

UTOPIA: Space Philosophy and Reality

By Bob Krone, PhD

In the first issue of the Journal of Space Philosophy, Article 8, Fall 2012 (www.keplerspaceuniversity.com), we included a philosophy designed by the Board of Directors of Kepler Space Institute, titled “*PHILOSOPHY FOR SPACE: Learning from the Past – Visions for the Future.*” This is a follow-up article.

The summary of the philosophy we proposed in the Fall 2012 issue was:

“REVERENCE FOR LIFE WITHIN ETHICAL CIVILIZATION”¹

Why Reverence for Life within Ethical Civilization? Reverence for life is the foundational purpose that will sustain humankind in perpetuity. Ethical civilization will be the environment facilitating that end. The Policy Sciences hold the solutions for creating ethical and successful civilizations. These are the three essential foundation blocks of *The Philosophy for the Space Age*. Building these three basics will produce the highest probability for successful Space exploration, development, and human settlements plus the capture of Space resources for humankind’s needs on Earth and in Space within *The Law of Space Abundance*. Failure to build any one of these building blocks will destine humankind to permitting similar, or worse, mistakes and catastrophes than those that have plagued Earth’s societies throughout history. This is global leadership’s major challenge for the 21st Century.²

This follow-up article asks the question: “*Isn’t that Utopian thinking?*”

The best source for Utopian thinking is the classic book by England’s Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), *Utopia*, which was first published in 1517.³ It portrays an imaginary, ideal commonwealth in the early 16th Century. It has been studied for five hundred years. Why did Thomas More choose to create what he well knew was an ideal – and at the time impossible – social-political system? The short answer is “*Political Feasibility.*” Political Feasibility is the probability that your recommendations will be accepted by

¹ The author acknowledges profound respect for the life’s work of two classic scholars: 1) Dr. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), the 100th anniversary of whose publication of *The Philosophy of Civilization* will occur in February, 2023; and 2) Professor Yehezkel Dror (1928-present), the Co-Founder and primary scholar of *The Policy Sciences*.

² This formula for the Philosophy of The Space Age can be the launch pad for an infinite set of intellectual creations that define its execution in detail. For the purpose of this essay, I will focus on the philosophy of Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) for reverence for life and the Policy Sciences of Yehezkel Dror (1928-present) for the governance guidance. Philosophy and Policy Sciences encompass huge literature sources available to Space Community scholars. The purpose of this essay is to stimulate interest and to launch research. That will be done with general concepts and basic design, not with detailed justification.

³ Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1965; first publication Paris: Gilles de Gourmont, 1517).

leadership.⁴ As the 16th Century began, European society's greed, decadence, the profligacy of the nobility – both political and religious – and the complete insensitivity of leadership to the misery and oppression of the poor had spawned Humanism. Humanism was a literary, scientific, and ideological movement, championed by Erasmus, that captured Thomas More. It has had a profound influence on global society ever since. Humanism was fundamentally Christian and challenged the educational system, the social conditions, and the authenticity of England and Western Europe's leadership. More's *Utopia* was a formidable reform document, but More realized that overt attacks on the existing leadership would be self-destructive. So, he created a completely imaginary future social-political system answering his own question: "*How is a wise man to seek remedies for the evils that he sees round him?*" He did it so well that leadership did not consider his work fiction and demanded that he, as Chancellor, sanction the Act of Supremacy. That Act was designed to preserve existing evils. More refused and was executed for treason on July 6, 1535. Political feasibility and More's convictions could not both be met.

So, is our design of a philosophy for the future of humans in Space a 21st Century repeat of Thomas More's *Utopia*? Is the expectation of Space settlements being based on a universal reverence for life and on ethical civilization as remote as the fundamentals of Humanism were to 16th- and 17th-century life? Viewing today's human existence on Earth reveals huge obstacles. But, we act on the belief that: "*When in doubt, choose optimism, then manage wisely to achieve a self-fulfilling prophecy.*" Pessimism is pathological. If a vision is for failure, failure will be the self-fulfilling prophecy.

We base our optimism on the characteristics of the modern Space Age, which have never existed on Earth. Discovery, science, technology, and invention have been persistent drivers of progress for humankind throughout history. The motives and applications of those discoveries and inventions reflect variations of good and evil. They are reasons for positive reversal from the pessimism existing in the 16th century. Christianity made the important change from antiquity's view of morality being that which is profitable and pleasurable to the belief that to be ethical and moral requires action promoting the welfare of others.

Another evolution of human thought was that individual action could produce gains, while passive inaction stalled progress. That thought took hold with some in the 18th Century. Since then that characteristic has grown to the point where discovery and invention occur not by decades or years, not by months or weeks, but now in the 21st century even within nanoseconds. Society is exponentially changing, producing paradigm shifts and making accurate predictions for the future less probable.

⁴ There are two Robert Krone journal publications on Political Feasibility: Robert M. Krone, "Political Feasibility and Military Decision-making," *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* 9 (Spring 1981): 49-60; Robert M. Krone, "Political Feasibility and the Manager," *The Bureaucrat* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1981/1982): 17-21.

The tragedies of history have occurred when ethical and moral thinking for the reverence for life was replaced by motives of power, control, manipulation, greed, and genocide. The 21st Century has begun without the eradication of human actions that can cause catastrophic events. Science and technology have brought humankind to the place where human behavior has an increasing capability of effecting human extinction. When the ethical foundation is lacking, most individuals, groups, governments, and corporations self-destruct and fail. Some survive for devastatingly long periods, like the Third Reich in Germany. But, Albert Schweitzer was right – without a foundation in ethics and reverence for life, civilization collapses.

There must be a natural life-affirmation, support, or endowment in human nature that has installed in humankind the will to live, to survive, to expand, to learn, and to progress. Without that in its genes, humankind would have gone extinct before now. Does the predominance of humankind's belief in progress both cause and continue discovery and invention? Is the satisfaction we feel from that action an important part of philosophy of life? We believe that evidence supports a "Yes" answer.

What has been missing too often in decision cultures is the inclusion of an ethical and moral foundation. Earth residents suffered human-caused catastrophes throughout the 20th century. Contemplate the results if those resources consumed could have been used to discover ways to prevent or ameliorate disease, hunger, poverty, or natural threats to humankind originating from our planet or from Space. Terribly unfortunate choices were made that were void of *Reverence for Life within Ethical Civilization*.

Policy Sciences Provides Solutions

Are we being naively optimistic and Utopian? How can *Reverence for Life within Ethical Civilization* be achieved in a world of diverse beliefs, values, conflicts, and visions? Doesn't the fact that it has never been universally adopted mean it is impossible?

Kepler Space Institute's answer is "**No. That is not an inevitable conclusion. Our World is radically changed, the universe holds the solution, and finding those solutions has high probability in 2013.**"

Ninety years after Albert Schweitzer's 1914 to 1917 writings in Africa were published, everything is different. Today ideas need not take decades to reach the public. They happen today with the speed of light. Science and technology have begun the Space Age, with humans experiencing Space for the last fifty years and now planning life in Earth orbit, on the Moon, and on Mars. Humankind's view of Planet Earth has been transformed.⁵

⁵ The best description of the worldview change due to the Space Age is by Frank White with his 1987 book, *The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution* (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987).

The Policy Sciences have captured intelligence for completely new governance systems. Jonas Salk described the way in 1973 with his book *The Survival of the Wisest*.⁶ Professor Yehezkel Dror, in the preface to his book *The Capacity to Govern: Report to the Club of Rome*,⁷ states, “Radical redesign of governance is, therefore, required; otherwise, increasing social costs, even existence-threatening failures, are unavoidable.” I invited Professor Dror to write a chapter in *Beyond Earth: The Future of Humans in Space*. His Chapter 5, “Governance for a Human Future in Space” was his first extrapolation of his life’s research and extensive writings into Space. He begins that chapter with the sentence: “New forms of governance are essential for engaging in moving humanity beyond Earth.”⁸ Dror describes humanity moving into a radically novel new epoch where living in Space is only one of its features. He sees that epoch as having a tremendous potential for better or worse:

On all of these levels much attention needs to be given to governance, because without restructuring governance, the movement of humanity into Space will remain a dream or, even worse, may take the form of nightmares becoming a dismal reality.

It’s a recognized fact that humanity is entering a radically new epoch in which, for the first time in history, it has the power to destroy itself, by deliberate or unintended action. To prevent grievous harm resulting from this power and to use it for the better, radical improvements in critical future-shaping actors, processes, and institutions are essential, especially in the moral and cognitive qualities of rulers. And that fact is why we have included “*within Ethical Civilization*” in our proposed Kepler Space Institute Philosophy for the Space Age.

On April 21, 2008 Astrophysicist Stephen Hawking called for an era of Space conquest stating:

Spreading out into Space will have an even greater effect than Christopher Columbus’ discovery of the New World. It will completely change the future of the human race and maybe determine whether we have any future at all.

⁶ Jonas Salk, *Survival of the Wisest* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973). Dr. Salk, who gave us the solution for polio, gives us the macro social solution for humankind. He states that human evolution is transforming from the survival of the fittest to the survival of the wisest in a manner similar to curves A and B of a Bell shaped curve. Human intellect and imagination will play the vital role for survival and evolution. Wisdom, as a new kind of strength, is a paramount necessity. Jonas saw individual and societal learning as the way to overcome barriers restricting the transformation to the survival of the wisest. With this essay Kepler Space Institute adds a new path to facilitate the evolution he prescribed in 1973.

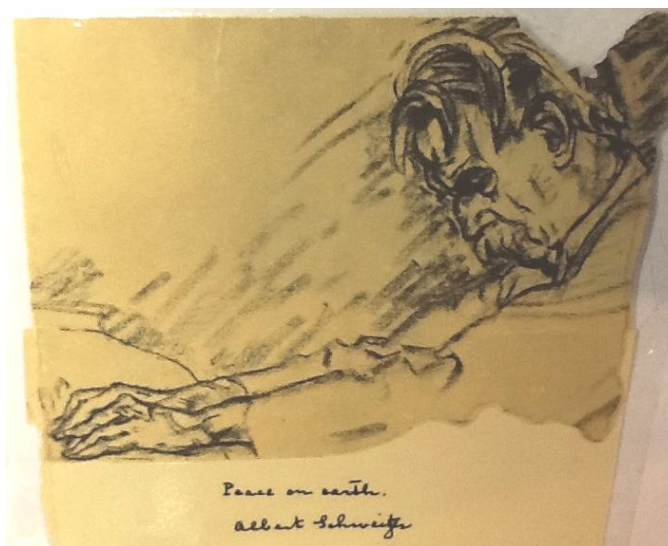
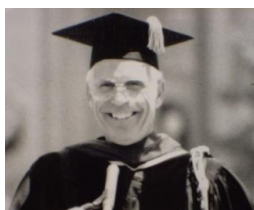
⁷ (London: F. Cass, 1994; 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge, 2001).

⁸ Yehezkel Dror, “Governance for a Human Future in Space,” Chapter 5 in Bob Krone, ed., *Beyond Earth: The Future of Humans in Space* (Toronto, ON: Apogee Space Press, 2006), 41-45. Bob Krone and Yehezkel Dror have been professional colleagues since 1969.

The reality in 2013 is that the belief that Earth's humankind is in such a fatal decline that reverse thinking is Utopian, is wrong. We came from the heavens. "We are Star Stuff."⁹ Answers lie in *Beyond Earth: The Future of Humans in Space*. Will decision-makers have the wisdom to create the research that finds those answers?¹⁰

Copyright © 2013, Bob Krone. All rights reserved.

About the Author: Dr. Bob Krone is Co-Founder and Provost of Kepler Space Institute and Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Space Philosophy*. His 17-page Curriculum Vitae can be found at www.bobkrone.com/node/103.



⁹ See "The Philosophy of Carl Sagan", article 15 in this Fall 2013 issue of *The Journal of Space Philosophy*.

¹⁰ See Space Research, article 17 in this Fall 2013 issue of *The Journal of Space Philosophy*.