DECALOGUE FOR A PLANET IN IMMINENT PERIL

Live simply that others may simply live.  Quaker Proverb

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a Decalogue is a “fundamental set of rules having authoritative weight.” This Decalogue is basically a reminder to me of the ethical/moral relationship I aspire to have with the biosphere and all its components.

(1) I will not cease efforts to protect and restore the biosphere, even in the context of bad news about its condition.
(2) I will not willingly engage in unsustainable practices, no matter how many people espouse them.
(3) I will do everything in my power to avoid contributing to either ecological overshoot or ecological deficits.
(4) Nothing relieves me of the responsibility for leaving a habitable planet for posterity and for other life forms.
(5) I must continually confront the ethical/moral question: “Which of my actions promote biospheric integrity and health- which do not?”
(6) I fear not for the future of life on Earth – at least until the sun becomes a red star. I do fear serious disruption of the planet’s evolutionary processes.
(7) I fear not that present irresponsible and unethical behavior is a threat to civilization and even the human species. I affirm that I will act responsibly to the best of my ability.
(8) I pledge to use less fossil sunlight since the post-peak-oil era that humankind is now entering is a serious threat to both civilization and the planet. Coal is a dangerous substitute for petroleum. Biofuels raise the price of food (e.g., corn), endangering the over 800,000 people the United Nations reports are starving.
(9) I will seek to understand and pay attention to nature’s warnings and lead a life that is harmonious with natural systems and the species that comprise them.
(10) Since the survival of humankind has depended upon the continuation of the conditions provided by the biospheric life support system (BLSS) for the 160,000 years humans have lived on Earth, I will do everything in my power to preserve the BLSS in its present form. If the effort fails, I am prepared to accept that Darwin’s dice will roll again.

This is a first attempt to express what has been on my mind since the climate change, energy, and population crises made the present situation the worst emergency Homo sapiens has encountered. I do not think the Decalogue should be lengthy, but suggestions for improvement are welcome.

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