

The Long Descent: A User's Guide to the End of the Industrial Age

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A harrowing but ultimately hopeful vision of the aftermath of the age of oil.

Americans are expressing deep concern about US dependence on petroleum, rising energy prices and the threat of climate change. Unlike the energy crisis of the 1970s, however, there is a lurking fear that, now, the times are different and the crisis may not easily be resolved.

The Long Descent examines the basis of such fear through three core themes:

>> Industrial society is following the same well-worn path that has led other civilizations into decline, a path involving a much slower and more complex transformation than the sudden catastrophes imagined by so many social critics today.

>> The roots of the crisis lie in the cultural stories that shape the way we understand the world. Since problems cannot be solved with the same thinking that created them, these ways of thinking need to be replaced with others better suited to the needs of our time.

>> It is too late for massive programs for top-down change; the change must come from individuals.

Hope exists in actions that range from taking up a handicraft or adopting an "obsolete" technology, through planting an organic vegetable garden, taking charge of your own health care or spirituality, and building community.

Focusing eloquently on constructive adaptation to massive change, this book will have wide appeal.

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Candidates for public office, and the voters who elect them, should be required to read John Michael Greer's accurate diagnosis of the terminal illness our fossil-energy subsidized industrial civilization. --William R. Catton, Jr., author of *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*

Across the globe, the histories of empires won and lost, built and destroyed show themselves like footprints in the sands of time. Mayan temples in the jungle, Roman forts in rolling British hills, crumbling Victorian architecture in the Caribbean- all these tell the story of civilizations risen to power and passed away again.

The Long Descent follows our present industrial society down the same well-worn path that has led other civilizations into decline. John Michael Greer explains that this path involves a much slower and more complex transformation than the sudden catastrophes

imagined by so many social critics today. The cultural stories we use to understand the world have, in turn, created our present environmental crisis and influence our future. Global challenges such as climate change and peak oil are not problems to be solved but predicaments that must be lived with.

The Long Descent offers concrete suggestions for just how to do this. A simple muscle-powered toolkit and professions that involve doing useful things with one's hands are high on the list as are adopting an obsolete technology and cultivating a garden.

Focusing eloquently on constructive adaptation to massive change, this book will be formative in evolution of a post-industrial society.

Greer's generosity of spirit and essential kindness are habits of mind and heart very much worth emulating --James Howard Kunstler, Author of World Made by Hand and The Long Emergency

Do we face a universally destructive calamity, or a long transition to a sustainable future? That's one of the most important questions facing us, and this book is one of the very few to address it on the basis of clear reasoning and historical precedents.

-- Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow, Post Carbon Institute, and author of The Party's Over and Peak Everything

John Michael Greer is a certified Master Conserver, organic gardener and scholar of ecological history. His widely-cited blog, The Archdruid Report, deals with peak oil among other issues. He lives in Ashland, Oregon.

Other Books

Dust Bowl Descent, Presents past and present photographic portraits of the survivors of the harsh conditions of life in the Great Plains during the Depression

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