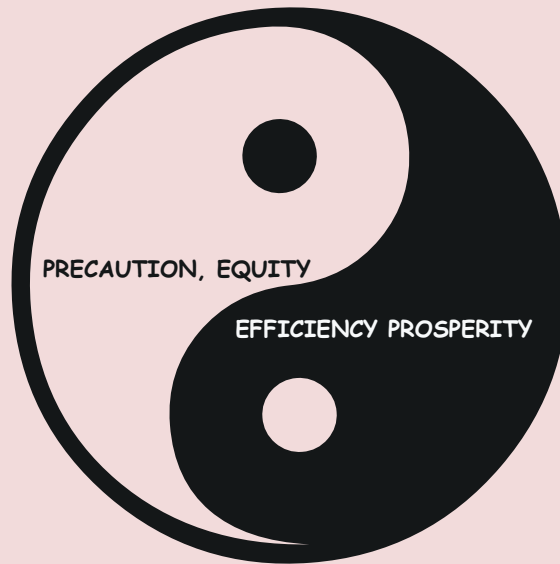


The Tao says: - 'from one comes two, from two comes three and from three come the ten thousand things.'



The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism in the lights of climate change

1. **There is a problem**
global climate change is a global problem.
2. **There is a cause of the problem**
systemically driven over-consumption & inequality are the cause of the problem.
3. **The problem can be overcome**
a global solution is needed to overcome the global problem.
4. **There is a way to overcome the problem**
a global framework for "*Contraction and Convergence*" structured on: -
 - One: **Precaution**
global contraction of carbon emissions,
 - Two: **Equity**
global convergence to equal per capita shares of this contraction,
 - Three: **Efficiency**
global emissions trading of these shares to ease transition costs to,
 - Four: **Prosperity by other means**
zero-emissions life-style and techniques,

in this order, is 'equity and survival'.

This is the way to overcome the problem.

Author's Note - I've never been anything other than a musician. How I ended up devising a global policy concept at UN climate negotiations for the last ten years is still a bit of a mystery to me. But a clue is that both writing and playing music are largely about wholeness and the principled distribution of 'effort' or practice. Responding to the climate challenge seems much like writing or playing music, where balance on the axes of reason and feeling, time and space, can only come from internal consistency. If practice is unprincipled there is no coordination and there is discord. When it is principled, there is balance, harmony and union. Perhaps all life aspires to the condition of music.

Ten years ago, I was feeling crushed and frightened by the realisation that humanity's pollution was destroying the future by changing the global climate. A sympathetic friend told me I wasn't being 'Zen' enough. I didn't know what he meant, had a good laugh and then decided he must be right.

So I went to the UN just as the negotiations began to create the Climate Convention. There I discovered tensions between Taoists, Marxists, economists, musicians and other human beings. This was only just funny enough, often enough, to rescue me from the powerlessness and despair that otherwise captures those who are not being Zen enough at the UN, or anywhere else. 'Being Zen' probably means caring, but enough to grasp reality by letting go of 'duality'.

The 'equity and survival' case argued at the UN tries to express this through 'Contraction and Convergence'. This starts from the oneness of the global picture and creates a framework with subdivision by principle. The precautionary principle is about survival. It says we have to unite in order to try and prevent damages and death from dangerous climate changes. This recognises the singular purpose or 'one-ness'. That is the Convention's 'objective'. That is why humanity created it. The equity principle says this must be fair across time and space between people in very different situations. This recognises 'two-ness' and shows the need to keep the feedback between ourselves and the earth in balance. It also recognises that the practice that flows from these principles of responsibility must be flexible and responsive rather than rigid. This is the 'three-ness' but is only a product of the responsibilities and the rights created by oneness and twoness. And then, and only then, come the 'ten thousand things' of prosperity in the traditional goals of life, health and happiness with harmony in all these because we have united to prevent damages and do no harm.

So C&C is a globalisation of consciousness and creates an internally consistent view of what has happened and what needs to be done. So it is a framework for organising our efforts to prevent global death and damage costs from climate changes rising out of control. This reflects the UN Convention. However, when we have failed to unite around these principles and pursue instead analysis of the 'costs and benefits' amid the noise of the 'ten thousand things', a divisive almost paranoid picture emerges ending up with the randomness of unresolved quarrels and guesswork.

Working this way is not illuminating and encourages people to see preventing the damages and death as less important than preventing the pollution that is causing them. Sadly the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention reflects this approach.

This global conflict between the one and the many is at the heart of the policy quarrel. The effort recalled here has been about resolving the tension between this one over-riding purpose of damage prevention and the 'ten thousand' protests' this has raised. It has been about transforming the friction between framework and guesswork back to this purpose.

While I hope this Briefing will appeal to the hearts and minds of a wide range of people, writing about C&C for a potentially diverse readership has been difficult. This is because, although we are all in the same boat in relation to climate change, we live in and see very different parts of it. Try addressing an audience made up of the anxious, the agnostic, sybarites and over-worked mothers. Then there's academia, 'policy makers' and bureaucracy. How do you persuade them, and especially the economists among them, about anything, let alone the logic of global equity in climate policy or letting go of guesswork? With honourable exceptions, those in a position to develop a response to the threat have chosen to remain captive to the very forces that now threaten us. Rather than seeking to calm the global climate, they have sought to calm us instead with mere economic management dogma. And while some of these have preened and quibbled, islands are threatened by rising seas and more and more people die from droughts, floods and other extreme events.

If this makes you just want to run away, I do too. But where do we go? Al Gore says to solve the problem we have to 'step out of the box'. But once again, step out into what? If this Briefing succeeds in making the case for C&C, staying means joining the effort for equity and survival. Both morally and logically, equity simply won't be unglued from survival and survival from equity. As in a marriage, the two are one. In fact, you can look at the UN climate negotiations as just a little haggle over an ante-nuptial contract in the shot-gun marriage that climate change forces on us all.

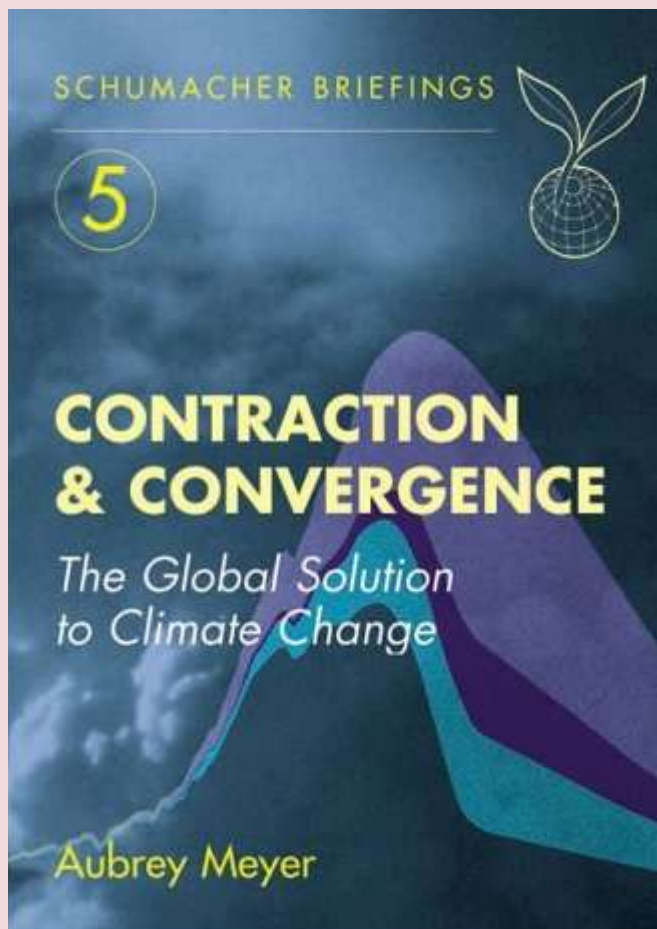
We have seen the future. We have the idea. We have to make an effective deal. If the right framework is adopted there can be a new growth of economic opportunity where prosperity is achieved by greener means for greener ends. This will necessarily involve all sorts of guesswork but within a framework that keeps us secure.

As another expression of Indian philosophy - the 'Yoga Sutras' of Patanjali - says, *'Heyam duhkam anagatam'*.

The pain that has not yet come can be avoided.

Aubrey Meyer, October 2000.

From Contraction & Convergence, the Global Solution to Climate Change



Review

"If you read only one book on climate change - its past and future, politics and solutions - read this one. This is the global picture and the key to a global solution." - **Tom Spencer, Professor of Global Governance, University of Surrey & President, GLOBE International 1994-99**

"Man-made climate change is probably the most serious environmental threat we face. This book offers interesting and useful ideas exploring the concept of 'Contraction and Convergence' as one way to address the global climate challenge." - Michael Meacher, UK Minister for Environment "It is clear that urgent action is called for not only by government and industry but also by ourselves. If our lives are to be conducted according to principles of conscience and survival, we cannot continue to evade our responsibility on this portentous issue. I can think of no better investment of time and no more effective means of jolting people out of their complacency on the ramifications of global warming than by reading this remarkable book."

Mayer Hillman, Town & Country Planning Feb 2001

Powerful, persuasive and fuelled by compassion 27 Jun 2001

By A Customer

Human-induced climate change is the greatest environmental threat today. Rising to this terrible challenge means overturning the global apartheid between rich and poor. For example, the United States, with a twentieth of the world's population, usurps a quarter of the global

atmosphere to dump its pollution. Such inequity motivates this book's author: Aubrey Meyer, a musician who grew up in South Africa. In 1990, Meyer helped found the London-based Global Commons Institute to promote a simple and powerful concept that may yet break the deadlock of climate negotiations.

Simply put, everyone in the world has an equal right to emit greenhouse gas emissions. First, take the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change figure of 60 per cent cuts to stabilise global atmospheric carbon dioxide levels by 2100. Second, calculate the level of pollution each nation should be allowed. The book's eye-catching computer graphics illustrate past emissions and future allocation of emissions by country, achieving per capita equality by 2030. Emissions thereafter fall to reach safe levels by 2100. Climate damage will still result, but disaster should be averted. Global emissions trading of per capita shares will ease transition costs to a zero-emissions lifestyle, Meyer argues.

This 'contraction and convergence' (C&C) framework has gathered the support of a majority of the world's countries, including China and India. It may be the only approach that developing countries are willing to accept. That, in turn, may spur even the US to ratify the Kyoto protocol. However, Meyer warns that the 'sub-global framework' of the protocol with its 'guesswork' of market mechanisms and 'inadequate' cuts 'could prove worse than useless' because the public would be lulled into a false sense of security 'that something is at last being done'. Meyer's argument is powerful, fuelled by compassion for the poor.

The crux of the matter is whether grassroots support for global equity will defeat the powerful elite interests that currently enjoy the status quo. As one US delegate put it: 'We won the Cold War. Contraction & Convergence is Communism!'

Communism or not, accepting C&C would require that the developed world eschews dirty economic growth. If global weather-related damage continues its present trend of doubling every 7 years, then by around 2050 the costs of climate change could exceed the total value of everything that humanity produced over one year. Has global capitalism finally destroyed itself by its own success? Let's hope so.

Human-induced climate change is the greatest environmental threat today. Rising to this terrible challenge means overturning the global apartheid between rich and poor. For example, the United States, with a twentieth of the world's population, usurps a quarter of the global atmosphere to dump its pollution. Such inequity motivates this book's author: Aubrey Meyer, a musician who grew up in South Africa. In 1990, Meyer helped found the London-based Global Commons Institute to promote a simple and powerful concept that may yet break the deadlock of climate negotiations.

Simply put, everyone in the world has an equal right to emit greenhouse gas emissions. First, take the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change figure of 60 per cent cuts to stabilise global atmospheric carbon dioxide levels by 2100. Second, calculate the level of pollution each nation should be allowed. The book's eye-catching computer graphics illustrate past emissions and future allocation of emissions by country, achieving per capita equality by 2030. Emissions thereafter fall to reach safe levels by 2100. Climate damage will still result, but disaster should be averted. Global emissions trading of per capita shares will ease transition costs to a zero-emissions lifestyle, Meyer argues.

This 'contraction and convergence' (C&C) framework has gathered the support of a majority of the world's countries, including China and India. It may be the only approach that developing countries are willing to accept. That, in turn, may spur even the US to ratify the Kyoto protocol. However, Meyer warns that the 'sub-global framework' of the protocol with its 'guesswork' of market mechanisms and 'inadequate' cuts 'could prove worse than useless' because the public would be lulled into a false sense of security 'that something is at last being done'. Meyer's argument is powerful, fuelled by compassion for the poor.

The crux of the matter is whether grassroots support for global equity will defeat the powerful elite interests that currently enjoy the status quo. As one US delegate put it: 'We won the Cold War. Contraction & Convergence is Communism'!

Communism or not, accepting C&C would require that the developed world eschews dirty economic growth. If global weather-related damage continues its present trend of doubling every 7 years, then by around 2050 the costs of climate change could exceed the total value of everything that humanity produced over one year. Has global capitalism finally destroyed itself by its own success? Let's hope so.

**CONTRACTION & CONVERGENCE:
The Global Solution to Climate Change by Aubrey Meyer**

Review by Dr. Mayer Hillman, Senior Fellow Emeritus, Policy Studies Institute, London, UK

Climate change caused by the greenhouse gas emissions from our past and present profligate energy-intensive lifestyles already appears to be having tragic consequences. If the reduction of these emissions to a relatively safe level is more important than the pursuit of economic growth, then it is clear that a framework for action is needed within which the reduction can be achieved.

This concise book profoundly and lucidly spells out such a framework. Its author, Aubrey Meyer, founder and director of the Global Commons Institute (GCI), logically calls it 'Contraction and Convergence'. It requires the reduction to be completed within a timetable determined by scientific evidence whilst at the same time programming it towards an end-state of per capita emissions 'shared out between people globally, equitably and sustainably'. This, he says, will deliver a clean and green form of prosperity which does not seriously prejudice the future of the planet. He argues convincingly that it is the only way of avoiding ecological catastrophe.

In addition to a devastating critique of the failure of economics to treat with the subject of the welfare of all mankind and the global environment, he provides a fascinating history of the process by which a transition has been made in the space of ten years from what was at first ridiculed as a totally unrealistic and impractical solution to a centre stage proposition at the heart of current climate change negotiations.

The effectiveness of his argument is reflected in a growing consensus around the world that 'Contraction and Convergence' may indeed be the only realistic route to ecological salvation. For instance, last summer, the Royal Commission on Environment and Pollution and Jan Pronk, the Netherlands Environment Minister and Chairman of the Hague Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, supported the case for an international agreement based on the principle. In his environment speech in the City of London in the autumn, Prime Minister Blair acknowledged that the massive reduction in greenhouse gas emissions must be achieved on 'an equitable basis'. A month later, in the Hague, President Chirac stated that 'France proposes that we set as our ultimate objective the convergence of per capita emissions'. It is extraordinary that acknowledgement by these two world leaders and others of the relevance of the concept of equity to the subject, with its seismic implications for the future of economic growth, received almost no coverage in the media.

It is clear that radical changes are called for not only in the policies and practices of government, industry and the business community generally, but also in our own lifestyles. If these are to be conducted according to principles of conscience and survival, we cannot continue to play down the significance of climate change. The fact that greenhouse gas emissions remain in the atmosphere for several generations makes it urgent that we take our responsibilities on this portentous issue far more seriously.

I can think of no better investment of time and no more effective means of jolting people out of their complacency on the ramifications of global warming than to read this remarkable book...

A rather uninspiring book about a truly inspirational idea 17 April 2009

By Jeremy Williams

Contraction and Convergence is the genius idea of Aubrey Meyer, a South African born classical musician with a passion for global justice. Over several years of campaigning, his theory of equal emissions rights for everyone on the planet slowly won round the international community. It is now considered a fundamental principle of climate discussions at the international level.

As an idea, Contraction and Convergence is simple and compelling. As a book, it's not nearly so engaging. This short book is more about the story of Contraction and Convergence as an idea than an explanation of it. Rather than describe and sell his idea, Meyer writes timelines of UN climate change negotiations and meetings, details of resolutions, amendments, articles, and obscure QUANGOs. On one level its interesting to see the political machinations behind the Kyoto protocol, but a book about diplomatic processes doesn't really do justice to the idea somehow.

If you're researching the topic, or interested in the politics and diplomacy of climate change, then this will be a useful little book, but it is a little technical for the casual reader.