

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The 50% Century

At the dawn of the new millennium, the RTC-TH created a series of cards highlighting the coming 21<sup>st</sup> Century as “the 50% Century” based on UN statistics reported at the time. In light of the less than stellar results of the 2009 United Nations *Climate Change Conference* in *Copenhagen*, we decided to show these cards are reminders. While it is clear that global change occurs in nature, and there is some disagreement as to degree humans are the prime causal agents of global climate change, it is fairly clear to us (in the RTC-TH) that Earth got along just fine for billions of years before humans appeared. So we suspect that Earth can get along just fine without us if we happen to “soil our nest” to the point of making it uninhabitable. And while this may seem an unlikely prospect for the remainder of our life time, we (at the RTC-TH) are not ready to abandon our responsibility to continue our efforts for sustainable living.



*Deforestation is a critical concern. Deforestation occurs for a variety of reasons, and cooking meals for half the world's people is a big one. Especially when they lack other cooking fuels as pointed out by the card on the right.*



*Liquid fossil fuels are a dominant energy source for much of the modern world. As more developing countries strive to improve, they also tend toward a more oil powered world and its associated greenhouse emissions.*



*Some recent studies suggest that deforestation may not be the main culprit in the water problem of the world, but the fact remains fresh, clean drinking water is not so readily available for about 50% of the world's people.*



*In the majority of cases, the distance from farm to table will be much greater for urban dwellers than for rural folks. The greater the farm-to-table distances are, the greater the costs in transportation, food, and the greater the risk in food security.*



*Increasing levels of water pollution, rising sea level, and increasing CO2 in the oceans threatens sea life and ecosystems associated with once abundant sea food resources.*



*The challenges facing us are many, varied, and complex. In Asia, and many other male-dominated societies, women are often side-lined. What country can afford to ignore 50% of the brain power in their nation?*

The RTC-TH is not a political action advocacy group. We focus our efforts at the grassroots level of daily life for small rural family farmers. Poverty is often defined in monetary terms of a threshold annual income. We see poverty as lacking the minimal habitat requirements characterized by the Habitat acronym SWFS from the Geographic Systems Model. SWFS stands for Space, Water, Food, and Shelter. The Space is the geographic area in which a rural farm family will find the water, food, and shelter necessary to support their lives. Water needs to be, first, clean and safe drinking water for human consumption. Secondly, water needs to be available in sufficient quantity to support food production for the family. Food should also be available in sufficient quantity to support the family (which includes an adequate reserve for emergencies). Shelter is not just a physical structure to protect the family from the natural elements, but embraces the concepts of safety to exist and to have family, and to live peacefully.

The RTC-TH uses education as a means to empower people to be responsible for their own well-being. For small rural family farms, we advocate a shift in focus from commercial agriculture to self-sufficiency and sustainability. Small rural family farms are often undercapitalized to compete with larger agri-businesses. Borrowing saddles small rural family farms with an endless cycle of debt. Small rural farmers first need to feed their families and be able to continue to do so before engaging in commercial sales of their produce. This is the foundation of the King's Theory. Surpluses generated by small rural farms should be collectively marketed to large agribusinesses who then deal with the larger national/regional/global markets. The formation of small farm cooperatives empowers small farmers to more effectively compete in the market place in contrast to many small farmers competing against each other in the market place.

Critics of the King's Theory for a self-sufficient economy often say "we don't understand it." Others pronounce it "impossible" because no nation in the world does this. That's like saying since there is no known cure for cancer, stop looking for one. There is a saying, "those who think the job is impossible should get out of the way of those trying to do the job." The RTC-TH sees self-sufficiency and sustainability for small rural family farms as a better alternative. Consumer driven capitalism based on spending more than you earn is not sustainable. The current global economic crisis seems to show there is no easy way to get rich quick without harming others. Hard work and consistent, disciplined savings may be a slow way to build wealth. But the current crisis shows that speculative investment and manipulative economic scheming can produce fantastic wealth for some at the expense of many who become direct and indirect victims. 🌐