come down now we give you warning  
Blasting of the earth will start in the morning

For the safety of the Tree Sitters all said they did care  
But rocks the size of footballs did fly through the air  
Fifteen meters deep and eighty meters wide  
The City of Hamilton would take a huge chunk out of the Niagara Escarpment's hide  
Even though it is a World Biosphere Reserve  
They proceeded with regrettable unforgettable unshakable nerve

The Tree Sitter's heroism did not stop or slow down construction  
From up high they could only look down on destruction  
They are true Eco Heroes they did not do this for fun  
They did it to save the environment for East Hamilton  
They became true eco heroes to thousands and certainly to me  
But unfortunately, not to everyone in our society

Although the delicate ecosystem that existed in the Red Hill Valley soon will be gone  
The efforts of thousands of concerned citizens must remain forever strong  
Like those brave Tree Sitting Heroes we must continue to care  
We must continue to fight for the environment and for clean water and air  
A big thanks goes out to everyone who supported them and felt their cries  
These Heroes will be remembered by all of us the rest of our lives.

Those three Tree-Sitters and their team influenced me. I will never forget them. Fifteen years later, I am telling you this story about them. It feels like yesterday. I think the actions of the Tree-Sitters and this poetic Ode, are examples of what compassionate radicalism is about. They are certainly examples of very strong feelings.

In October 2005, the last of the Tree-Sitting Red Hill Expressway Protesters charged with civil contempt to appear in court, accepted a negotiated settlement with the City. The suit against the tree sitters cost taxpayers nearly a quarter-million dollars. The City didn't collect a penny. In the end, they let the Tree-Sitters go free."

*Upon hearing this, the Viruses of Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying and Bigotry (the Terrible Five) and the Viruses of Societal Indifference, Police Brutality and Inaction were moved. They all felt the pains of compassionate radicalism within them; a feeling they had not experienced before. They were realizing, like the Virus of Climate Change, they had hearts as they admired the hearts of the tree sitters. The Virus of Climate Change had tears in it's eyes (similar to the tears in my eyes as I write this).*

Tech #2 says, "Oh Wow! That ode was powerful."

Tech #3 says, "Thank you for sharing your story. Does anyone have a Kleenex?."

Tech #1 continued, "I have another example of compassionate radicalism. It is recent and powerful. It is another true story.

Last month Greta Thunberg and 'Fridays for Future' (FFF) climate activists from Belgium and Germany published an open letter with demands to the European Union (EU) and world leaders. In the last month their letter has been signed by more than 125,000 people. On August 21, they hand-delivered the letter to German Chancellor, Angela Merkel.

*The letter said the following:*

- *"(Their) Our demands include halting all fossil fuel investments and subsidies, divesting from fossil fuels, making ecocide an international crime, designing policies that protect workers and the most vulnerable, safeguarding democracy and establishing annual, binding carbon budgets based on the best available science.*

- *We understand the world is complicated and that what we are asking for may not be easy or may seem unrealistic. But it is much more unrealistic to believe that our societies would be able to survive the global heating we're heading for – as well as other disastrous ecological consequences of today's business as usual. We are inevitably going to have to fundamentally change, one way or another. The question is, will the changes be on our terms, or on nature's terms?*
- *In the Paris agreement world leaders committed themselves to keeping the global average temperature rise to well below 2C and aiming for 1.5C. Our demands demonstrate what that commitment means. Yet this is just the very minimum of what needs to be done to deliver on those promises.*
- *So, if leaders are not willing to do this, they'll have to start explaining why they're giving up on the Paris agreement. Giving up on their promises. Giving up on the people living in the most affected areas. Giving up on the chances of handing over a safe future for their children. Giving up without even trying.*
- *Science doesn't tell anyone what to do, it merely collects and presents verified information. It is up to us to study and connect the dots. When you read the reports, as well as what leaders have actually signed up for in the Paris agreement, you see that the climate and ecological crisis can no longer be solved within today's systems. Even a child can see that policies of today don't add up with the current best available science.*
- *We need to end the ongoing wrecking, exploitation and destruction of our life support systems and move towards a fully decarbonized economy that is centred on the well-being of all people, democracy and the natural world.*
- *If we are to have a chance of staying below 1.5C of warming, our emissions need to immediately start reducing rapidly towards zero and then on to negative figures. That's a fact. And since we don't have all the technical solutions, we need to achieve that, we have to work with what we have at hand today. And this has to include stopping doing certain things. That's also a fact. However, it's a fact that most people refuse to accept. Just the thought of being in a crisis that we cannot buy, build or invest our way out of seems to create some kind of collective mental short circuit.*
- *This mix of ignorance, denial and unawareness is at the very heart of the problem. As it is now, we can have as many meetings and climate conferences as we want. They will not lead to sufficient changes, because the willingness to act and the level of awareness needed are still nowhere in sight. The only way forward is for society to start treating the crisis like a crisis.*
- *We still have the future in our own hands. But time is rapidly slipping through our fingers. We can still avoid the worst consequences. But to do that, we have to face the climate emergency and change our ways. And that is the uncomfortable truth we cannot escape."*

This letter comes at a time when government choices in the next couple of years will shape our future for decades to come, for better or worse. To be for the better they must facilitate a fair but large-scale industrial transformation that prioritizes human life and the environment over profits. This is a time when governments world-wide must draw inspiration from increasingly popular initiatives that are happening in Europe; such as, The Economy of the Common Good (ECG) movement, that envisions a capitalist order that rewards economic activities promoting human rights, sustainable development, accountability and transparency. Rather than simply measuring financial profits, a company's success is determined by its contribution to the common good.

The EU's Recovery Plan is indicative of this. It entails the 'do no harm principle', a policy instrument that excludes financial support for economic activities not considered sustainable, such as the fossil fuel industry.

One reason this is very important is that in September 2019, when the world got together for the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, countries had been called upon to bring concrete targets to a special summit with the aim to compel countries into stronger action on climate change and get on track to meet the Paris Agreement. Seventy-seven countries committed to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The US did not offer any commitments. President Trump made a surprise appearance at the summit, staying for just ten minutes.

Arguments about climate change rage around who does what and who pays. Progress demands that nearly 200 countries with widely differing levels of prosperity and vulnerability, different political systems and interests, agree on the means to achieve an unprecedentedly challenging set of objectives. The conversations are both driven by the understanding that failure would bring catastrophe and hindered by the complexity and scale of the effort required.

In May 2019 the UN was pushing to end new coal plant construction saying, 'Don't build new coal plants after 2020, and certainly don't pay for them with taxpayer money.' The leaders of Australia and Japan (both countries support expansion of coal production), did not address the summit.

Today there is more tension than harmony in global geopolitics and China has yet to demonstrate its potential for climate leadership. Since the US left the Paris Agreement, the loss of political momentum is great. It will have to be rebuilt. If Joe Biden wins the election in November 2020, maybe that will be possible.

How to emerge from this global pandemic crisis with more resilient and sustainable growth will test the wisdom, determination and foresight of all governments. They may have wisdom and they may have foresight, but do they have the determination it requires? Until they begin to talk-the-talk and walk-the-walk, protesters will have to walk the streets of every country and do the talking for them using cardboard signs. Since government transparency and trust is sparse, the walking and the talking of the protesters be constant. The FFF movement has made that very clear.

August 20 marked the two-year anniversary since the first 'school strike for the climate' took place. Since then, millions have taken to the streets to join the decades-long fight for climate and environmental justice. Over these past two years, the world has also emitted more than 80 gigatonnes of CO2 according to the Global Carbon Project (80 gigatonnes = 80 billion metric tonnes).

Tech # 2 responds, "I am glad the FFF movement has not slowed their efforts in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The next Global Strike is set for September 25<sup>th</sup> and the FFF movement and other groups are asking for a [#JustRoveyForAll](#) from the COVID-19 pandemic that puts people and the planet first."

Tech # 3 says, "Yes the COVID-19 crisis will not slow them down. Since August 2018, mostly on Fridays, sometimes on Thursdays, Saturdays or Sundays, the FFF movement protests have occurred all over the world and some of them have been huge. On March 15, 2019, 1.4 million people participated, and in September 2019, during a week of protests, 6 million people participated with thousands of towns and cities uniting people across time zones, cultures and generations to demand urgent action to the escalating ecological emergency.

I remember a spokesperson for the FFF movement coordinating the demonstrations said, *'People power is more powerful than the people in power.' It was the biggest ever climate mobilization, and it's only the beginning. The momentum is on our side and we are not going anywhere. We will keep fighting until the politicians stop ignoring the science, and the fossil fuel companies are held responsible for their crimes against our future, as they should have been decades ago.'*

Tech #1 continued, "Yes, there is no doubt the FFF movement and many other environmental and social justice groups will fight hard in the years ahead. I can feel the compassionate radicalism in their letter to world leaders and I can feel the compassionate radicalism that is spreading everywhere. I agree 'people power', 'compassionate people power' can make the difference required.

People may wonder what it means to 'make a difference'. Everyone talks about 'making a difference', 'changing the world' or 'doing good', but few define what they mean.

Consider this:

*Your social impact (making a difference) can be determined by the number of people whose lives you influence and improve, and how much you influence and improve them, over the long-term. You can increase your social impact by helping more people, by helping the same number of people to a greater extent, or by doing something which has benefits that last for a longer time. The latter is especially important when your actions affect future generations. For example; if you can improve the quality of government decision-making, you might not see many quantifiable short-term results, but you will have solved lots of other problems over the long term.*

This definition is broad enough to cover many ways to make the world a better place. It's broad enough to cover environmental protection. If we let the environment degrade, the future of civilization will be threatened. In that way, protecting the environment improves lives. It is also broad enough to include the fight for social justice and help people who are confronted with racism, prejudice, discrimination, bullying and bigotry (RPDBB-20 the terrible five), and the virus of Police Brutality.

We must all fight for all people plagued by these viruses. Justice is more than fairness. The nature of justice is both a moral virtue of character and a desirable quality of political society as it applies to ethical and social decision-making. It is essential in a just society. Life is meant to be this way; now, and 100 years from now.

Compassionate Radicalism or Radical Compassion is a specific type of general compassion, which includes the inner imperative to change reality in order to alleviate the pain of others. It is total compassion – nothing is excluded. This state of mind is universal and stands at the root of the historical cry for social change. It stands at the root of protests today.

There is an important difference between the protests of today and the protests of the past. Protests of today are more visible; everyone is watching. Ugly state-sponsored violence, or anti-protest violence against peaceful protesters will be visible through social media and will likely motivate the immediate spread of further protests. Easy-ended protests are a march of the past.

*Hearing this the Virus of Police Brutality knows it's time is up. It knows it will be under constant surveillance. It also agrees that compassion for others must support the rule of law.*

Accordingly, today's leaders should realize their time is up. Reasonable and required demands for dramatic change will be forced upon them by millions of youth with likely support of their parents. As a result, the next 5 years will see dramatic change throughout the world.

*Hearing this, the Viruses of Indifference and Inaction know their time is up. They know they will be under constant surveillance. They know that fewer and fewer people will be complacent and complicit in their silence. They know this decade will make a difference. This decade will be about caring for the future and refusing to be part of its destruction.*

To be successful, people must rise to speak truth “through” power, as much as to speak truth “to” power. Change will be swift through mainstream power via our culture institutions. Protests are necessary but protests alone will be insufficient without help from persuaded and committed leaders and institutions. Institutions should by now know that world-wide protests are not the result of disgruntled masses that can be ignored, but due to informed masses that clearly see the failures of their leaders and a lack of effort to correct those failures. In this decade, governments and institutions will observe the informed masses whose knowledge and correctness must be heard. They will not observe disgruntled masses hoping their protests can work. They will observe informed masses knowing their protests will work because they must.



In the past leaders dismissed anything that reached beyond their understanding. They were focused on delivering their own messages and unwilling to hear the messages of others. Today's leaders know the people they lead are not naive. Leaders no longer have acceptable excuses or alibi's for dismissing the actions urgently required in support of human rights and justice."

Tech # 2 responds, "Seeing the big picture makes me feel worried and comforted at the same time. On one hand what you have told us is alarming, to put it mildly; on the other hand I am encouraged the protests we are likely to see over the next few years will bring about significant and required change."

Tech # 3 says, "Yes, seeing the big picture helps to keep the final-destination in sight. In everyday life there will always be things happening that will shift our focus away from the big picture. What matters is how strong and persistent we remain towards achieving the end goal; to hold world leaders accountable to make the required changes now, to delay, climate change. Greta Thunberg is leading this fight and she has my 100% support."

Tech #1 says, "What a great discussion this has been. I also feel comforted and encouraged that future protests will make the important difference."

*Unexpectedly, there was a knock on the Lab door. Tech Support Services delivered a large envelope addressed to Lab Techs # 1, # 2 and # 3.*

They said, "I found this on my desk in the mail room when I returned from coffee. I don't know how it got there. I delivered it right away. It might be important!?"

The 3 Lab Techs said, "Thanks", and facing the Tech Support Service Worker, tapped their hearts 4 times as he left the lab.

Tech # 1 says, "I wonder what this could be?"

*Tech # 1 opens the envelope and finds a very surprising letter:*

*Dear Lab Techs # 1, # 2 and # 3,*

*We are the Viruses you have been discussing for weeks while you have been working to address the COVID-19 Virus. We are the Viruses of Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Bullying, Bigotry, RPDBB-20, Societal Indifference, Police Brutality, Inaction, Climate Change and COVID-19.*

*During the last few months, you took a magnified look at us under your microscope where we described ourselves in detail. Anyone who examines our slides will understand us, if they didn't already.*

*While you were studying us, we were studying you. We listened to every word you said. Surprisingly we learned something about you AND about ourselves that we were not aware of. Your discussions made us look inward and we discovered, like the Virus of Climate Change, we have hearts!*

*As a result, we owe you an apology. We are very sorry for what we have done to you and all of humanity.*

*How did we make this change of heart? You taught us to recognize that the emotions of billions of people around the globe are common. You taught us that billions of people care about causes that are too often swept under the rug by governments while perpetrators of aggression and wrong doings receive only slaps on the wrist, if at all. You have taught us to see the inequity, the inequality and the injustice in your world.*

*We see the frustration expressed by the masses. We cannot ignore the collective grief and outrage felt by countless victims of our terrible and collective actions.*

*We see the many failures manifested by the Virus of Societal Indifference and the Virus of Inaction can no longer be tolerated and why none of us can persist. We deeply regret and are profoundly sorry for all harm we have caused.*

*We hope that this acknowledgement of our errors in judgment will encourage others to examine themselves. We do not expect to change all minds, but we hope our apology will plant a seed.*

*To the skeptics, we ask you to consider exploring your heart for an understanding and emotional connection with people you would otherwise dismiss. We now understand that having the courage to listen to another person's pain can commence the process required to create change.*

*Empathy is the minimum requirement to create change; supported by listening. We listened to you through the five acts of this play-within-a-play and we have learned from you. We did not expect to learn, but we did. Now we wish you and all of mankind Goodwill, Compassion, Respect and Justice. As we leave you, we tap our hearts four times for you.*

*Sincerely*

**THE VIRUS OF RACISM, THE VIRUS OF PREJUDICE, The Virus of Discrimination. The Virus of Bullying,**  
The Virus of Bigotry, **THE VIRUS OF RPDBB-20, The Virus of Societal Indifference,** The Virus of Inaction, *The Virus of Police Brutality,* The Virus of Climate Change, The Virus of COVID-19

*PS: Please look under the microscope.*

*Before the viruses turn to leave, they wait for Lab Tech #1 to look at the slide they slipped under the microscope.*

Tech # 1 says, "This slide is asking why humans speak through poetry?"

Tech # 1 answers, "Because poetry is a strange and wonderful thing. It can confront the perils of the present moment faced by people, their communities and this planet. Poetry is literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings; expressing words that may otherwise not be said. The words become guides to the feelings that lie between the lines."

*The Viruses agree they like this answer. Poems express the contents of hearts and minds, often inserting the remedies between the lines. The Viruses realize everyone wants goodwill, compassion, respect and justice. They realize everyone DESERVES goodwill, compassion, goodwill and justice. They decide they will share this play-within-a-play with many, often! The Viruses hold hands as they depart to spread the word. Tap, tap, tap, tap*  
Tech #1 says; "WOW! I did not know this story would end this way. I wasn't sure how it would end but the ending is not what I expected. It gives us hope a wonderful new day is possible."

Tech # 2 responds, "I am stunned. The letter was amazing. Your description of poetry is beautiful! It makes sense."

Tech # 3 says, "That letter is astounding! This is an amazing moment! I'm thankful I worked with you today. This is a day I will never forget. I am inspired and I want to try to write poetry. I have so much I want to say. We all have things to say!"

Tech #1 says, "Oh, one last thing before we start work, I wrote an open letter of thanks to all peaceful protesters in all parts of the world. The idea of thanking all peaceful protesters may sound inappropriate, especially to people who think that protesters are annoying troublemakers, and don't believe in what the protests are for. Let me read the letter and you can tell me if you feel it is appropriate."

Tech #2 says, "Nothing you do or say surprises me anymore."

Tech #3 says, "The idea of thanking protesters for protesting has never occurred to me. This might be a great idea."

An open letter to Peaceful Protesters everywhere on earth,

Peaceful protesting has long been a part of our history, and for the benefit of society it is not just a written right, it is also an unwritten responsibility. The responsibility to ensure our governments are truly as they should be, 'of the people, by the people and for the people'.

In our democracies you have a right to get together and peacefully protest whatever we feel is wrong, could be fairer or more just. Putting your beliefs out there for the world to see and judge is not easy for many people and when you do, we should extend a heartfelt thank you, to you, for doing it. You deserve to be celebrated as caring world citizens who drive necessary change. You, by the raising of your voice, hands and signs, spur our governments to act on required, even crucial change or to change course on policies that have been harmful or misguided.

As you have likely noticed, today, people everywhere are expressing their appreciation and gratitude to all who are serving in the fight against the COVID-19 Virus. I am sure you agree these expressions of thanks are very appropriate. What you may not be aware of is that you also deserve appreciation and gratitude for standing up and speaking out for goodwill, compassion, respect and justice.

Please keep doing what you are doing. It means the world to so many today, and it will mean so much more for humanity long into the future.

To those peacefully protesting, please know that we see you - and we thank you - the world's future is brighter because of you!

Sincerely,

(Insert your name here)

Tech #2 says, "I would like to add my name to that letter."

Tech #3 says, "Yes, I was just about to say the same thing. I think it is a wonderful letter and very appropriate. This letter is long overdue. I would love to sign it."

Tech #1 says, "Yes, that would be great – please do. I have not figured out who to deliver the letter to, or how to distribute it, but we'll figure it out. Maybe others will help us.

Okay, time for work. This fight against the COVID-19 Virus has been challenging, but together we will win the fight!

Oh, I almost forgot; I got up early today and baked you a Loaf of Peace."

*Tech # 1 gives Tech #2 and # 3 a Loaf of Peace.*



Tech #1 says: "I baked these loaves using different ingredients. I never know what they will look like; they come in all shapes and sizes. I am not the greatest cook, but every loaf I make is made with goodwill, compassion, respect and justice in the recipe. Hmmm, sounds like a good recipe for life.

I've included the poem I wrote in Act 1; enjoy."

### **Let's Bake a Loaf of Peace**

There is as much hunger for Peace in this world as there is for bread;  
Conflicts starve us all.

There is as much love in the homes of ever country as there is in your own;  
Love unites us all.

There is as much need for understanding in this world as there is for forgiveness;  
Reconciliation can save us all.

To satisfy the worlds hunger for Peace;  
Feed yourself with good judgment,  
Feed your governments with good advice,  
Feed all others with compassion and hope,  
Feed them with opportunities to help them cope.  
Let's grow more crops of goodwill and respect,  
Let's grow more caring and more sharing,  
Let's harvest the will to feed us all,  
Let's Bake a Loaf of Peace.

The three Lab Techs are happy. This experience has changed them. They make copies of the Viruses Letter of Apology to Mankind to give to their friends. The letter fills their hearts with joy. They know the road ahead will be a difficult one, but they are feeling positive about the future. The letter gives them hope.

They wish each other well with 4 taps over their hearts, as they begin what they know will be a busy day fighting COVID-19.

End of Act 5

## Act 6 will not be written by me - I hope it will be written by you.

In the year 2100 when people read this play-within-a-play they will ask what did we know, when did we know it, and what did we do about it? We should be asking now what will humanity be like in the year 2100? What will climate change look like in the year 2100? What will we do now to help our youth experience a healthy and happy year 2100?

Nothing will change unless we change our thinking. We can create peace and restore the structure of our social fabric to foster peace like we have fought COVID – together. We must slow down our planet. We must slow down all human activities on this planet – together. This will be the decade of compassionate radicalism. Maybe I will see you at a protest.



### I Tap For You

I wish you goodwill throughout your life  
I wish you compassion without any strife  
I wish you respect, every minute, every day  
I wish you justice, life is meant to be this way

by Carol Fentiman

Robert Hicks

### Canadian Peace Activist, Climate Activist, Poet and now a Playwright

About the author:

As a peace activist in 2002, Robert Hicks was nominated for the YMCA Canada Peace Medal for his efforts to promote world peace through the Toastmasters organization. As Vice President Education of Mansion Toastmasters in Burlington, Ontario, he organized a special meeting for “Peace Talks.” It was an evening of speeches about peace that provoked people to think more about the importance and meaning of peace in the new millennium. His hope was that more “Peace Talks” would take place throughout the world and that through a meeting of minds and hearts we can pave the way for a peaceful and just future for all people.

On March 5<sup>th</sup> 2003, as a member of Poets-Against-the-War, Robert headed the Canadian delegation of a world-wide effort to present the leaders of 7 countries with 13,000 Anti-War Poems that had been submitted to a Poets-for-Peace website over a period of just 6 weeks. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced that Canada would not participate in a pending invasion saying Canada refused to declare war against Iraq without United Nations Security Council approval and because the people of Canada did not support it.

Robert likes to think that the 13,000 anti-war poems helped to motivate that decision. He wrote the following words on the inside cover of the 13,000-poem presentation. “There is as much hunger for peace in this world as there is for bread. War starves us all. To satisfy the world’s hunger for peace – starve war.”

Robert’s presentation of poems MP Paddy Torsney



MP Paddy Torsney presented the poems to PM Jean Chrétien



As an environmental activist from 1998 to 2002, Robert served as a member and Chair of the City of Burlington Sustainable Development Committee.

As founder of the Friends of McNichol Park Community Group, Robert led the group through a successful court case against the rezoning of a 14-acre lakefront park in Burlington Ontario. After winning the lawsuit Robert wrote a successful application for a \$300,000 Federal Millennium Fund Grant to help restore the mansion now known as Paletta Lakefront Park and Mansion. The park has become the jewel in the crown of the city.

In 2004, Robert formed a Student Math Action Research Team (SMART), an Ontario Public Interest Student Research Working Group at McMaster University. The Group's slogan was - "Making mathematics matter more for the environment." In May 2005 Robert gave a SMART presentation at a Natural Resources Canada Adapting to Climate Change Conference in Montreal, and also to the Government of Ontario at Queen's Park. During that time Robert served a 5-year term as a community representative on the OPIRG Board of Directors.

Additional community contributions include:

2010 and 2011 – Organized the 'Art in the Mist' Fine Arts Festival in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

2010 to 2016 – Volunteer for Meals on Wheels Program in Niagara Falls.

2018 to 2019 – Volunteer in the Emergency Room of the Niagara Falls General Hospital (now on hold due to COVID-19)

As a poet, Robert's poems are written from the heart. Robert's words convey goodwill, compassion, respect and justice. Robert's hope is peace for all in a healthy world.

Robert retired in 2008 after a 35-year career in senior purchasing and contract administration roles within the industrial sector. Born in 1948, Robert is 72. Robert has been happily married to his wife Loretta for 49 years. Loretta is an accomplished artist and Robert adds, a wonderful cook.

Due to COVID-19, Robert had to stay home when social distancing protocols were put in place and he could not go to the gym or volunteer at the hospital. With time on his hands, Robert sat in front of his computer and started to write a submission for the Brock University Library, COVID-19 Archive. The request was for people to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences in real-time, and in a novel way, to help people in the near and far future looking for such materials to retell our history. Robert could not resist the opportunity to respond.

His words now translate their importance through a play: "Virus Under the Microscope".

Robert's sister and self-defined amateur wordsmith, Carol Fentiman, has contributed to this submission. Whether it be the change of a word, format of a sentence, or the creation of the "I Tap For You" poem, Carol recognizes what her brother has to say is important for others to hear. Robert has written this play for you. A story of truth. A story of hope. A story everyone can be a part of. What we do now can change the ending. What will you do?



"Please rise up for Goodwill Compassion Respect and Justice and help save the world."

- Robert Hicks