

FINDING A BETTER PATH

People around the world changing how they live

The crisis of our ecology is not like others we've dealt with. Its origins are our origins, and it's taken humanity a while to get its collective head around — enough time, in fact, that we don't have time to sit and ponder. Climate change has already contributed to social collapse in Somalia and Syria and will continue to convert injustice to crisis as the world's poorest are left without the economic means to adapt.

That's not the end of the story, though. We have concrete solutions just waiting to be put to work. We don't have time to sit and ponder, not anymore. We've got to think on our feet and act decisively. Drastic climate action is the first step away from a path of destruction and decline, and the next step toward a world of more genuine equality.

The truly exciting thing is, we're already tending toward the better path.

People from all races, creeds, geographies and social classes are changing the way they live. They're starting to exist in ways that cooperate with each other and the world around them, ways that allow them to prosper more equitably and stably than economic growth ever did. In many ways, in many places, we're still stuck at the crossroads, lost in the thrall of more things and false pragmatism, but in others we're already well on our way to the next generation of social change.

Where are these people? They're in cities and towns and on farms across America, and even more so, around the world. They're getting into "the good kind of trouble," as John Lewis would say. They're building responsibility



into the core of new businesses and putting thought into their consumption. They're just living their lives, but doing it in a way that reflects our changing world.

To most of America, these change-makers are invisible. Our newspapers and television networks don't pay them

much mind. Old narratives rule, ones that don't take into account the new data we've gathered since the end of the Cold War.

That's why I've started 360bybike.com. For the next four years, I'm going to act as a conduit for climate action as I travel one circumference of the earth by bike. Starting in Asia, I'll make my way to Europe and Africa, and then North America and South America.

Along the way, I want to highlight the fundamental change that is taking place in communities around the world. I want to help communicate the sudden pull of action that happens when you realize that a better world is again possible, is in fact around the corner if only we choose the right path.

People's lives and livelihoods are more disrupted every day by climate change. But even with some of the most powerful, entrenched interests in the world against them, everyday people are working, fighting, dedicating their lives to stopping climate change. And against all odds, slowly, surely, they're making progress. 360bybike will tie this rising tide of people closer as we organize community actions and events together along my route and as we join a global network working for solutions to the problems we see. I'll gather the energy and creativity of people I meet in interviews, stories and art collaborations that show the raw force and courage of this movement. While I hope these stories will raise questions and change minds, I'll try to contribute more concretely to climate action by raising \$10,000 for 350.org.

A new generation of change-makers is looking for the path at the intersection of pragmatism and idealism. This project will try to share their knowledge, their experience and their dedication in a way that will nucleate action. ■

Forrest Watkins, who grew up in Eugene, is on a four-year bicycle trek around the world documenting how people are responding and adapting to a changing environment. Follow his trip at 360bybike.com.

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