



November 14, 2018

Dear Pandotopia Network Member,

I am writing to those of you who have agreed to be part of this network to update you on the latest news as well as seek your ongoing support and commitment moving forward. We will be sending this occasional newsletter to you, along with conference calls and meetings from time to time. We hope to have another Pandotopia Blitz event next year.

As you're well aware, we've chosen to name this network after the largest single living thing on Earth. The Pando one-tree forest in Utah has received [significant coverage in the news](#) recently, centered around its uncertain fate as it is shrinking and dying.

Pando is Latin for "I spread;" *topia* comes from the Greek, *topos*, meaning "place." As Matthew Celmer of MoonTree Studios, who was with us in July, points out, the Pandotopia Network is intended to be the place where our communities can spread out our reach and impact, bound together by the common themes we share:

- Attention to interconnectivity
- Creativity and can-do spirit harnessed for the common good
- Unity amidst great diversity
- Radical commitment
- Grounding in big ideas

Pando becomes a shorthand way of communicating values that motivate us all, but framed in a language that is encompassing. "I belong to you, you belong to me, we belong to each other" is the way that Maria Shriver phrased her own interpretation of Pando. The intent of Pope Francis in choosing to address the world at large in *Laudato Si'* speaks to this essential idea.

The importance of the Pandotopia mission is emphasized in the [report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), wherein we're given a dozen years or so to make civilizational shifts of the kind never before attempted on a mass scale or remain on a cataclysmic course. In response, Pando communities have two roles to play: first, in modeling,

accelerating, and communicating a new way of living that can avert catastrophe, and then in creating communities of resilience in a world facing depletion. The IPCC report underscores the need for mission-driven collaboration as never before.

UPDATE: Pando at Maryknoll

Because of the July event, you have all become familiar with our collaboration in Monrovia with the Maryknoll Sisters: Pando at Maryknoll. If you would like to read more, [here's the relevant link](#).

We are continuing to make good progress: we have prepared two apartments for outside residents, brought in our first full-time Pando Fellow, are bringing together key partners for developing collaborative plans, and are launching a series of small bets to test the viability of new ideas.

This week, we are holding a Pando Blitz event for 40+ participants from the Maryknoll communities and elsewhere in collaboration with students and professors from the Think Wrong Institute at the University of Kansas. Lots is happening. Stay tuned!

PROFILE: MoonTree and The Center at Donaldson

Because other members of the Network are engaged in such interesting work that we like to think of as “Pando” – whether it gets filed under that name or another – we hope that a section of this newsletter will include Network updates. Matthew Celmer of MoonTree files this report:

The Center at Donaldson is the name of the ministry center of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ where the Motherhouse and multiple ministries including MoonTree and Ancilla College are located. Sr. Michele Dvorak, PHJC, who was with us out at Maryknoll, returned invigorated and inspired to shift Ancilla College’s focus to integral ecology. In her inaugural address as president, she shared this vision with students, faculty, and staff and challenged them to make small changes in their lives to help ease the burden on our environment.

At the invitation of the faculty, our Director of Ecological Relationships, Adam Thada, and I addressed a faculty senate meeting where we discussed our hope for the future of the college and dedicated our services and resources to supporting its new ecological vision.

For the first time ever, MoonTree Studios played an integral role in the student orientation. At the Gallery, Adam introduced the students to the current ecological initiatives and awareness of The Center including the LEED building design and recently installed solar array of MoonTree. At the Lodge, Sr. Mary Baird, PHJC (also at the Pandotopia Blitz), and I introduced the students to centering prayer as we sat around a papier-mâché globe she made to emphasize that this planet is our home and protecting

it is our responsibility. That globe is now hanging up in the student lounge to remind them every day that we are all one family with one common home.

Right outside of our studio buildings, we planted about half an acre of Kernza to test its viability here. You might remember Bill Vitek's presentation about Kernza as an example of perennial agriculture and a perennial way of thinking. If successful, we hope to incorporate it into our farming practices.

We have been talking with Eugene about the possibility of serving as a Midwest Pando Accelerator here at MoonTree to complement the one at Maryknoll and potentially initiate a residency program here as well. We're also hoping to host another gathering for the Pandotopia Network so that we can return the gracious hospitality we received at Maryknoll and share some of our projects with you all in-person.

Sr. Margaret Anne Henss, PHJC (another of our representatives at the Pandotopia Blitz), hosted a land usage meeting that brought together all of the land stakeholders here at The Center to discuss how we can best utilize our 1,100 acres in a way that enables us to serve the land as well as those in need. These discussions continue.

CHALLENGE: Pando Ontology for Integral Ecology

You will remember that during one of our sessions at the Pandotopia Blitz, I discussed the need for developing what I described as an "ontology" for integral ecology – that is, a listing of categories and sub-categories that the vision of *Laudato Si'* entails. The aim is that it would become a systematic and structural basis for assigning objectives and goals and assessing them with quantitative and qualitative measures.

At the time of the blitz, we had only begun some early-stage development work. Now, it remains a draft, but it has been developed further. I invite you all to [take a look](#) at what we have done to date, and to criticize it freely. John Cobb has agreed to collaborate on this, but the ontology to date does not yet include his critique.

Creating ontologies of things is not for everyone! Friends have told me that this shows my nerdy side, and surely it does. But as we think about incarnating the vision of integral ecology, I believe an ontology to be very helpful as a tool to:

1. Illuminate both the forest and the trees of concern at the same time. You will see both great detail (more can be added) and big picture sweep.
2. Nest within other indices. It is important that we incorporate other good work that has already been done along similar lines. This means to include indices that are currently used to assess conditions of justice and sustainability, both locally (for example, LA County goals) and globally (the Global Reporting Initiative is one example; another is John Cobb's own groundbreaking work in developing an alternative to the GDP in measuring the health of economies).

3. Lay a foundation for assessment in meeting critical goals. If the recent IPCC report is accurate, and we must make extraordinary progress extraordinarily fast, then it is critical to assess progress.

What it means to be a member of the Pandotopia Network

As we develop the Network more fully, it begs the question of what it means to belong. This is a conversation for us to have together, but I am hoping that it might include these elements (which I put on the table to initiate conversation):

1. To self-identify as a Pando community, the value of which is to create a structural foundation for furthering broad and inclusive partnerships.
2. To make use of and reference the ontology for integral ecology that we develop, so that we share a common reference point.
3. To share best practices and contribute useful resources.
4. To foster entrepreneurial energy and creativity in attempting to reach our shared vision. I would like to think of Network members as inhabiting locations where change makers can come to kick-start environmental and social impact initiatives.

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of the Network. It is a great honor and pleasure to help foster its growth and to be a part of this community.

Please let me know any suggestions you may have.

I look forward to further communication and to sharing together.

Cheers,

EUGENE
Eugene Shirley, President
[Pando Populus](#)