

OCCUPY Wall Street and Prepare for
a Constitutional Convention

Al Fritsch

2011

OCCUPY Wall Street and Prepare for a Constitutional Convention

Occupiers of Wall Street and elsewhere: The message is being heard loud and clear: change is in the air, and Americans and others are getting the courage to speak out about the unspeakable subjects of disparity of wealth, economic class differences between the haves and have-nots, taxes on the rich, and schemes for redistributing wealth havens to those in most need. This message pertains to the right of people to essential services, quality livelihood, and meaningful work opportunities. Furthermore, these are not American problems alone but, rather, an emerging solidarity is forming about people of all lands with their problems and burdens related to a dysfunctional global economic system.

Occupiers make the public aware through a non-violent educational process in basic civics. Over and over comes the message that we will not be overwhelmed and silenced by the powerful commercial interests. We seek a public dialogue about social injustice in all its forms. It is significant that in early November, groups demonstrated near the G-20 meeting in Cannes and others in the tax haven of Monaco (with its ten times the accounts as there are inhabitants in the principality). Finally, the world's have-nots are articulating that the so-called quantitative infinite pie of material wealth simply does not exist, will not be shared without effort, and is inaccessible to a great multitude of people -- except a few with extraordinary football talent or luck at the lottery.

Confrontation with the power elites has begun. This decidedly non-violent approach is not waiting in patience until the wealthy decide to release portions of their loot to the begging public. Democratic process realizes that the powerless must become empowered and reclaim the rightful commons; it is not the domain of the privileged. This uniting triggers a deeper question, how is this wealth obtained and retained when wealth is for the good of all? We must stay focused on the terrible disparity of wealth that has all the ingredients of a tradition that will harm us all damaging democratic process and future hopes.

George Parker¹ lists why inequality is bad for America; it -- mocks America's promise of opportunity; hardens society into a class

system; divides us from one another; makes it harder to imagine the lives of others; corrodes trust among fellow citizens; provokes a generalized anger that finds targets where it can; saps the will to conceive of ambitious solutions to large collective problems; and undermines democracy. Many of these and other reasons are explored in *Reclaiming the Commons*.² All too often the disparity of wealth leads people to despair that they can have a better quality of life and this leads to drug use in our Appalachian region. Unrelenting poverty and lack of promise when one can easily view wealth in the mass media only compounds the frustration of so many of our brothers and sisters. Let's strike while the iron is hot, make hay while the sun shines.

1. The Current System Is Dysfunctional and Needs Change

*The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
and God fulfills himself in many ways,
lest one good custom should corrupt the world.*³

A sense of change in the air goes beyond my home, our community, America, and actually is becoming a shared experience with demonstrators and others throughout the world. Disparity of wealth and its corrupting influence amounts to a plutocracy, which is simply contrary to our American spirit of a true democracy. Patriotism does not include a tolerance of those whose wealth crowds out the resources needed for essential services. Part of a hesitancy to speak out has been the fear of being called "communist," or different, or envious of what others have -- implying a hidden greed for some of the wealthy pot of gold.

However, underneath hesitancy is a social sense when inequality leads to denial of essential needs for many in this world -- and that hurts everyone and makes for an insecure world. ALL on this globe have a right to a livelihood, a chance to exercise one's freedom, and the opportunity to a higher quality of life -- and this is not the domain of the privileged few, the wealthy "nobility" of this or any land. Democracy and plutocracy cannot coexist. To say this is to exercise our democratic right to speak. Emerging is a sense that the unemployed or those denied certain health facilities have equal rights to those exercised by the privileged with sufficient money. The inequality of rampant, unregulated, and ungoverned capitalism, strikes many desiring social justice as a threat to the democratic spirit. All have an equal right to the commons along with the privileged. They would agree that the world's wealth and resources

do not belong to a select few; they also belong to the poor.⁴

Educational and health facilities came from the commons and need to be shared by all, not a private domain of a few. The air and water belong to all; fragile land and oceans belong to all. The airwaves and the silent space are to be enjoyed by all. Health facilities do not belong to a few simply because the laws they helped instigate allow them to retain wealth that ought to be better distributed for those who lack essentials of life. Education should be open to all. Routes, places and means of commerce are to be accessible to the general population. The movement of people to better environments must be a common concern of all the people of the world. The wealthy have no right to control commercial operations, employment, areas of basic research, and ads and mass media.

Thank God, occupiers are willing to question an inherently unfair system that allows excessive capitalism to triumph, to elect leaders, and to determine legislation in their self-interest. However, to declare the current economic and political order to be dysfunctional and worthy of change can only occur through the expressed will of a people who develop viable alternatives, lest the imperfection of the current system is regarded as superior to an untested alternative. The skeptics ask, "Why do Occupiers lack clarity in their objections? If they desire change, change to what." It is as though the unsure future beyond the horizon is not talked about since it is not as certain as privileges possessed. Underlying this is the fear that deeper questions about how the wealth is obtained and retained will be asked.

Analysis of the current situation reveals existing classes, exacerbated by disparity of wealth, involving haves and have-nots. To pretend this does not exist is perverse, something promoted by the wealthy in many ways: the fiction that they have majority approval, that the public knows that by hard work and a little luck they can be part of this nobility, and that they represent the true American spirit -- a dream of wealth for ALL. Furthermore, they believe that the Republic's founders agree.

What Occupiers and others see in being a majority (99%) is the courage to speak, to confront the system, and demand what is due. The uninsured do not need to hop-scotch from one free zone of the Monopoly board to another; the unemployed have a right to a job with a civic duty by elected officials to ensure their livelihood; the ill have a

right to health facilities; young people have a right to affordable education without long-term indebtedness; all have a right to clean air, potable water, and access to silent space and Internet. The series of rights bears simultaneous duties and responsibilities for all economic classes.

We repeat a basic issue, namely, that wealth threatens the democratic spirit. We have been late in mustering the courage to confront excessive capitalism and to do so with the possible bad taste associated with being designated as radicals, dissenters, or worse. Even amid this tardiness in questioning this dysfunctional system, we ought to now focus on two routes, one that has more general agreement (limiting wealth) and one that is still more radical and may lead to more struggle for resolution (a global structure to ensure that limitation). If privilege is confronted, ALL people, even the poor and marginalized, have a chance. The poor folks who are a majority deserve a leading role in change.

Faulting people for taking deliberate time before expressing frustrations is minor compared to an insidious effort to keep the frustrated ones from free assembly and expression. Will repression overcome Occupiers in many parts of this country and abroad? Will the growing and righteous anger and concern lead to a civil and open discourse among people? While the chances are increasing, still one asks the more searching question as to whether legislators will heed the message of the people -- or is the divide between the elected and citizens so great that it does not really matter to Congress members what citizens think? Do the elected (who admit all free time is taken up raising money) even have time apart from their funders to look into questions of limits on wealth? Let us all unite with others and reclaim the commons!

2. Wealth Corrupts; Excessive Wealth Corrupts Excessively

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to abolish or destroy it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Declaration of Independence

Noted economist Jeffrey Sachs, in his recently published and quite informational, creative, and lucid book says, *I have no quarrel with wealth per se* (p. 8). However, some of us do have a quarrel with

wealth and those who control it -- and our numbers are growing. We are more than leftists and include a vast middle range of people who accept small farms and home ownership, of workers with CEOs making 400 times their salaries. Doesn't wealth uncontrolled become excessive and wealth holders tend to corrupt government, pay legislators, buy a political party or two, canonize billionaires (when a billion people throughout the world go hungry), subvert laws, create corporate persons with undue influence, demand lower tax rates, control the media, encourage the have-nots to crave wealth through unrealistic dreams of lottery jackpots, label the prophetic word "sharing" as unpatriotic, and promote an entitlement of wealth nobility deserving of Jefferson's blunt words for King George III?

How privileged nobility can be confronted and changed includes the problem of an uncertain future result. For people with trust in God and faith in a better future this is not a hindrance. Problems take effort to solve but where the stakes are great, this is worth the sweat and tears. Status quo seekers will argue in their controlled media and through their paid "experts" that only a violent future can result from such change; they hark back to the death and destruction of the French and Russian Revolutions, and Chinese Great Leap Forward. However, even in recent times since the dismantling of the USSR and the Arab Spring, the amount of death and destruction may in many instances be minimized or non-existent. Change has no historic pre-set pattern, especially in an age of instant social contact on the part of the great majority.

Violence is not a viable option for the non-violent Occupiers and the great majority. So often violence plays into the hands of those currently holding power (namely the plutocrats in this country and other "developed lands" or the autocrats of some African states). Those in control have access to the mass media and are capable of creating a biased scenario that could be squelched by an efficient police and military force. They can paint a frightening picture that could excite advocates of suppression and violence, and hope those looking for tranquility will agree. The status quo may be more tempted to violent suppression of demonstrations and exciting disorder than Wall Street Occupiers. Even when anarchists smash windows many suspect that is the status quo at work. At times of shortened tempers, the temptation is to strike out; those trained in non-violence have a major part to play at these moments.

Charity is good on a local level of immediate need for the hungry and homeless. At times of upheaval and natural disaster, people

naturally dig into their surplus and even part of what they regard as essential, to share with others. We tend to be humane and help needy neighbors, and virtually every culture and religion encourages this, though some might restrict neighborly assistance to certain related and friendly groups. Charity takes on various interpretations. Those who have the excuse of getting a new wardrobe each year and call the castoffs "charity" are finding excuses. Likewise, "charity" by the wealthy can be a subtle means for control of suppressed groups. It may be an enticement to get others to agree, or it may be a personal effort to gain influence and a notable name. Thus, charity deserves a careful scrutiny.

Non-profit groups can complicate matters further when they cater to the wealthy as sources of funding for their own good causes. Such groups naively regard their own superior causes as a motivational insurance against undue influence by wealthy sources of funds. For them it may even be imperative that they restrict sources of funding to neutral sources, but such neutrality deserves careful discernment, for funder expectations may be quite subtle. Since sources are risky, alternative options for funding ought to be sought, such as earning through activities, or by producing commercial products or services. Another approach is one of extreme efficiency, namely, work with the least funding possible; say "no" up front to wealthy individual donors in general and restrictive sources (both private and public). Multiple small donors are generally more suitable.

The wealthy elite control money and often distribute it at rates resembling a drip-tube in a life-support system. This becomes an exercise of POWER, not of charity. Most of these subtle power brokers retain enough wealth after donations to continue control of the political and economic systems in which they work. Tax deductibility is perhaps outmoded. Asking the wealthy voluntarily to relinquish their treasures is often met with utter disregard, even though the asking is important, for refusal sets the stage for further action. It is hard to distinguish "excessive" wealth for them or others for the possessor always sees a higher sum than they possess as excessive. The challenge is to break the clutch of the wealth that many regard as a reward for virtue. Giving the wealthy a chance to voluntarily relinquish their holdings is praiseworthy but, except for Francis of Assisi and a few others in history, this is a rare and unrealistic expectation.

Taxation of the wealthy is a third route to reclaiming the

commons and breaking the grip of the wealthy. Citizens are called to be responsible participants in a democracy, and to keep this system functioning smoothly and with sufficient resources to meet the legitimate demands of all. Governments enhance the people's welfare through social services, health facilities, and safety protection along with maintaining common infrastructure (everyone needs roads, bridges, airports, etc.). Even libertarians agree to some degree -- though theirs is a minimalist approach with a preference for private takeovers of governmental functions and means of transportation and communication.

What is the reason behind allowing the upper one percent of the population to have the lowest tax rates in the nation? The gross unfairness is a cry of the wealthy nobles for privilege. Is this right? Desiring fair taxes for all, especially the wealthy classes, is preferable to the vast majority of our people by every recent poll. However, desire does not translate into actuality, if the proponents of "No new taxes" continue to hold on to the reins of one branch of government, and the mass media. Furthermore, there is the contested fable that wealth generates jobs. Reality and deliberate change to a more qualitatively viable state not based on GNP must be more than wishful thinking. Face the facts: the forces that include the powerful who have access and thus influence in governmental circles will do all in their power to continue the status quo. There is no guarantee that their paid lobbyists with such influence in Washington, DC will not subvert the weaker and less organized forces seeking fair taxation. The consequences are haunting and daunting.

Even though fair taxes seem so obvious to the majority of citizens, it may be necessary to play devil's advocate and find some possible dangers lurking in the wings. First, the pledge of "no new taxes" by elected legislators is certainly not superior to the demands of office to serve the entire population. This is especially true since several decades of tax cuts have resulted in lower rates for the wealthy, a condition fraught with danger of explosive reaction. Such pledges have no moral content and are disingenuous. The middle class is burdened with taxes along with static salaries, threats of underwater housing, higher costs of living, uncertainty about the economic future, and escalating educational and health bills. "No new taxes" angers many when a wealthy one percent prospers, and disparity of wealth escalates.

Mere fair taxes may not give the full answer to defining "fairness." Should the super-wealthy retain residual wealth after

paying similar rates to the middle or working poor? Mere fair taxes may not solve a dysfunctional economic system, nor can it be effected by a dysfunctional Congress (half millionaires), who's members may look too often to special interests of contributors. Violent revolution and voluntary surrender of wealth are not suitable or realistic options. Isn't the need for global rather than national regulations? Today globalized wealth flows from one nation to another. Limiting wealth in one country simply leads to the exodus of that wealth to another -- as the UK has found out in attempting to tax its financial people. Ease in money movement has led to tax havens both at home and in distant mini-states. The challenge is to create a global mechanism to prevent this unregulated flow of globally mobile wealth.

3. Progressives and a Constitutional Convention

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to the Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of the Constitution, when ratified by three fourths of the Legislatures of the several states, or by Conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress. **Article V, U.S. Constitution**

Ought we to tinker with the Constitution, or is this a sacrosanct document? What about reading the Declaration of Independence as something that could be useful today or is it solely a historic document? Are there comparable situations between what occurred in Revolutionary War times and what is happening today? These questions haunt us in our dysfunctional society.

In all fairness, Tea Party advocates sounded the first alarm and called for change in imitation of early American revolutionaries. However, the ire of the Tea Party directed to government alone and without attention to the total picture of either period is disingenuous. All of us, including tea party folks must see the connection between the British government and the East India Company (the first multinational corporation), which owned the tea thrown into the bay. The relationship of misused power by public AND private entities at that time would be helpful in considering our present situation. With a more objective view of what is occurring now, we see that a partnership of private super-rich and public protective government form a single target of our concern, not simply a naive and libertarian attention to governmental diminishment and neglect of the disparity

of wealth.

Our intention must be to obtain a profound change of the present situation, not a mere tweaking of an outdated economic system in partnership with government. This route takes us to limiting wealth in such means as are necessary for bringing about fairness and equality to all. This harks back to the 1787 Constitutional Convention in which elder statesman Ben Franklin proposed the limitation of wealth. Franklin had previously favored at the Pennsylvania constitutional convention a radical proposal that officeholders did not have to own property. One *ultra-democratic proposal Franklin made to the Pennsylvania convention was that the state's Declaration of Rights discourage large holdings of property or concentrations of wealth... That also ended up being too radical for the state convention.*⁵ In a similar fashion, the 1787 national convention containing delegates who were mostly property holders, politely dismissed Franklin's proposal to limit wealth as senile talk. Has its time now come?

Is the current situation similar to the first American Revolution? Only to some degree. The lack of fair taxation due to the current influence of wealthy "nobles" has a similar cast. However, these times now require still a more perfect union than the joining of scattered colonies. America must work together with other independent nations lest the excessive wealth will shift to havens abroad. The nature of that more perfect union is still indefinite (whether United Nations or another global system), but its need is clearly felt. In an age of globalization and facile wealth transfer from one part of the world to another, the wealthy will simply take a plane to the Cayman Islands and their wealth with them. The speed, complexity, and hidden nature of global financial transactions transcend national sources of wealth. Havens beyond national regulations are legalized pirates' nests.

Constitutional changes seem necessary to deal with modern situations. Our nation must act multilaterally. At the same time, the risk in changing our sacred Constitution frightens some people. Certainly, the many good basic elements and amendments of the existing Constitution ought to be retained, though some differences in tenure of office and separation of powers may need addressing. Guaranteed quality of life may result in including the time-honored goal of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" with some further precise language. Certainly, persons who enjoy such benefits should NOT include the Corporations. Persons have rights through their birth; corporations have existence at the will of the people, for they

are creatures of the state. No corporation has ever gone to jail for irresponsible acts.

Is it proper to permit CEOs, celebrities, and others to have salaries that suit each of their egos and luck? Should not a reformed Constitution, in Franklin's way of seeing things, reach an arbitrarily set wealth limit, and return the remainder of newly acquired wealth to the commons? It's not what one earns per se that is problematic, but rather what wealth one retains. However, government imposed limits for the common good could be on both earnings and retained wealth. In fact, no one retains material wealth after death -- though we may say that acquired qualitative wealth (love) carries over past the great divide.

For some discussion of wealth please download free of charge from this website our unfinished work in progress, *Reclaiming the Commons: Taking what is Rightfully Ours*. Addressing the disparity of wealth is at the heart of the environmental as well as the financial crises, and all citizens must be willing to accept the responsibility for meaningful change. Longer-range citizen political action is as necessary today as in the 1770s -- and we have far better means of communication through Internet and its social interaction. The call is for a deeper sense of patriotism.

Efforts at addressing the disparity of wealth through the rule of law are a continuation of our democratic process. American efforts limiting wealth could incorporate two major insights: the Washington concern and the Lincoln insight. George Washington came to realize with other revolutionaries that thirteen independent colonies would not address commercial and safety needs; these united states (colonies) must become THE United States for furthering commerce. That was an emerging Washington insight first seen during the Revolutionary War, growing in conviction during the interim period before the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and solidified during his eight-year presidency. True to the tradition of our founders, we must be willing to surrender certain national sovereignty for global structures, not to remain isolated.

In a similar manner, Abraham Lincoln realized that our nation could not continue to exist half slave and half free. Extending this insight, one realizes that a safe and prosperous world cannot exist with haves and have-nots. Americans must be first in calling for efficient governing structures to handle global issues beyond that of single or groups of nations. Along with others, the United States must

work to overcome the dichotomies of wealth -- the source of global insecurity and distrust -- and we must aspire to be number one, not in a quantitative role of producer or user of goods, but as a leader in being willing to unite with others.

Poverty is a form of enslavement for many, the have-nots. It is our sacred duty to lead in freeing the world from poverty. The global regulations must include all areas of the commons: air, water, specific land areas, health facilities, educational opportunities, intellectual property and communication networks, silent space, commerce, and movement of people. Our national interest in these matters must transcend our borders and go out to all the world. Thus, emerging global structures must address the financial, personal security, care-giving, nuclear warfare, and the environmental crises of our age.

Wildlife such as migratory birds and whales as well as land-based flora and fauna deserve special protection. Due to climate change, efforts to replace fossil fuels by renewable energy are a global mandate. Food security through strategic storage facilities and encouraging small farm enterprise is a necessity as the world population climbs beyond seven billion. Mechanisms to redistribute the estimated 11- to 14-trillion-dollar tax haven loot to agencies working on basic needs such as food and lodging is becoming more pressing. Global problems demand attention while conservatives are pressing for a balanced budget, restrictions on immigrants, English as a national language, and other issues, but not on limiting wealth. Limitation deserves BOTH public and private perusal.

Limiting wealth will not be easy, for the wealthy will aggressively seek to dissuade any such movement. However, proper political education could lead to a democratic selection of delegates for a constitutional convention (Con Con). Tom Deweese⁷ tells his conservative friends in no uncertain terms that a Con Con is uncontrollable. In his essay, he fears the influence of a potential Obama, Pelosi, and Reid crowd. Deweese takes to task the wishful thinking of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a group promoting Con Con to different state legislatures. Also he criticizes POLICOM president, William Fruth, and a group called "10 Amendments for Freedom," and their aggressive mailings to over 7000 state legislators.⁸ Apart from certain conservative cautions, the urgency of our times mandate a Con Con to prepare us to lead a proper globalized regulatory framework.

A Con Con is no more risky than continuing the present situation;

disparity of wealth grows and the have-nots become ever more restless. True, one cannot predict the mix of designated delegates; however, with proper ground rules they will not be controlled by money interests while in session -- provided the lobbyists are excluded. Furthermore, delegates to the Con Con are free to ignore a pre-set agenda. History tells us that a formulated agenda by those at the Articles of the Confederation to 1787 delegates was ignored. Delegates were and could be again free agents. If fear arises, at least the final outcome must be ratified by the states. A more progressive viewpoint is not to ignore state legislatures, but to influence them.

In support of a Con Con recall that the period before such an event would be ideal for educating our nation in American civics and world regulatory needs. This period of discussion would broaden the electorate -- provided the delegates are chosen according to a fair electoral process. Delegates who understand the gravity of the situation will feel a duty to back all the people and not special interests (provided lobbyists be excluded from the Con Con assembly). Questions of not allowing foreign cultures to impose their law within our land could be countered by not permitting individuals from within or from without our borders to oppress others through their wealth. Regulations must protect all from BOTH public and private sources of oppression.

The Con Con will be an entity unto itself, provided it is isolated like a closed jury (expert witnesses may have to be called). In taking on its own life, compromise will be an important component of deliberations. The delegates will realize that they must work with each other, and do so apart from the reinforcing hype of the media. All things equal, progressives have a power to persuade the assembled delegates that globalization calls for broader changes that must be met. Limits on governmental power will be balanced with limits on wealth by private individuals and groups. Without limits to both, our democracy will suffer. In many ways, a democratically elected and uninfluenced Con Con may be our last best chance to limit wealth while limiting government. Some argue that social addiction influences all Americans including delegates. Pre-Con Con sessions must address this problem area.

It will hearten some to remember that Con Con decisions will not automatically become law. In fact, the final product must be ratified by 38 states. The structure of the final document will have to reflect the competing demands of delegates -- hardly more challenged than the South/North slavery divide in 1787. Let's pray that good leaders

will be able to create an acceptable document.

Now We Must Hasten Change

Critical moments are opportunities for those who seize the moment and do not deny it, excuse themselves from responsibility, or seek escape from difficulties to a fictional world. Our nation is at this critical moment and, while many have said or written about it in the past, the public outcry raised by Tea Party folks and the alarm has spread across the land. The Arab Spring and the Madrid demonstrators led to Occupy Wall street fever that spread like an epidemic through the world. For people steeped in the democratic tradition, disparity of wealth has become intolerable and is perceived as the cause of the financial and environmental crises. The global movement's outcome is uncertain. The issue is how to hasten change or act as catalytic agents without losing patience -- for even rapid change takes time and effort. The focus question is whether a constitutional convention should be a vehicle of change in this country -- and how we prepare for such a dramatic event.

Six initial steps (not exhaustive) should include:

- * Welcome in a wide range of participants provided they are willing to help bring about positive change. Do not forget the poor, the homebound, the unemployed the military, prisoners, the working poor, the uninsured, and the homeless.

- * Question candidates for political office and contest their association with wealthy donors and power brokers. While remaining civil, at least be forceful for principles held.

- * Confront the inherent dangers of the prevailing social addiction to our global consumer culture; the associated economic incentives must be clearly perceived by all, and efforts made to see the merits of quantitative downsizing introduced and discussed for the sake of more radical global sharing of resources.

- * Challenge false economics that touts a larger material pie that all can carve into -- if they have access to the carving knife known of the wealthy and privileged. An alternative and fresh economics of people participation (sustainability or solidarity) involves qualitative growth that fosters literacy, sharing resources, mutual support, reduced competition, caring for the elderly and disabled, and food and lodging security.

* Accept and work with those striving for social justice on many fronts: racial, religious, cultural, and countercultural. However, be watchful and undeterred by one-issue social reformers for fear of fracturing those working on limiting wealth.

* Stay spiritually refreshed and prepared for the long haul through celebration with like-minded individuals and groups who see a Higher Power at work, and are willing to be grateful for the insight and energy to act here and now.

Discussion Points

Occupiers deserve to reflect on these further points:⁹

1. Express the basic right of all people to life. This includes the basic right to health, both of the individual and of the entire community, including all creatures on this planet.

2. Promote a realistic dream that all our sisters and brothers on this planet will go to bed tonight with a full belly under a decent roof and with basic security. We cannot allow our nighttime dreams to wither in the daylight of reality.

3. Encourage the democratic process, wherein all participate in determining their own destiny and through which they can assist in taking what is rightfully the commons belonging to all in a non-violent manner.

4. Champion equal opportunity for work and for earning a living, with the government as ultimate employer.

5. Create Global Development Funds to alleviate world hunger, lack of housing, and major health problems.

6. Restrict incomes to a set amount dependent to some degree on the cultural conditions of the place, thus an "excess" tax on the wealthy. This helps to overcome the disparity of wealth.

7. Tithe the military budgets and comparable amounts from other rich nations for emerging and poorer nations. The peace dividend could become additive over time with increased security.

8. Promote a spiritual profit-motivation by discouraging a material profit motivation -- for, in this needy world, material profits for some are at the expense of others. Support non-profit organizations as examples of what the entire world can become.

9. Tax excessive wealth so that there are limits to what individuals can retain. At the same time reduce the tax burden on lower-income people, but retain taxes on luxury items and on items and practices linked to substance abuse such as alcohol, tobacco, and tanning salons. This includes removing tax havens for the wealthy through concerted global efforts -- and redistributing this wealth to those in genuine need.

10. Organize local groups to discuss these matters and to prepare them for the eventuality of being possible delegates to a future Constitutional Convention.

Endnotes

1. Albert Fritsch, *"Reclaiming the Commons: Taking What Is Rightfully Ours"*, Brassica Books, 2011.

2. George Parker, "The Broken Contract: Inequality and American Decline," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2011 (p. 31).

3. "The Passing of Arthur" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

4. Quotation from Pope Benedict XVI in general audience on September 7, 2007 as reported on that day by the Catholic News Service.

5. Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The Price of Civilization*, Random Books, 2011, p.8.

6. Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), p. 315.

7. <<http://www.thenewamerican.com/opinion/967-tom-deweese/>>.

8. Amendments include: the balanced budget, repay the national debt in fifty years, government transparency, line-item veto, term limits for Congress,

control illegal immigration, English-speaking foreign law should bind us, preventing government from growth beyond constitutional powers, and declaration "In God we trust."

9. Albert Fritsch, *The Little Blue Book*, Brassica Books, 2011.