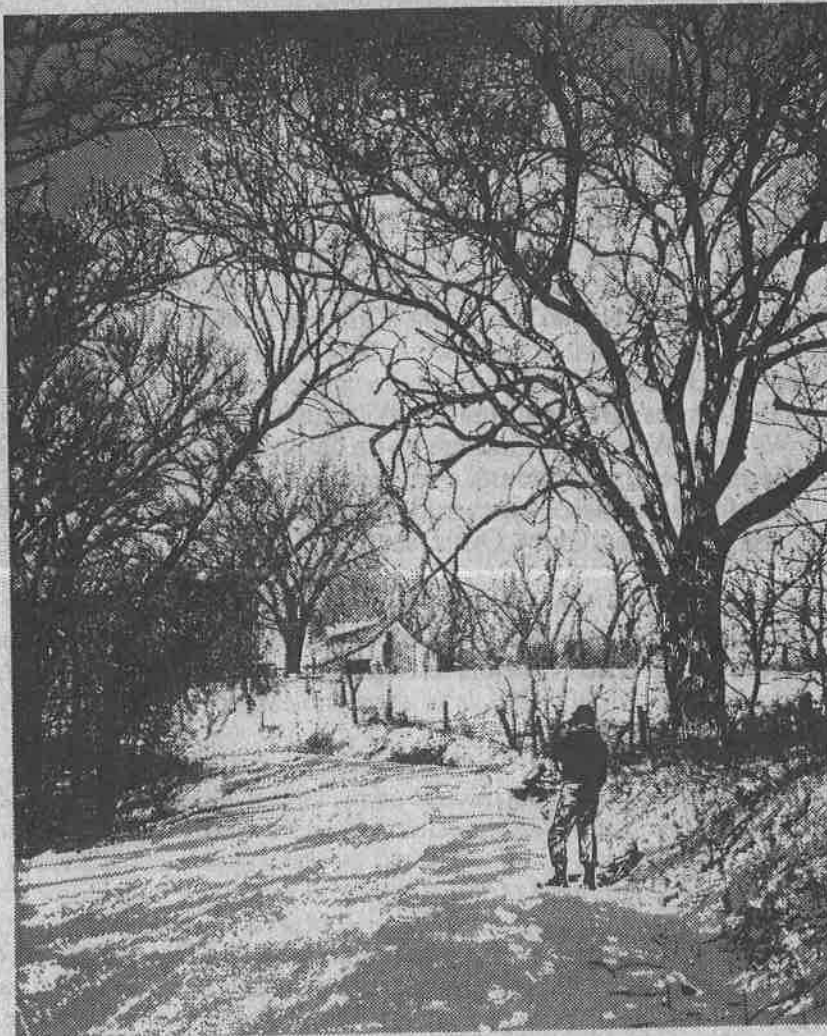


THE EARTH IS OUR HOME



Lowell Bolstad

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This booklet is dedicated to my parents Harold and Pearl Bolstad on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary — September 12, 1992; as well as to my brothers Neil and Arlan; to my brother Sheldon, his spouse Terry and their children, Robin and Natalie; and to my spouse Robbi Rudiger.

Scripture quotations unless otherwise noted are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1946, 1952, and 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches.

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Foreword

Over the past decade Lowell Bolstad has written eloquently and passionately about the threat posed by factory farms and the need to preserve and strengthen family farms and rural communities. With **The Earth Is Our Home**, he focuses his attention on the question of "how to live most responsibly as keepers of the earth." While drawing heavily once again on rural life, particularly his own experience as a Lutheran pastor and fledgling farmer in western Wisconsin, the wisdom and message found here should be of equal relevance to non-farmers and urbanites.

His pastoral message drawn from scripture and from several contemporary scholars of biblical teachings on environmental stewardship is informed by hard facts about the plight of the planet, as well as by personal insights drawn from his own experience as a rural minister living and working with rural folks who care about, and care for, the land. His central message is simple and profound — all of us must come to see ourselves as members in the community of creation. Such an understanding will lead us into a new relationship with creation so that we become active, loving caretakers of the environment. And in turn, the actions we take on behalf of the earth will deepen our love and understanding of creation.

Besides being a keen observer of his own community and an avid student of theology and ecology, Bolstad is a good reporter. His book is sprinkled with succinct reports from workshops and speeches he has attended, as well as with key ideas from the many books he has read. As such, it serves as an excellent primer on the topic of environmental stewardship, as well as a practical guide to down-to-earth activities each of us can do. Here he shares what he has learned from the likes of Frances Moore Lappe on regaining democracy, Thomas Berry on creation spirituality, Dean Freudenberger on the global perspective of sustainable agriculture, John and Mary Schramm on how the Bible's teachings can guide the rural church, Wes Jackson on the importance of making a personal connection to the land through gardening, and many more.

At the practical level he provides a summary of the benefits of community supported agriculture. He lists ways church congregations can practice what they preach on care of the environment. And he offers actions each of us as individuals can take to tread more lightly on the earth.

Wendell Berry, one of the writers who has influenced Bolstad's life and writing, has warned in recent essays about the dangers of global thinking — the danger being that dwelling on global issues can distract us from doing vital work in our own backyards. Bolstad, however, epitomizes what is best about the axiom "think globally, act locally." He has educated himself, and in turn educates us, about the global implications of our actions, but he focuses on bringing it all back home, where the work can be done well, inspired and informed by a genuine sense of place.

Ron Kroese
Executive Director
Land Stewardship Project
Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota

Introduction

Earth Day, April 22, 1990, became the occasion to mark the beginning of a long-term commitment to the safeguarding of this planet in such a way as to assure a safe, just, and sustainable future. The event launched a "decade of the environment" meant to emphasize the responsible use of renewable energy and recycled resources. In the precedent, Earth Day 1970, 20 million people took part in the largest organized demonstration in history that began the modern environmental movement. Some of the problems have been addressed, while other even more serious dilemmas have come to the fore.

Wes Jackson, from the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, spoke at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota on Earth Day 1990 to a crowd of several hundred people. In his address, he reflected that one of the learnings of the past 20 years is that individual actions have far-reaching consequences; one example is global warming. He also spoke of challenges leading into the 21st century. One central point stands out. Jackson contended that, at the present rate of consumption, fossil fuel sources will be exhausted in the next 50 to 60 years. When this happens, he asserted, people will be faced with choosing between two alternatives: solar or nuclear power. A split could be more divisive, he claimed, than the Civil War, the Vietnam War, civil rights, or any other social conflict in the history of this country. He challenged those gathered to envision how life would need to be changed in order to live in a post-petroleum age. More people are needed on the land, he stated. "We need more eyeballs to acres," he contended.

In the question and answer session following the speech, a young man sitting not too far from me stood up. He was dressed in professional business attire and most likely had just come from the office. His manner spoke of one desiring to act in a politically correct manner. He asked what the speaker would suggest in the way of seeking to pass certain legislation. Jackson looked at him and slowly replied that he thought the best thing the young man could do was to go home and plant a garden. In order to care for the earth, one must come to know the land, water, and air in a more intimate manner, he explained. This was not the answer the young man expected to hear and immediately after Jackson had concluded the question and answer period, he left with his suit coat over his shoulder.

The incident reminded me of the biblical account of Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler, who desiring to be religiously correct asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Jesus, knowing that his riches stood in the way, told him to go and sell all that he had and then come and follow; whereupon the rich young ruler went away sorrowful. The young urban professional on Earth Day wanted to be politically correct and so asked, "What must I do to save the earth?" When he could not bring himself to receive the painfully simple answer, he went away disappointed.

Earth Day 1990 has come and gone. We are well into the "decade of the environment." The question can be asked, "What is the most appropriate way to live out our concern for the planet earth?" None of us alone can solve the problems of shrinking energy sources, greenhouse gases, ozone holes, acid rain, toxic wastes, expanding deserts, and shrinking rain forests. But I believe the response Wes Jackson gave — "to go plant a garden" — gives the key to becoming more connected to the earth, acting on a local level in a particular way, and then joining together with other people of goodwill to address the systemic problems that confront us. This booklet, **The Earth Is Our Home**, is my modest attempt to contribute to the ongoing dialogue typified by that interchange on Earth Day 1990. I seek to relate my personal story as well as those of others who wrestle with the question of how to live most responsibly as keepers of the earth.

Part I

Homemaking

“When you go to see Tom and Ginny Marsh you turn off a busy road near Borden, Indiana, into an almost hidden entrance. You cross a stream, pass the end of a hedgerow of autumn olives, drive past berry beds and a garden, and suddenly you are struck by one of the most pleasing of realizations: you have come to a place that loving attention has been paid to. Everywhere you look you see the signs of care. You are in what appears to be a little cove, a wedge of flat land tucked in against a wooded hill. The natural character of the place has been respected, and yet it has been made to accommodate gracefully the various necessities of a family’s life and work.

“When the Marshes started work here in 1970, the place was disused and neglected. The flat land where their buildings and garden now stand was just a sort of gravel bed with the creek wandering over it, and all grown up in briars. They straightened the creek and so salvaged the land they needed for building and food raising. They staked out a plot of the almost sterile soil and began to enrich it with heavy applications of sawdust and with green manure crops. They built their house and began to construct the other buildings they needed, working out the designs and doing the carpentry and masonry themselves. They set out fruit trees and berry bushes, and acquired a small laying flock. Along the new course of the creek they planted white and red pines, giving their place a wide margin set off by an autumn olive hedge. They dug a pond up on the hillside and stocked it with bass and bluegills. By December of 1975 they had cleared some hillside pasture, and so were ready for a milk cow. The next spring, because they had milk to spare, they started raising their own meat hogs.

“By now they have an exemplary subsistence farm. Of their twelve and a half acres, all but four are wooded. Two of the cleared acres are in pasture. The rest of this space is taken up by buildings, garden, berry beds, and fruit trees. Because their acreage is so small, the Marshes have had to work carefully at the problems of design and scale. Everything had to be put in the right place or it would be in the way of something else. And it had to be the right size or they would run out of room.”

—Excerpts from Chapter 19 “An Excellent Homestead” in *The Gift Of Good Land* by Wendell Berry, pages 210-215.

Homestead, Montana

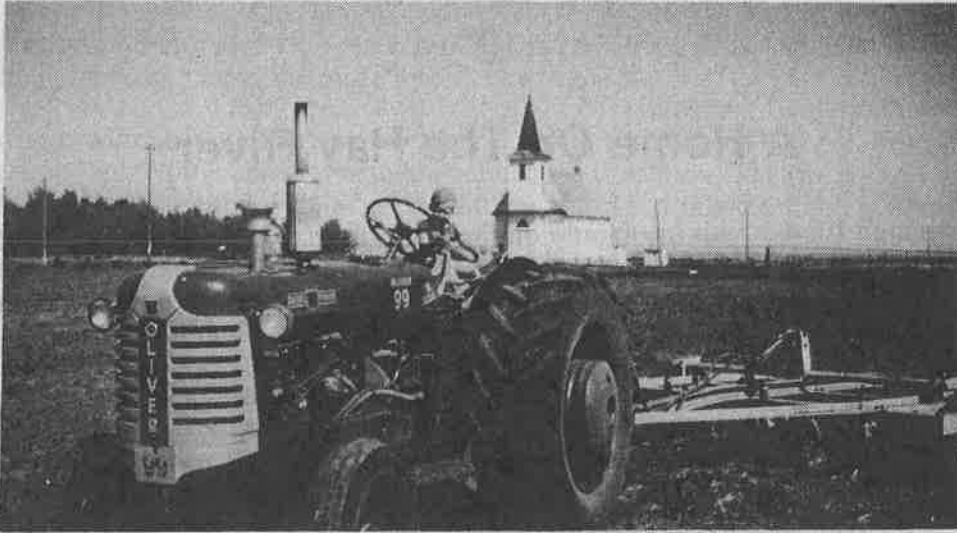
Homestead is a small village located in northeast Montana, not far from the border of the Canadian province of Alberta to the north and of the U.S. state of North Dakota to the east. Montana is called the Big Sky Country for good reason; from a small knoll one can see 20 to 30 miles on a clear day and pick out the various villages by their grain elevators. These storage facilities rise high in the air at Homestead to house the wheat and barley that area farmers grow on the flat land of the plains. In 1979, two new steel bins with a capacity of 100,000 bushels were added. Following the harvest of 1982, over 97,000 bushels of wheat were piled on the ground next to the elevator due to a lack of storage facilities. During the rest of the 1980s, though, drought and grasshoppers kept the yields low.

Farmers retired to the village in the past, and more recently practicing farmers have moved to town and now drive out to the countryside to do their field work. At one time a general merchandise store handled machinery, dry goods, hardware, and groceries. Now the front half of the store has been converted to a 4th class post office, while bakery and dairy products are sold for the convenience of the public in the back half of the building. A school was started in 1914 for the first eight grades, and in 1920 a four-year high school was added. Two classes graduated from then until 1927, when the decision was made to have the high school students attend the neighboring schools of Froid and Medicine Lake. Homestead continued a two-teacher school for the eight grades until 1960 when the school was closed, and students then were transported to Medicine Lake.

In 1953, I was born in Plentywood, Montana and lived with my parents and a younger brother Sheldon, born in 1956, on the family farm near Homestead. My father, Harold Bolstad, had grown up on his family farm of Kinley and Nora Bolstad five miles away, while my mother, Pearl Norager Bolstad, had been raised on her family farm of Morten and Lydia Norager near Outlook, some thirty miles away. Dad's younger brother Jim and his wife Adeline and their family lived down the road a mile. The home church, Bethel Lutheran, stood on the corner between our farm and that of my uncle's. Both sets of grandparents as well as my uncle and aunt engaged in farming and ranching in which they grew wheat, barley, hay, and corn and raised beef cattle.

Both of my parents share distinct memories of their growing up. Each had childhoods characterized by hard work. Dad often would miss school in the fall and spring when he was expected to stay home to help with farm work. At the same time, evenings were filled with music, as Kinley played the violin while Nora played the piano and the rest of the family joined in singing. Mom herded sheep in the summer time, riding a pony as the sheep meandered across the open spaces in search of forage. She also took a book along to read in order to pass the time. For a period of three years after high school, Dad farmed with his older brother Donald. When Donald started to do custom combining, eventually following the harvest from Texas in the spring to Canada in the fall, he asked Dad to go with him. Dad did not want to live on the road and so declined his offer. After high school Mom went to nurses training but interrupted her studies to return home to care for Lydia and never went back to complete her degree.

At the time I was born, Dad was recovering in a Japanese hospital from wounds suffered in the Korean War. He had enlisted and agreed to serve as a medic; shortly after entering battle he was shot by an enemy bullet and also injured by a land mine. For ten months, he stayed in various hospitals. Mom and I stayed with Kinley and Nora until he returned home. Dad and Mom then started family life on the farm near Homestead.



The author as a young child sits on the tractor his father used for summer fallow cultivating on the home farm near Homestead, Montana. In the background is the family church, Bethel Lutheran. To the left is a cluster of windbreak trees around his uncle's home.

The family farm of 160 acres was small by Montana standards. When one keeps in mind that, due to low rainfall, a crop can be planted on only half the land, it is possible to see that the number of tillable acres per year for wheat and barley to be sold at the elevator was not very large. For this reason, Dad did carpentry work in the area to earn additional income. A large garden provided vegetables throughout the year, as Mom did considerable preserving. A beef animal was butchered once a year, and range chickens were slaughtered in the late summer to provide meat. Dad continued a practice from his youth of hunting geese in the fall for wild game. The barn had stanchions, and at one time a previous owner had raised cows and sold milk to the school. Dad milked one cow for our use. Animals drank from a small pond not too far from the barn.

The principles of industriousness and conservation were both important to life on the land near Homestead. Grandpa Kinley was one of 13 children in a family that moved west from Edinburg, North Dakota and homesteaded 5 miles east of Homestead in 1906, where they lived in a sod shack until a house was built. He worked on the farm and attended school only until the fourth grade when he had to quit because he was needed on the farm. As Uncle Jim recounts, "In those early years of Dad's farming career, there were a lot of hardships: hail, drought, grasshoppers, cyclones, tornadoes. At one time a tornado took all the buildings on the farm except the house. Dad made most of the toys that we played with and was handy at fixing and doing most anything. In the dirty '30s, I remember Dad would butcher hogs, cure bacon and hams and load up the car with meat, eggs, butter and head for Fort Peck, Montana where he would sell the commodities to the workers who had money to buy." Kinley was one of the first to implement soil conservation practices including planting trees for windbreaks, making contour strips, and using a chisel plow instead of a moldboard plow. In 1951 he was one of two farmers in Sheridan County awarded an honor for outstanding conservation practices established on his farm.

In 1958, my parents moved our family to central Iowa where Mom's brother and sister had located earlier. Dad found a carpentry job in the city of Ames where he worked until retirement, and we lived in Story City — a town of 2,000. Although I spent most of my growing years there, I still remember Homestead, Montana as my point of origin, and at this time in my life the connection to my birthplace is becoming even stronger.

A Home On The Hay River

Even though I lived with my family on the small farm near Homestead, Montana for only the first five years of my life, the memory of those early beginnings stayed with me. Sooner or later I thought I would end up living on a piece of land in the countryside. In a serendipitous manner, that development happened sooner rather than later.

The beginning of the 1990s brought my spouse Robbi Rudiger and me to a juncture in our lives. We had served in pastoral ministry for the decade of the 1980s, but both of us had pursued other interests as well. Robbi earned a masters degree in marriage therapy and family counseling and began working full-time in that field at a mental health agency while also serving a small congregation on a part-time basis. I had served a two-point parish for over ten years while at the same time taking on writing, editing, and self-publishing as well as doing gardening with the thought of possibly expanding to garden farming.

In the spring of 1990 when we were exploring options, a fellow Lutheran pastor Bob Esse told me about an old log cabin situated on forty acres of land southwest of Prairie Farm near the Hay River. He and his spouse, Mary, had purchased the acreage twenty years earlier with the idea of someday retiring there. An avid history buff on original log cabins, he found one in good condition across the road and had it moved onto a new basement in the center of the property. It was constructed in the Pennsylvania Dutch tradition with hand hewn oak logs. Bob installed plumbing and electricity, put vertical cedar siding on the exterior walls and wood shake shingles on the roof, and added a front porch.

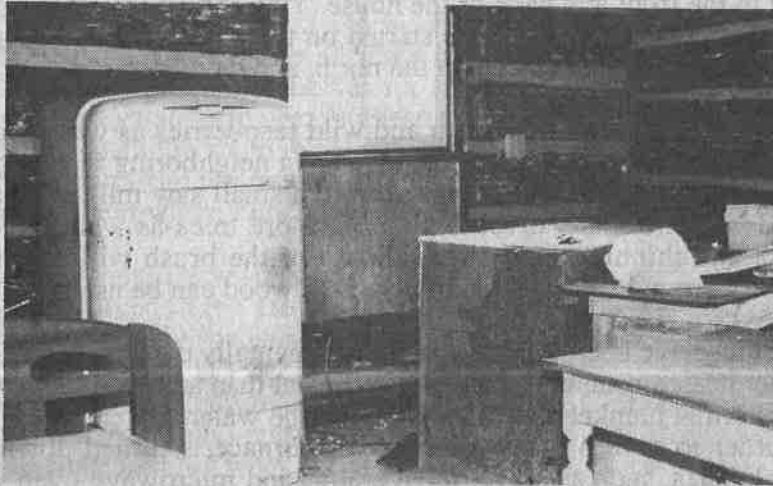
When his wife died of cancer, progress on the remodeling slowed, and the interior was never finished. As his children reached college age, he realized he needed to sell. We had never set out looking for an old log cabin, nor did we think it feasible to settle in one place, but when placement for a clergy couple in two separate, adjacent parishes proved to be difficult we decided to figure out a diversified employment picture and purchase the property. Robbi continued with her combination of counseling and pastoral ministry, while I took special training and began intentional interim ministry. We were still able to provide more service to the church than if we had simply split one call. Also I continued writing, editing, and self-publishing, and began to figure out a way to do garden farming on the place where a third of the land was tillable, a third woods, and a third pasture.

Even though the cabin smelled of mice, squirrels, and birds and required a tremendous amount of work to make it liveable, Robbi and I were drawn to the house by its character and history and to the surroundings by the beauty and abundance of wild life. Fortunately the price was such that we were able to pay cash, but neither of us were quite fully prepared for the sweat equity that lay ahead. Who could be? Like most refurbishing projects, there was always more work than anticipated. Using carpentry skills I learned from my father, I worked an estimated 1500 hours over the next eighteen months on the house, pole shed, and landscape. Being used to new home construction, I had once stated I would never do remodeling, but plans change. Rather than cut corners simply to finish sooner, I took the time to create a look that was spare, handmade, and predominantly wood.

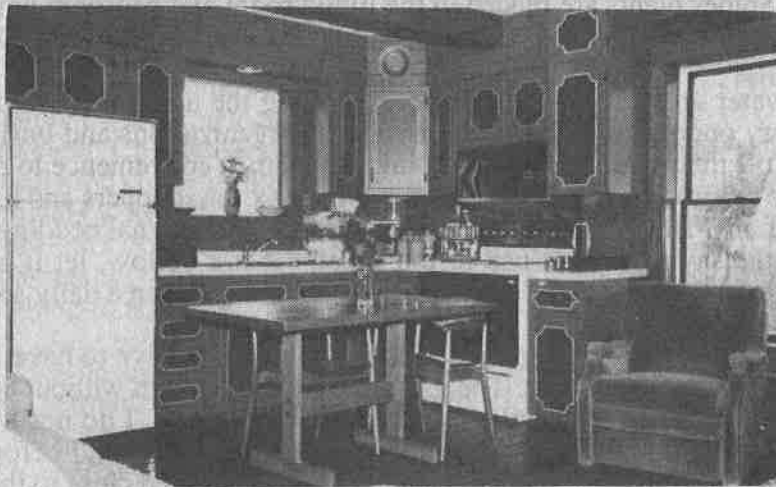
Our families graciously assisted. Robbi's father Bob Rudiger did some of the electrical work, and my parents Harold and Pearl and my brother Arlan donated many valuable hours of skilled labor in carpentry and painting. Once when my mother was painting she stopped

for a break and remarked, "This place reminds me of Homestead." I responded by telling her, "The longer I live here, the more it feels like home."

Taking recommendations from my brother Arlan who earned a degree in construction engineering, I gutted the upstairs with his help and started over. The ceiling and walls were then insulated and covered with wood car siding. Harold trimmed out the windows with 1" X 6" pine, even as he trimmed windows and doors in the same manner downstairs. New interior walls with accompanying rewiring were constructed to make a study, a bedroom, and two closets. The floor was covered with plywood and 1" X 12" pine plank flooring with screws and wooden plugs. Wooden bookshelves were built to fit the vaulted ceiling.



The kitchen as well as the rest of the house presented challenges to the refurbishing project.



An attempt was made to preserve much of the original style, while also using modern appliances.

Downstairs a couple of walls and doors around the stairway were taken out to open up space. Harold built a new stairway leading upstairs and a stair railing on the second floor. Sheet rock was torn down from the ceiling to expose the original tongue and groove boards; nail holes were filled and ceiling painted. Unfinished cabinets were purchased and painted with the colors of blue and red often used in old log cabins. Tongue and groove pine wood flooring was installed, again with screws and wooden plugs. Cedar wainscoting removed from the ceiling upstairs was installed in the bathroom ceiling. Harold enclosed

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the bath tub and built cabinets. Arlan made bookshelves to fit in the downstairs study as well as a stereo cabinet. New exterior doors were installed in front and back. Sometimes when I wearied of the work and skill required, I looked at the hand hewn oak logs and realized how much effort had already gone into the building. Each part of the work provided an opportunity to look back and take pride in the work completed.

As for outside work, we had a crew erect the structure for a 28' X 56' pole shed, which I then sided with vertical rough hewn pine boards. The house and pole shed were scrubbed by hand to remove any mildew and then stained redwood. Simple but functional patios were built in the front and back of the house. Yew shrubs were planted on the north end of the west side, while junipers were started on the north end of the east side. Hosta and snow-on-the-mountain were placed on the north, and daylillies and roses on the south.

In the woods, I cleared out prickly ash and wild raspberries as well as other brush. A logger cut down seven mature pine trees for me, and a neighboring farmer pulled the logs out with her horses. These logs were then taken to a small saw mill to be cut into rough hewn pine boards. Future plans involve planting more trees as well as keeping up the clearing of brush and thinning of saplings. Some of the brush will be chewed up in a chipper/shredder for animal bedding and mulch. Hardwood can be used for firewood.

Several measures have been taken to be environmentally conscious. We had a gas furnace and gas water heater installed; gas is more efficient than a fuel oil furnace or an electric water heater. A thermal blanket was placed around the water heater. Wood is burned in a cabin stove in order to save on gas heat, and the furnace is turned down when we are away. Other appliances, such as stove, refrigerator, and microwave oven were also purchased with energy efficiency in mind. Aluminum, glass, plastic, and tin, are recycled; with this practice comes a greater sensitivity to consumptive patterns and an effort to cut down on waste. Spider plants are placed in the living room and bedroom with the purpose of having them take out carbon and put back oxygen. Fuel efficient automobiles are used.

Wood and water are valuable resources. Realizing the amount of wood required to make paper, every once in awhile I write to various organizations and businesses asking them to take me off their mailing list as a savings to them, a convenience to me, and a consideration for the environment. Also I took down the box for shoppers and asked the carrier not to drop off any. Black and white paper is shredded for animal bedding. To conserve water, I follow the saying on the use of the toilet, "If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down." Showers are taken when needed rather than a daily soaker.

Living in the countryside off the road, I do not feel compulsive to have a finely manicured lawn so prized in the suburbs. The grass grows fast enough without applying fertilizer. Besides, with tributaries meandering through the property, I do not want to pollute them with runoff. In addition I wait until the grass is 3 to 4 inches tall before cutting, because weeds actually get more of a hold when the grass is cropped close to the ground.

At times I think I would like children to enjoy country living and to join in the work; but for a number of reasons, we have decided not to bring offspring into the world. One of the reasons is to not place greater demands upon the carrying capacity of the earth. Even if the children would adopt a modest lifestyle, they still would consume more than most in the world. This decision may be the one with the most far reaching consequences. I do not actively promote this step, and I respect those who have children as acts of faith and hope.

Also, I consider myself fortunate to have grown up without a TV in the home. To this day I do not watch TV programming, because I am offended by the bombardment of conspicuous consumption philosophy. In this way, I place a limit on my needs and desires.

Living on forty acres, I have taken the plunge into garden farming. Garden farming is an avocation in which I seek first to grow a garden for our own vegetables and to raise chicken, beef, and pork for our meat. (Parenthetically I could add that we have joined a food buying club to gain access to those food products normally available at a food co-op but for a reduced cost.) Second I have entered into an economic arrangement to sell broiler chickens, yearling calves, and pigs on a low-cost scale. I have no illusions about this becoming a full-time livelihood; rather to begin with my modest financial goal is to earn enough to pay for property taxes and utilities. I have stayed out of debt in starting this venture; never in my life have I made a loan payment and I am not about to start now.

Why am I interested in earning less and working harder? The answer lies in the desire for diversity. Being engaged in garden farming in addition to pastoral ministry as well as writing, editing, and self-publishing makes for stimulation and satisfaction. As indicated earlier, being born on a small farm near Homestead, Montana instilled a yearning to live in a partner relationship with the creative powers of the land. Also garden farming seemed to be a logical progression from my previous preoccupation with gardening, and I wanted to engage in an arrangement where I knew who benefitted from the growing of the products.

Besides these personal interests, social concerns also motivated me. All around me I saw fewer people involved in the growing of crops and the raising of animals; those who do are becoming increasingly specialized. A greater number of people have no idea how to provide for even a small part of their own food. I wanted to be one who is willing to learn these skills. Among the conventional farming population, a large portion are nearing retirement age, while only a small number are entering the field. How are we going to encourage people to enter farming when those operations are so capital intensive that a beginning farmer could never hope to get out of debt? There have to be alternatives; I do not claim to be a model, but I am willing to explore some of the options. A beneficial result of this garden farming comes from the necessity of communicating with others in similar life situations in order to exchange information, work, and machinery.

Presently I am raising broiler chickens using portable huts with no floor to provide access to fresh pasture by moving them regularly. These enclosures are made with previously used corrugated steel. Chickens eat bugs and grass in addition to commercially prepared rations. At maturity the chickens are sold live to the Hmong who pick them up and process them away from the farmstead. As part of their culture, they want chickens that have black, red, or yellow feathers. Realizing that the sight of moveable huts out on pasture is an unusual sight to passersby, my standard quip for inquiries is: "I'm doing my best to give the neighbors something to talk about."

In addition I am raising Jersey calves purchased from an area farmer. The Hmong like a Jersey because it reminds them of the size cattle they are used to in Laos. Also I like this breed because of its excellent taste. Butchering them as yearlings allows me to get the fastest growth that first year and necessitates keeping them over only one winter. Their pastures are rotated with the use of electric fencing, which I installed with the help of a local farm hand. Pigs are confined in simple accommodations next to the garden. As with chickens, the Hmong do the butchering of the cattle and pigs themselves. Here to, the scale is so different from conventional farming that I usually use a disarming statement for questions: "I assure you I am not going to compete with dairy farmers by milking cows."

In all, there are other things I probably could be doing in order to be more friendly to the environment and there are things I am doing I probably should not be doing. But I believe I have found a niche filled with challenge and creativity that allows me to live with integrity in respect to the creation. I realize I cannot save the whole earth, but for the decade of the 1990s I am willing to hunker down and try to protect 40 acres.

Part II

Sustainable Agriculture Requires Citizen Democracy

“Citizen democracy is grounded in certain core beliefs:

- “Participation in shaping the larger world beyond our families is a deep human need, as real as the need for a satisfying private life.
- “Prevailing models of democracy ignore the ingenuity and commitment of millions who want to be part of the solution but now feel frustrated and disaffected.
- “Active, engaged citizens are not born; we become effective citizens as we learn the arts of democracy: active listening, dialogue, negotiation, reflection and creative controversy.
- “Citizen democracy is not an endpoint. It is an ongoing, dynamic process enhancing the dignity of each citizen and the health of the planet.
- “Citizen participation in economic decision making is as vital to healthy democracy as our participation in political life.”

—Institute for the Arts of Democracy/Building Citizen Democracy. Founders/Co-directors are Frances Moore Lappe and Paul Martin Du Bois.

Constructing A New Civic Culture

"Can we develop a sustainable agriculture in order to sustain the land and the people on it unless we are involved in a richer, stronger form of democracy?" Frances Moore Lappe asked as a part of her keynote address at the 1991 National Conference on Rural Ministry at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. In her presentation, "Sowing a Sustainable Future: The Land and Democracy's Future," she sought to place the work for sustainable agriculture within the broader context of sustainable democracy. In introducing this key point, she related how her studies through the years have demonstrated that the cause of hunger is not so much a scarcity of food but a scarcity of democracy.

To begin with, then, she challenged some of the accepted assumptions about what people consider democracy to be. One common perception is that democracy is a set of laws and institutions, which people of this country were fortunate enough to receive. As a result, there is little to do but vote and pay taxes, but, Lappe argued, fewer people vote as evidenced by the fact that the United States has the lowest voter turnout of any of the industrialized countries. Also, according to Lappe, the IRS reports more people are cheating on their taxes. In another statistic, she told how only 63% even wanted to be counted in the census. From a study of American youth, she cited how only a small percentage thought of citizenship as having to do with politics; most of them took a passive approach in regarding citizenship as staying out of trouble and not getting in anybody else's way.

Lappe went on to contrast what she called the mechanistic world view whereby individuals pursue personal freedom seen as elbow room and the ecological or relational world view in which people are defined by their context. The latter focuses on how people live as social creatures in relationship to each other and to the whole web of nature. As an anecdotal aside, she told how the Greek word of "idiot" meant one who had no public life, only a personal life. "We are on the verge of discovering a new perception of democracy," she asserted. "I see you as the harbingers, or midwives, of this new world view."

Building On Our Relational Capacities

Lappe challenged her listeners to rediscover the rewards of public life. Citizens in relation to each other solving common problems is how she explained this new understanding of democracy. Such a vision moves us beyond the limiting notions of the mechanical world view, she stated. Lappe summed up some philosophical background by saying that in the past this form of citizen democracy may not have been needed.

Then she made her case by arguing, "Today's problems are too complex, too inter-related, too great in scope to be solved by top-down authority. Solutions come from decisions made by people most directly affected and from the creativity of diverse points of view and experience. A commitment comes from the knowledge that people will benefit from sacrifices they are making. Sacrifices will be worth it when people know that they are able to keep decision makers directly responsible to them." This view of democracy as a way of life touching all of public relationships stands in contrast to the perspective of a set of laws and institutions carried out by experts.

Public life, Lappe stated, must be seen in a broad context. Included in her definition are all those areas beyond the most personal that shape the common life, in other words schools, work place, religious organizations, to name a few, as well as the formal political

sphere in which people take responsibility for making public choices. Seen in this way, public life is redignified and becomes supportive of private life, and not simply a device to protect private life. Together with this view of public life, citizenship also becomes redefined to mean, not simply accepting more onerous responsibilities, but building the capacity to participate.

Power also comes to be seen differently in this form of citizen democracy. In the mechanistic perspective, Lappe described power as being a one way force over others. In this zero-sum game, one wins at the other's expense. For instance, in the game of pool, the cue ball puts the eight ball in the side pocket. Power, in citizen democracy, is carried out in relationship with other people. The word "power" is defined as "to be able." Instead of a win-lose game, people are mutually enhanced. Closely related to this notion of power is the category of self-interest seen in a constructive light, which according to Lappe, is carried out by understanding the connection to others' self-interests.

Learning The Arts Of Citizenship

Citizen democracy does not simply come about from the birth of active, engaged citizens. Such arts of democracy must be learned: active listening, dialogue, negotiation, reflection, and creative controversy. As one of the founders and co-directors of the Institute for the Arts of Democracy, she seeks to help others discover these freeing concepts. In her most recent book, **Rediscovering America's Values**, she sets out a dialogue that looks at fundamental beliefs, which can offer hope for the future of this country.

She illustrated the art of listening by telling of an effort called The Listening Project based in North Carolina, in which workers go into communities, not with a set agenda, but to listen to what people are saying. In one such conversation, the workers visited a white middle-aged man and asked him to identify the main problem in his community. He immediately responded by saying that black teenagers were staying out on the streets late at night and making lots of noise. Lappe interjected that many socially conscious people may have simply written this man off as racist at that point, but the workers kept the man talking so that after awhile he came to the realization that the real problem was lack of employment for these youth. Then the problem solving for this social issue could begin.

Political imagination can be learned at a young age, as Lappe demonstrated when she told of a group of elementary children in southern Ohio who had been encouraged by their science teacher to take what they had learned in class and put it to practical use in the community. The motto put forward to these sixth graders by their teacher was stated, "I want to make a difference now, not in some far off distant future." The students discovered a chemical spill in their creek and said, "We don't trust the EPA." So they gathered chemistry equipment and constituted themselves into teams. Lappe recounted how they demonstrated an ability to think strategically when they told her, "You have to put one smart kid in each group." They became the water control team for their community.

When this class reached the eighth grade, they organized a boycott of the cafeteria because it was using plastic utensils. Lappe told how the principal called them into his office and told them to call off the boycott because the action was costing the school money. The students responded, "Call us back when you're serious." As a result, the principal relented and went back to metal utensils. The story does not end there, though, as the students returned to the principal and told him of their willingness to raise the necessary money with a bake sale and a car wash. Lappe concluded by pointing out that these students were learning the arts of democracy. They were not simply protesting; they were taking responsibility for problem solving and for the consequences of their actions.

Point Nanongabee Reserve Association Dedicates Land

As the Hay River meanders south of Prairie Farm, tall white pine trees populate the valley, while banks of layered sandstone occasionally border the stream. Farmers use adjoining land for pasture and crops. Such a peaceful setting gives little visible clue to the final battle in 1861 between the Dakota Sioux and the Chippewa, when the Chippewa drove the Sioux from the territory. Only a stone marker in Vanceburg Cemetery three miles south of Prairie Farm commemorates the event.

This area served as hunting grounds for Chief Nanongabee and his Chippewa tribe. Nanongabee was killed in the final battle; following the chief's death, his people lived on and from the land until they were removed to the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation (LCO) in the mid 1860s. According to Dr. Rick St. Germaine, former LCO tribal chair and now a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, "Nanongabee was the most colorful and articulate of all Anishinaabe chiefs of the treaty-making era." Along one bend in the river, there is a semicircle where the river flows north toward Barron County and south again to join the Red Cedar and Chippewa rivers. A small prairie is nestled in a flood plain, and grasses grow tall as they have never been cultivated. This place has been named "The Point," and people have gathered here for centuries as it is considered to be hallowed.

When Bob Albee learned that an 82 acre piece of land, on which the famous battle had been fought, was being offered for sale, he thought of a way for a group of people to purchase the property and create a conservation trust. Albee, who at one time helped to start a community radio station WOJB-FM at LCO and later lived adjacent to the historical site, brought up his idea to others at a Protect the Earth gathering at the reservation on Labor Day weekend of 1991. He proposed calling the land Point Nanongabee Reserve with the purpose of assuring the preservation and appreciation of the place for future generations.

Albee related, "During the pow wow when I held up the eagle feather and stampered through my telling of Point Nanongabee, I became connected to a story Amy Tan tells of an old Chinese woman who had carried a swan to America, a symbol of all she had dreamed about for a new life. Immigration officials confiscated the swan, but the old woman held onto one small feather. For a long time, she had wanted to give her daughter the single swan feather and tell her, 'This feather may look worthless, but it comes from afar and carries with it all my good intentions.' And she waited, year after year, for the day she could tell her daughter this in perfect English." He concluded, "For Point Nanongabee Reserve, and what the future might hold, I couldn't wait for the perfect words."

The response was overwhelming. One person came up to him and started the giving with a pledge of \$200. Others stood in line with \$20 bills. Still another couple hearing the story on WOJB-FM radio station on their way back to Milwaukee from the festival turned around and went back in order to contribute \$250 to the effort. Soon he was able to raise \$2800, more than enough to meet the earnest money of \$2000 needed to hold the property and begin payments on the \$20,000 asking price. A total of 100 people gave in the early stages to get the project going and became part of the Point Nanongabee Reserve Association. Instead of the one year that owners Ken and Virginia Smoot originally gave them to complete the purchase, they agreed to a two year payoff period because they were so impressed with the strong support and financial commitment. The Smoots even joined in contributing to the fund.



Photo by Layne Pitt courtesy of *Dunn County News*
Professor John Little Bird Anderson explains the concept of the Big Drum to a gathering of the Point Nanongabee Reserve Association at dedication ceremonies. The original Big Drum ceremony was used to make peace between the Chippewa and the Dakota Sioux.

In order to dedicate the land, about 100 people gathered at the The Point on October 27, 1991. A special blessing of the land was given by Archie Mosay from the St. Croix band of Chippewa; he was accompanied by Bill Sutton, another Chippewa elder from the LCO reservation. Then, the Dakota Sioux pipe carrier, Ed Godfrey, performed a traditional ceremony in which the four directions were honored; he was accompanied by Dakota singers and a drummer. Master of ceremonies Professor John Little Bird Anderson told stories from oral tradition of the tribe and the battle and explained the concept of the Big Drum and how it was used to make peace between the two tribes at the end of the battle.

Albee has been asked what is to be done with the land once it is purchased. He responded, "That is not for me to say. I have talked about making it available for urban Indians to use for sweat lodges and ceremonies, using the land as a way to learn how to design covenants and easements that will protect this land in perpetuity, local people gathering to compile historical accounts of the land for sharing with the children and the wider community, and whether the land could contain a large lodge where school children could come to learn about Indian history and culture."

In addition, another idea is to make the cultivated land available to the Hmong to grow medicinal herbs. Some university biologists may want to use the land for studies. "Most of all," Albee stressed, "I hope that the land can be used as a gathering place for Indian and non-Indian, Dakota and Anishanaabe, as a healing place — where new understandings and friendships can be nurtured and developed." Albee concluded, "Chief Nanongabee had a few things to say about land. I hope his words will be remembered and carried with the wind in all directions. I hope that we will set an example for others by learning about our lands' history, taking steps to protect it for future generations and learning how to create a commons, a place to be quiet and alone, a place to join with others in ceremony, festival and celebration, a place to observe, learn, teach, and make new friends."

Sand Creek Turns Over School Building To Community Group

By a vote of 45-7, the residents of the Town of Sand Creek decided to sell the school building for \$1.00 to the Sand Creek Arts, Recreation, and Theater Company (SCARTC). At the town meeting on December 3, 1990, the Town of Sand Creek, which is located 17 miles southeast of the Village of Prairie Farm, relinquished control over the building after 10 years. The nonprofit group was formed for two purposes. One was to preserve and maintain the school building. The second was to encourage arts, recreation, and theater. Plans are to use two rooms for a museum of the old school and the area. The gym and one room would be used for volleyball and basketball, as well as theater and plays.

Groups like 4-H and Luther League could use the facilities in addition to the community recreation programs. Also a couple of businesses may be interested in the cafeteria and another room for setting up specialty shops in order to sell craft items. Sandra Anderson tells how the effort began. "A few of us women had talked about ways to make better use of the old school building. Then when Pastor Dale Moe came to the community, he helped us to get going." Moe brought experience in community leadership from previous parishes and so was a natural for enabling people. "You don't have to be big to take on a community effort," Moe said. "It is just a matter of doing some work in order to see that things can happen. There is fun in being involved in small town life."

The informal committee that began moving the project along included herself, Moe, and Elaine Toyce, Adeen Johnson, and LouAnn Gilberts. Anderson recounted that the summer program started in 1990 gave youth involvement in sports and crafts. Now they will have a place to go. Anderson, who moved back to her home community two years ago after living in California, described life in rural Wisconsin as "less hectic and less expensive. I like it here," she stated. Adeen Johnson also moved back to her home town of Sand Creek after retiring from elementary school teaching in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The public library in Sand Creek is named after Adeen Johnson's mother — The Clarella Hackett Johnson Library. Adeen is the daughter of the late Clarella and Juno Johnson.

The group started, early on, working with a lawyer to gain tax-exempt status. They sought to gain money from grants in order to fix up the building. In addition they began planning an all-school reunion for the summer of 1992 with a fund raiser. They intend to do only as much repairs as finances permit. The Town of Sand Creek bought the building from the Chetek School District ten years ago when the Sand Creek School closed. Since then the building has stood vacant, except for the gym, which has been used for recreation.

Pastor Dale Moe, who serves the New Hope Parish of Sand Creek Lutheran Church and Pine Creek Lutheran Church, submitted the following piece telling of the Sand Creek School to the *Hay River Review* newspaper.

I am the Sand Creek School and I would like to tell you part of my story. I was conceived long before bricks were laid or cement was poured. My birth was in the dreams of immigrants who came to Wisconsin years before the windows were placed in my walls. As the Hendricksons, Gilberts, Nelsons, Toyce, Myrons, Andersons, and others built their houses, they dreamed of churches and schools. The church as a place to gather with others to worship God, and a school, a place to learn English and about presidents and of this new country.

There were other buildings before me, but I too was a dream. When I was built some 70 years ago I was the dream come true for many people. A large majestic place with large windows and many steps. A building that a small community was proud of and where they sent their children to learn. I was a building now that contained dreamers. Not that one can contain dreams. The children dreamed of recess and places to play, they dreamed of college and high school. They dreamed of places a long ways from Sand Creek. They dreamed when teachers wanted them to study. And got in trouble when they had that day dreamer's look on their face. But the teachers encouraged their dreams. The dreams of their parents of a better world, of better lives in other places and of a better life in this place.

There became a dream to add on to my building and soon that dream came true with two more class rooms and a gym to play in. And then about eight years ago my doors were closed. It was as if a dream had died. No longer did children gather within me to learn of presidents or math or learn how to read. It felt as if a part of this little world had died. But I am and was a dream. And my doors just could not stay shut. I had been a dream come true and dreams die hard. And so people found reasons to open my doors, reasons to gather within me for fun and for joy. Halloween and basketball games opened my doors and helped keep the dream alive.

This place continued to inspire more dreams. Maybe this place would not be what it once was, "but is it not possible to have dreams of this place like their immigrant parents had?" these dreamers would ask themselves. And so the dream continues. Some of my doors have received new paint, some of my floors have been scraped clean ready for new indoor-outdoor carpet. And people dream of a place where young and old can gather to play and laugh again, for I have good strong walls.

And a place where people can gather to learn about my past and their past. And this dream as other dreams needs work to come true, a new roof on the two newer class rooms and on the front entry way, new strong metal doors and a little bit of paint. I am a building for dreamers. I am a building in which many dreams were born and came true. And I continue to be a symbol of dreams.

Moe helped people catch sight of the dream for this old school and then do the work needed to make the dream a reality.

A large number of citizens turned out for a work day on June 15, 1991 to begin the effort of making the old school into a community center. Volunteer workers removed the ceiling tiles and floor tiles and tore up the carpet for the contractors to do their work. They found the old building to be in pretty good shape. Where there was a flat roof, the building had sustained water leakage, and the roof will need to be replaced. In addition, contractors will come in to install new exterior doors.

The community was able to start actual work on the building after the legal work had been completed in order to gain nonprofit status. A new board was then voted in. Pastor Dale Moe was elected chair; Elaine Toycen, secretary; and Carol Schoen, treasurer. Adeen Johnson will be responsible for the museum, while Sandra Anderson will work on the gift shop. LouAnn Gilberts will be in charge of recreation, and Pam Reetz will move ahead on the theater. The latter four people will form their own committees to expand the effort.

According to Johnson, the school played an important role in the lives of the people. She told how Victor Moe had recounted, "All I ever needed to know to get along in life, I learned at the Sand Creek School." Moe, who died in the summer of 1990, had a long standing interest in reading and had learned the tricks of spelling in elementary school.

Johnson told how another woman stated, "I was very sad when the school closed, because it seemed to go downhill. Now I am so excited to see it rehabilitated. I attended other schools while growing up, but Sand Creek was the school I really loved."

The board is collecting addresses of school alumni. They believe that over a thousand people went to the school. The collection of addresses is a learning experience in itself. People begin to recount the history of the school and the larger community, Johnson said. A newsletter Johnson started for the Sand Creek community is helping facilitate communication. Posters hung around town and word of mouth is getting the message out. Johnson sees the community becoming more united around this effort.

In another piece of original writing Pastor Dale Moe perceptively outlines four circles of conversation and tells how the completion of the school project could enhance one of those circles.

There are four circles of conversation in the Town of Sand Creek. The first circle is the 100 plus homes that make up the Town of Sand Creek. These are places where private conversations take place between family members and friends. These conversations take place sitting or standing, and no one outside of the conversation knows of their content. On occasion these conversations will be made public. These are the talks with friends visiting together. This is the small inner circle.

The second circle begins where public conversations take place. These are most often spoken standing up and in the businesses around town. These are not often long conversations, and very often done one to one. Others may listen in and are not frowned upon if they do. These occur at places like the Home Store, Security Bank, Heidi's Country Parlor, Gilberts Motors, Home Oil, Sand Creek Radio and TV, The Golden Hide, AMPI, Cenex, Clarella Hackett Johnson Library, Security Agency, and Gustum Plumbing.

The third circle consists of only four places: the cafe, post office, senior center, and the bars, (even though there are no bars in the Town of Sand Creek.) These are the places where people sit and visit. The conversations last much longer and usually involve a group. The Post Office is included because often, at 11:00 a.m. the group waiting for the mail grows. The post mistress knows who is out of town, and who is ill by the habits of people and when they get their mail. Of course, there are other conversations that she is also privy to. The other places are in this circle because here people sit and converse, and the conversations are more public.

The fourth circle involves the churches and the school. The churches are where the large groups of people gather for celebrations, funerals, major events in the lives of the families that make up Sand Creek. Faith Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Assemblies of God, New Hope, Alliance, and others are the places of these large gatherings. Also in this circle are the one day events: Art in the Park, the Firemen's Barbecue and Auction, Halloween, and the Valentine Supper.

When the school closed ten years ago, a part of this circle was lost. The school was a place for large events where the whole community could gather together. In finishing the work on the school building, this fourth circle could be complete again. Not a going back to the past, or trying to bring the past back again; that, of course, just sets one up for failure, but rather as a place for large gatherings.

Moe concluded by stating that such activities as plays, speakers, and musical groups added to those current events could bring to completion this fourth circle of conversation.

Community Supported Agriculture

A handful of families who had recently moved to the countryside in the Prairie Farm-Ridgeland area were exploring ways to make use of their land in a way that could provide a partial or full livelihood and that would also contribute to their goals of community building and environmental justice. In order to gain some insights, they invited Verna Kragness from the Philadelphia Community Farm of Osceola, Wisconsin to relate her experience in the starting of a community supported agriculture (CSA) venture. Kragness began by telling of the European origins of this concept where the citizens have faced times of food shortages in their history and have chosen CSAs as one way to insure the availability of food. She explained how the CSA development represents a cutting edge in the United States. "We want to get started before things get bad enough," she stated.

CSAs are distinguished from subscription farming, she pointed out, in that the latter appeals more to the consumer orientation in subscribing for a certain amount of produce, while the former involves more involved social principles. Some of the goals in the Philadelphia mission statement include the following: "producing organically grown, life sustaining food through community supported agriculture in which urban people are linked to a working farm, sharing responsibility for the land with the farmers"; "providing regenerative cultural, spiritual, artistic, and educational activities for children and adults"; "establishing a healing retreat environment for individuals, families, and organizations." Kragness elaborated by saying that CSAs run the spectrum from new economic arrangements, on the one hand, to social, educational, and therapeutic on the other hand.

Donna Goodlaxson and Jim Bruns were two of the people at the meeting. They garnered many ideas and put them together with their own plans for establishing a community supported farm. The two have taken out a three year lease on land near Prairie Farm that had been farmed organically and respectfully for twelve years. As the farmers of the effort called "40 Acres and Ewe", Goodlaxson and Bruns stated to their shareholders, "We promise to work to the best of our abilities, given the conditions of nature, to provide a weekly delivery of farm-fresh, organic vegetables from June through September. A weekly package will weigh approximately 10-15 pounds and provide basic vegetables for a family of four. As your farmers, we also promise to be responsible stewards of the land."

Members went through an involved process to arrive at a plan for farm finances. They ended up by saying in their explanatory material, "The farm belongs to the whole community. Member shares support the activities of the farm and are necessary to generate the harvest. Financial decisions are made by representatives of the community via the budget/finance committee. The farmers make initial budget recommendations which are then reviewed and amended by the committee. Final approval is made by the core group." Vegetable shares cost \$500 or more, while meat shares (vegetable share plus meat items), run \$700 or more. Shareholders were told that eggs would be available sometime in midsummer, while free-range chickens and poultry would begin in July, lamb, beef, and pork would be included in the fall, and a turkey ready for Thanksgiving. A sliding schedule was suggested for shares. Some members will pay more so that others can pay the base.

Members were given various opportunities: call phone tree, family outings, help to plant and harvest, participate in work day, serve as distribution site, recruitment, plan festivals, finance, and garden. The core group was not considered a governing body; rather, they have taken on responsibilities for farm finances, produce distribution, correspondence, and festivals. In this way Goodlaxson and Bruns can focus on farming.

Mike Racette and Patty Wright and their daughter Katie moved from Minneapolis, Minnesota three years ago. Since then they have been joined by a son David as they live on an eighty acre farm near Prairie Farm. Racette explained, "Moving to the country was merely a continuation of our already established choice to live simply and in accord with our vision of a better world. While some looked upon our decision as dubious, at best, there was little doubt for either of us that this was the right thing to do. Our dream was to, somehow, make a living off the farm and to extend that to a larger community."

Wright goes on to say, "Making a living means more to us than receiving enough money or goods to sustain our family physically. It is living in touch with the rhythms of the seasons and the cycle of life... maple syruping in the spring... gardening and planting in the summer... harvesting in the fall... cutting wood in the winter. It is working in accord with nature... taking care of the land... eating seasonally and regionally... returning the bounty to the earth. We both have a passion for farming."

They believe that the CSA based on their Spring Hill Farm with members drawn mainly from Minneapolis and St. Paul allows them to accomplish their goals. In addition, they see the CSA as a way for members of a community to gain access to good, fresh food through an informal distribution method and grown by people who are known and trusted. In addition a connection between friends, family, and the earth draws all of them together.

Ed and Fran Murray plan to make a CSA a part of their diversified farming operation. They intend to combine a small Grade A dairy operation and a school for teaching the handling of draft horses as well as training the horses. Ed and Fran, together with their son Todd, daughter Jaimee and her husband Kevin Granruth, and Fran's mother MaryAnn Hamilton live on their 280 acre farm near Ridgeland that has been named Belgian Hollow Farm. Ed originally hails from Wyoming where he worked on farms and ranches in the Laramie area, while Fran grew up in northern Minnesota. Now they have staked their life's savings on making this venture work among the rolling hills and meandering streams.

The Murrays work together with the other CSA farmers in that Ed and Fran raise the seedlings in their specially constructed greenhouse. Whereas Goodlaxson and Bruns, Wright and Racette are building on their contacts in the Twin Cities area to gain members, the Murrays are looking to smaller communities in Wisconsin, such as Menomonie, Eau Claire, Rice Lake, and Chetek. A drop-off spot was chosen in each town where the members would receive their produce. A full share should yield 10 pounds of swiss chard, 5 pounds of spinach, 10 pounds of cabbage, 10 bunches of radish, 5 pounds of peas, 10 pounds of snap beans and carrots, 25 pounds of cucumbers, summer squash, tomatoes, 50 pounds of potatoes, 10 pounds green peppers, muskmelon, watermelon, 50 ears of sweet corn, along with a number of other vegetables including pumpkins, rutabaga, turnips, kohlrabi, and assorted other produce. In all they have approximately 45 different products. Ed and Fran Murray have this desire, "Using the CSA program, we can all continue to devote the time needed to accomplish our goals, we can feed our families, and we can be good stewards of the gifts God has given to us."

These three families are among a growing number of people involved either as farmers or members in CSAs. The Minnesota Food Association (MFA) based in St. Paul reported in April 1992 that 11 farms would serve their shareholders in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. Just the year before there were five. Five years earlier none were reported in the region. MFA has acted as a clearinghouse for people both involved and interested in CSAs. For instance in January 1992, they sponsored a day-long workshop on CSA together with Common Harvest Farm, Land Stewardship Project, Philadelphia Community Farm, St. Paul Food and Nutrition Commission, and the Self Reliance Center. Nearly 250 urban and rural people showed up — twice as many as they had expected.

Part III

Biblical And Theological Perspectives on Earthkeeping

"Shortly after the ARC Retreat Community was established, we asked a forester who worked for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources how we should care for the seventy acres of forest, marsh and creeks that was given to us for a retreat center. I expected a scientific answer and was ready with clip board and pen to record what we should do. After looking at the property with its beautiful tall white pines, assorted hard and soft woods, the meandering creek, the marshes and meadows, his answer was simple. 'I think you should do three things,' he said. 'First, live with it. Second, find out what it is trying to do. And third, join it.' At first I was disappointed with such a simple answer for such a complex system. But the more I have pondered over that advice in the past years and the more I have seen the elaborate and complicated efforts fail to improve much less even sustain life, the more I realize the truth hidden in what first struck me as an almost simplistic response. But, as a friend wrote some years ago commenting on the profundity of the simple responses coming from his grandchildren, 'I've paid a lot of tuition for less.'

"The forester from the Department of Natural Resources invited us not to force our agenda on the land but to live gently with it. In other words, he was inviting us to live graciously with the land. I believe we are here on this earth not to be its masters but its partners joining sensitively in the process already at work for the sustaining and renewing of life. Living gently with nature and allowing ourselves to be instructed can lead to the recovery of the wisdom that has eroded from the land. There is an old English word that was used in earlier generations to express the confidence that there already was in the created order a process for protecting and regenerating life. That word is "providence." I believe it was present in our conversations at ARC not perhaps in the language we used but it was in the values we shared. One evidence of this was the repeated reference to a psalm verse used in the opening worship: 'You give breath, fresh life begins, You keep renewing the world' (Psalm 103:30)."

— **Regeneration of Land, Life and Spirit. An Essay/Report** by Loren Halvorson based on a July 19-20, 1990 retreat at the ARC Retreat Center in central Minnesota in which Dean and Elsie Freudenberger were honored guests upon first coming to the upper Midwest.

Living Word Encounters

"Let's stop having Bible studies," is how John Schramm began his presentation at the 1991 National Conference on Rural Ministry at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. John, together with his spouse Mary Schramm, the co-authors of **Things That Make For Peace: A Personal Search for A New Way of Life**, were asked to speak from a biblical perspective on how the rural church can respond to environmental issues. To begin, John asserted, "I do not want to see the Bible Americanly. I want to see my country biblically." Sometimes the Bible is translated in an individualistic way, he said. For instance John told how 2 Corinthians 5:17 can be literally translated, "If anyone is in Christ, new is creation." Instead the RSV reads, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."

John contended that the problem with many Bible studies is that students of the Bible examine the Bible to see what it has to say. He argued that people of faith should be open to what Martin Luther called "living word encounters." In this way, the Bible functions in a provocative manner to call to vocation. A response must come in the form of a "yes" or "no" to the address. Those who are willing to engage in "living word encounters" can gain a new perception of reality. This heightened consciousness in regard to the environment shows how people are creatures of the earth who are connected with the rest of creation. Also, as creatures, people of the earth must admit to being culpable for abuse of creation.

Storytellers, Contemplatives, And Songwriters

In the body of his presentation, John proceeded to give three suggestions for life in the parish: storytellers, contemplatives, and songwriters. Storytellers help us to remember, while contemplatives share what they see, and songwriters enable us to praise the Creator.

Storytellers Who Help Us Remember

This age has come back to a time of storytelling, John pointed out. As evidence, he told how there are now more videos than books at the library closest to him in his community. At the same time this culture would have us forget, he stated. In contrast to this message, John offered, the Bible calls people to remember. With the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, the words are spoken, "Remember you are dust." This statement sums up an important emphasis of the biblical message. Genesis speaks of how God formed humans from the dust of the earth, and the Hebrew scriptures use the word "dust" over 100 times.

The word "remember" is employed in the Lord's Supper, John stated, so that people of faith are called to remember that their identity is one of a wilderness people dependent upon manna or daily bread. "The problem comes in that we find it hard to pray for bread when we own the bakery," John stated. The environmental crisis is primarily an identity crisis, then, John asserted, because the temptation comes to forget who we are. With that biblical basis, John recounted a story he heard from John Douglas Hall, author of **Imaging God**. The story illustrates the importance of acknowledging personal culpability.

A scientist was giving a presentation about the problems he had discovered bugs were having along the Lower Saskatoon River in Canada. After giving a detailed description of the bugs, a member of the audience asked why the problems had arisen. The scientist responded, "How should I know; I'm just a guy who likes to study bugs." When the questions of why became more persistent, he surmised that pollutants flowing into the river

were causing the problems. As more questions of why became directed towards him, he stated, "I realize now that something is really wrong here, and I suspect it is me."

Contemplatives Who Will Share What They Have Seen

According to John Schramm, those whose attention is focused on the environment need people who can see and then share with the rest what they have seen. Contemplatives are such people who reflect on the interconnections within this world. John quoted extensively from *The Trees Clap Their Hands* by Virginia Stein Owens as one who sees. In one such citation, Owens writes, "I call myself a spy. I pick up the secrets discovered by both scientists and spiritualists. I stuff them into my pockets and go about my business undetected and watchful." John asserted on the basis of her book that the biblical writers were correct when they spoke of a living, conscious cosmos; matter is not just inert, dead stuff. He went on to quote from Owens, "Only a full embrace of the incarnation can open our eyes to an interpenetrating of all beings, its redemption of the whole cosmos, which is the biblical point. Groaning the whole universe waits with eager longing."

Songs Of The Universe

"Unless we have praise, we will not have what we need," John Schramm stated for the importance of songs in the faith community. He went on to say that we come to the truth by hunches; singing praise helps us do that. John referred to Karl Barth in his third book on dogmatics, "Humankind is created, but of humankind, Christians are those who not only know they are creatures, but say yes to their creaturehood." Barth proceeds based on Isaiah 55, "We are invited into a banquet. We come into this banquet and sit with publicans, beasts, plants, and stones." Even the trees shall clap their hands, the Bible says.

John Schramm stated that now is a *kairos* time. In stressing the urgency, he quoted Thomas Berry, "The devastation of the earth has become the destiny of humankind." The question to be asked, according to John, is, "Can we live connected to the rest of creation?" The goal is to seize the moment, John offered, in order to work toward a world that is more human and toward an earth that is a community. John concluded by having songwriter Ray MaKeever lead in the singing of an original composition "Even The Stones Will Cry."

Vision, Plan, And Response

When Mary Schramm spoke, she also organized her presentation into three parts. God gives a vision, and that vision is of shalom. Following is a plan, and that plan is oikonomia. Then comes the response, and that response is metanoia.

Vision Of Shalom

Mary Schramm began by inviting people to look at God's Word and to ask, why are we such slow learners in responding to this unprecedented environmental crisis. "We cannot survive as a human race if we do not take care of our home," she asserted. God's vision is summed up in the word, "shalom," Mary told, and that word is used more than 250 times in the Hebrew scriptures. Shalom never was simply a private peace, but signified unity and wholeness in the context of community and for all of God's creation. She quoted extensively from the often neglected books of Leviticus and Ezekiel to speak of how God's vision of shalom encompasses people, animals, the soil and water, and all the earth. "Shalom will happen, God says, when just lifestyles are observed," Mary pointed out.

In the Garden of Eden, Mary continued, the vision of shalom is most clearly portrayed as God placed everything in relationship — light and darkness, sea and dry land, humans, animals, and plants. The problem came when human inhabitants chose not to live within the limits set by God but instead tried to be like God. Mary cited Reinhold Neibuhr, who

spoke of how we have refused to acknowledge our humanity and separated ourselves from God. In the words of Thomas Berry in **Dream of the Earth**, "We have changed the topography, the chemistry, altered the bio-system. We have even changed the geological structure of the planet — structures and functions that have taken billions of years to bring into existence. Never before has change of this magnitude entered into earth history or human consciousness." Berry goes on in his book, as recounted by Mary, to speak of a vision that tells how the destiny of humankind is related to the integrity of the creation.

Plan Of Oikonomia

God has a plan for implementing this vision, Mary continued, and this plan is laid out in Ephesians 1:9-10, "For God has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of God's will according to the purpose which was set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth." The word for plan, Mary stated, is "oikonomia," from which we get ecology, ecumenism, and economics. Ecology has to do with the connection of all created things; ecumenism with the relationship of all people; and economics the stewardship, guardianship, and responsibility.

Oikonomia can also be spoken of as "home economics," but as Mary told, this is not the same as what most people think of as the high school course of the past, which had to do mainly with cooking and sewing. Now home economics has also to do with parenting and budgeting, maintaining the equipment, and hospitality — all that is needed to live in harmony, Mary offered. She then recounted how a friend, who operates a hospitality house for international students, said, "It seems like we treat the earth like the way we treat international students and refugees; we don't understand them, they're different. They speak a different language, and because they're different and we don't understand them, we think of ourselves as superior and the others as subservient to us." Mary then appealed for a greater understanding and appreciation of the wonders of creation, so that as humans we do not necessarily regard ourselves as so superior as to believe we can crush lesser things.

Response Of Metanoia

"Today the church does not seem to be responding to the scientific prediction that by the year 2000, if we do nothing to change the way we are now living, the earth will lose the capacity to regenerate itself," Mary stated in her concluding section. She then asked why the church has been so slow to address the integrity of creation as being of greater importance and gave some historical and religious perspectives.

- Christians have been ambiguous about the world and believe it is better to be detached.
- Other Christians have believed in the rapture, and that God's will is manifest in wars that speed up the destruction of the earth.
- New Testament Christians believed Jesus was coming soon, and there was no need to plan ahead, because they had all the revelation they needed.
- A split between the scientific and religious communities occurred over the reason for plagues of diseases, with the former looking for explanations in science and the latter attributing the suffering to sinfulness.
- The church has been man-centered, and in this hierarchy nature becomes subservient.
- Some make pious statements that God will provide, thereby evading responsibility.

Mary Schramm then appealed for a willingness to speak the truth about the urgency of the environmental crisis. In referring to **Imaging God**, by John Douglas Hall, she said that Christians are not pessimists or optimists, but those who live with hope and truth. Instead of power and dominion, she invited people of faith to live with an image of God as compassion, righteousness and justice; as a servant willing to give up everything; and as a mother, friend, lover. The church, she believes, needs a metanoia or change of heart in order no longer to view the earth as borrowed from our children but inherited from ancestors.

Global Perspectives On Farming And The Future

Dean Freudenberger is uniquely qualified to provide global perspectives on farming and the future. At the age of 20, he left his home in California to cross the country and the Atlantic Ocean where he traveled through war-torn regions of Western Europe and then spent a summer with young people building an orphanage in Southwest Germany. After many years of study in college, seminary, and graduate school, he spent 17 years of service as an agricultural missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Eleven of those years involved working in the continent of Africa. He saw six major continents, the world of the Pacific and Caribbean Islands, and the seas of the globe. Through his many years, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean more than 100 times and the Pacific Ocean eight times. In a major address at the Tenth Annual Rural Ministry Conference at the University of Dubuque and Wartburg Seminaries in March of 1991, he related some of his insights based on that experience.

Fragile Ecosystem A Result Of Abuse

One of the most graphic consequences of environmental degradation can be seen in Africa. Freudenberger described this continent of 6,000 miles in length and 3,000 miles in width as drying up as a result of nearly 300 years of Western European colonization with the introduction of slave trade, as well as competition during the cold war and industrialization. Having recently returned from the country of Senegal in West Africa where he visited his son and daughter-in-law working there in landscape rehabilitation, Freudenberger offered striking images. "Forests are dying, even 300 year old baobab trees with diameters of 20 feet or more at the base of the trunk. We saw vast herds of poor conditioned cattle, goats, horses, and donkeys, and rural poverty in the villages and massive congestions in the major cities," he stated.

Freudenberger — who is a Methodist minister, Christian ethicist, international agronomist, and as of the fall of 1990 professor of pastoral theology and ministry, church and society at Luther-Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota — gave a brief historical account of how slavery and colonization have made for hunger and poverty as well as environmental disaster. Through the walls of the slave compound of the island city of Goree off the coast of Senegal's capitol city of Dakar passed 180,000,000 people who were carried to the boats and transported to nations throughout the world. "Out went hundreds of years of cultural values, generative agricultural technology, with all its wisdom and ethical constraint. In the vacuum of destroyed communities of people came western European cash cropping systems, research and development of corn, peanuts, coffee, tea, pyrethrum, cocoa, rubber, copra, palm oil, cotton, and much more," he asserted. The Europeans were never interested in domestic self-reliance, he contended.

Much the same kind of degradation can be observed in other parts of the world. For instance, Freudenberger told how the forests of tropical hardwood are being logged off across the Pacific islands. "Timber export, coconut for copra export, mineral exports, cultural breakdowns from poverty and out-migration to the U.S.A., Australia, and New Zealand is the norm. In the Caribbean it is sugar cane and social and environmental demise," he explained. Export thinking dominates also in Southeast Asia, Freudenberger outlined, in rubber, rice, and forest products. Throughout the countries of Pakistan, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, and now China, grains are being planted that are depen-

dent on petroleum-based imports, such as herbicides, fungicides and insecticides. On another continent, Freudenberger pointed out how colonialism produced much the same results in Latin America. "... the loss of memory and wisdom, human values and the ability to care for the land and community, export infrastructure of agricultural research, transportation and processing, irrevocable soil loss, ...and environmental degradation unfolds with growing momentum," Freudenberger explained.

Based upon his experience over the course of 42 years of service with the churches in more than 100 nations, he offered the following observations:

- Environmental degradation and irrevocable loss in soil and water continues unabated as the result of farming systems that focus upon wealth generation and balance of trade and budget deficit adjustments as the primary purpose of farming in our time.
- With massive grassland and forest clearing for agriculture, and accompanying rapid oxidation of organic matter, light and heat reflection into the atmosphere (albedo effect from clearing of grasslands and forests) and wind and rain erosion, I detect massive climatic change. Toxicity in the global food system is out of control.
- I observe the massive global dependence on oil for farm power, fertilizer, pesticides, transportation, processing and packaging, all developed during the heady days of the "Green Revolution" where plants were genetically designed to be highly receptive to soluble nitrogen. David Pementel and colleagues at Cornell University calculate that if every nation used (an annual per capita) 400 gallons of oil in the process of food production, which is the average energy budget in the U.S.A. food system, all known oil reserves would be depleted by 1996. Given this reality, and the reality of 24 billion metric tons of soil loss from global farming, this leaves us with about six percent of the earth's entire surface, by the end of this century, arable for farming.

Freudenberger concluded from these observations that this abuse of the earth has made for a massive crisis. Industrial agriculture, he contended, would be impractical and immoral to continue to follow. "We must find an alternative which will get us onto a renewing, sustaining, and enhancing track in world agriculture — a track of closed energy systems rather than linear and open-ended — a system that holds itself accountable for the benefit of all life for future generation," he argued.

New Shift In Value Orientation Needed

How can this alternative be realized? Freudenberger believes that a different moral understanding must be discovered. In his address, "The Ecology of Human Existence: Renewed Considerations For Ministry And Mission Of The Church In The American Heartland Today" presented at the South Dakota Synod Assembly in Sioux Falls, South Dakota in June of 1991, this noted ethicist called for a shift in value orientation. The problem can be defined, "The goodness of God's creation is being diminished as a consequence of abusive human behavior. The vision of our ancient Hebrew-Christian heritage is threatened by modern humanity. The vision of the opening chapter of Genesis, that unsurpassed literary marvel which functions as the prelude to the scriptures, is being shattered."

A shift from a human centered perspective to that of human interdependence with the rest of the earth is what is needed in our day, Freudenberger contended. "An ecological understanding of human existence acknowledges the fact of the interdependency of life and the integrity of life's uncountable patterns of dependency. We now know that global security, in a full ecological sense, is dependent on the maximumization of biological diversity,"

he stated. "There is a recognition that much more than immediate human welfare considerations are involved in moral behavior and decision making."

With this shift in value orientation, Freudenberger continued, must also come a change of the commonly accepted world view. The problem here, he believes, is that humans are placed outside of creation which results in the domination and manipulation of the created order. "This is quite the opposite of an ecological understanding of existence," he countered. "We have made the self-serving claim that creation is subordinate to humanity. Male dominates female. Rich dominate the poor. White dominates black. In modern times, modern humanity has set out to dominate, control, and change the natural system."

Freudenberger then asked the question, "Can the church transcend the cultural mindset?" A key here is the way in which various parts of the system relate to each other. At this point, he quoted Aldo Leopold to the effect, "A thing is right when it contributes to the integrity, beauty, and harmony of the biotic community. It is wrong if it goes the other way." Until the church can come to this point in its world view, it falls short in moral thinking and behavior, he argued. Humans, according to the Hebrew vision, are given the land as a gift in order to be trustees, he pointed out.

As a participant in ecumenical social deliberations over the years, Freudenberger referred to a statement from the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Vancouver in 1983 and further explained at Canberra in 1990 that helps to give expression to a vision of peace, justice, and the integrity of creation.

We need ethical guidelines for a participatory society which will be both ecologically responsible and economically just, and can effectively struggle with the powers which threaten life and endanger our future.

Justice, he believes, means right relationships between the land and its inhabitants.

Furthermore, Freudenberger argued that "sustainability" must be made an important part of the concept of justice. "A growing element of the idea of responsible society is that the structure of society be sustainable or regenerative. We ask: how can a society, even a global society, so organize itself that its lifestyle (science, technology, industry, economic order) and support systems are engineered to be sustainable? How can a nation's agriculture, for example, be designed so that it does not exhaust the human and natural resource base essential for its existence, nurture, and productivity and future?" he stated.

Freudenberger contended that the work must be an expression of gratitude to God because of the gift of this earth and also the trusteeship that God has imparted. "The foundational values of the tasks of ministry and mission are the values of faithfulness to justice, meaningfulness in our relationships of life and work, commitment to the renewal and preservation of life in all its forms, and commitment to the welfare of the uncountable generations yet to be born," he pointed out.

Freudenberger concluded this presentation, as he does many talks, with a prayer from the 7th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra for this broken world:

Come Holy Spirit, renew our creation
-giver of life, sustain your creation
-spirit of truth, set us free
-spirit of unity, reconcile your people
-Holy Spirit, transform us and sustain us

With this prayer, Freudenberger believes, people of faith commit themselves to work for a sustainable global farming system, for justice, for peace, and for the integrity of creation.

Preparing For A Post-petroleum Future

"What does a post-petroleum food system look like?" asked Dean Freudenberger in his address "Emerging Tasks For Mission In Rural America" as part of the Power and Powerlessness event at Luther-Northwestern Theological Seminary in May of 1991. Freudenberger wondered out loud how much longer the earth can withstand the abusive practices of humans. If present consumptive practices continue, he asserted, the world may very well run out of fossil fuels sometime before the end of the first half of the next century. The human purpose, he insisted, is to contribute to the ongoing tasks of human creation. Integral to this task is to tell the truth of the magnitude of the problem; that truth, he believes, is the necessity of preparing for a post-petroleum future.

Freudenberger went on to give his analysis of how the present social structure takes its toll on the ecosystem. "The rural sector is being colonized, as power is being controlled in the hands of people from outside," he stated. "As a result, producers of farm products are being marginalized, and the landscape is being ruined." In alluding to **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** by Paulo Freire, Freudenberger argued that a similar raising of consciousness is needed for people to catch a vision. People of a faith tradition possess a unique resource for addressing the enormity of the problem, he continued. A sense of place and farming as a way of life becomes important to lift up, he told. Operating out of this perspective, people can develop an environmental ethic, he suggested, that speaks of reverence and awe.

Outrage is a virtue, according to Freudenberger, as the task involves public policy and advocacy. He went on to add that the market has to be structured to serve people, not people to serve the market. In asking the question, "What does the land require of us?", he answered by saying, "Decentralization." In his mind, large vertically integrated conglomerates like ConAgra do not have the best interests of the land at heart, only the bottom line of profit margin. Freudenberger sees positive developments in sustainable agriculture, as more people inside and outside of farming are convinced of the need for a perma culture where the land can continue to support people.

Crusader With A Cause

Dean Freudenberger is a man possessed by a mission. In the case of his post at the seminary, he was asked to come by President Dr. David Tiede to raise the kind of questions with which the seminary needed to struggle for the next 50 years. Word has it that he is making waves in his short time there so far; and he promises to do more of the same as he is trying to raise the consciousness of both the students and the faculty. From his position, he travels and speaks tirelessly. Shortly after finishing his talk mentioned at the top of this page, he headed over to the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota to address members of the faculty at the agricultural campus. Most likely he spoke to them in the same kind of straightforward manner he used for people in the religious tradition.

At another of the conferences where he was the keynote speaker, Trends in the North and Tasks of the Rural Church in Marshfield, Wisconsin in February of 1991, he surprised the conferees by challenging them, "Keep coming back for at least the next ten years to carry on the work." Wherever he goes he prods people to keep going over the long haul for the commitment to care for God's creation. At that conference, he came up to me and asked, "When am I going to receive your next publication?" When I tried to explain to him that I had written four booklets in four years and was thinking of maybe taking some time off, he was insistent. His prompting is partially responsible for my going back to work on this effort. Having a crusader with a cause, like Dean Freudenberger, gives urgency and intensity to the work of all of us concerned for the future of farming and the earth.

Preaching And Worship On Care Of The Earth

Preaching and worship can be important ways to bring about a greater awareness of the care of the earth. Used effectively, these two avenues can empower people to put their faith

Preaching On Care Of The Earth

At the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology, Midwest Regional near Madrid, Iowa in August 1988, Pastor S. Roy Kaufman from Sterling, Illinois presented a paper on "Ecological Themes In Preaching." In this chapter I would like to draw on two parts from his presentation — biblical themes for preaching ecological concerns and an outline of a sermon series on a sustainable future.

Biblical Themes For Preaching Ecological Concerns

- 1.) Ecological Consequences of Sin and Grace: Kaufman suggested that a place to begin is to examine how nature bears the consequences of human sin. In Genesis 3:17ff, the balance is disrupted, and humankind is forced to raise food by hard labor. The prophets also link the desecration of the environment with human irresponsibility; in this regard Kaufman cites Jeremiah 5:18-31, Isaiah 24:1-6, and Hosea 4:1-3. Grace is manifested in the biblical witness, according to Kaufman, in passages that speak of a new heaven and new earth, esp. Isaiah 65-66, Revelation 21-22, and Ezekiel 36.
- 2.) Land — Promise to the Landless, Threat to the Landed: Kaufman acknowledges his dependence upon Walter Brueggemann, particularly the book, **The Land**, which shows how biblical people move back and forth between landedness and landlessness.
- 3.) Gospel Paradox — Grasping and Losing, Yielding and Receiving: In Mark 8:34-38, Matthew 5:5, Luke 1:46-55; 12:13-14, Kaufman states, "...the message is drummed home that the tighter and closer we humans look out for ourselves, the more likely we are to lose all, and the freer and looser we can be and the more we can trustingly work with God's ways and processes, the more likely we are to be granted life in abundance."
- 4.) Land Tenure Policy in the Old Testament: The Bible wrestles with issues of land control, access to the land, and decision making on how the land is to be used, Kaufman asserts. In order to avoid a land monopoly, Kaufman points out, the provisions for the Sabbath and Jubilee are enjoined as well as a call to remember the poor and strangers.
- 5.) Biblical Lessons on Sustainable, Appropriate Technology: Kaufman makes his case here by stating, "From a biblical point of view, the problem is that we are sinful creatures, and while our sinful state does not or has not blocked our creative abilities to make inventions and to alter and change nature, it has warped our sense of knowing limits and understanding appropriate technological applications."
- 6.) Ecology, Economy, and Ecumenicity — Toward a New Testament Household Economy: This theme is fruitful for a series of sermons, Kaufman offers, as he once preached seven messages on *oikonomieo*, which has to do with ordering life in the home. This ordering involves the whole network of relationships that constitutes life on earth.
- 7.) The Place and Role of Humankind in Creation: In doing an exposition of Genesis 2, Kaufman believes a balance can be struck between the uniqueness of humankind and also the humility of being made from dust and dependent upon breath. Psalm 104 also helps to set humankind within the context of all creation, Kaufman states. One helpful resource, Kaufman suggests, may be chapter 1 "Earthkeepers in Eden" from **Hope for the Family Farm** by Ronald Guengerich in which the author shows how dominion in Genesis 1 speaks of service under God rather than a license to abuse the earth.

Sermon Series On "Envisioning A Sustainable Future"

- 1.) **Ecology: Affirming Our Place In Creation** — In this message, people can be helped to understand that humans are part of creation and must live in relationship to the other parts. Also there are ecological implications to what God has accomplished in Christ. Texts include: Luke 12:35-48; Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5-9, 15-17; 3:16-24; 4:8-17; Romans 8:18-25.
- 2.) **Technology: Choosing the Appropriate Tools** — Kaufman explains this theme by saying, "In order to develop sustainable ways of living, we need to choose the appropriate tools carefully, making sure that we count the cost involved, examining our motives in developing technologies, and rejecting those technologies which destroy the living communities of humans and living things." Texts include: Genesis 4:19-26; 11:1-9; Leviticus 25:1-7; Luke 14:25-33.
- 3.) **Theology: Putting God First** — When God is first in the life of God's people, then the rightful place becomes one of stewards and co-workers with God, rather than isolated and separate from God. Only in this way can human communities be made sustainable. Texts include: Deuteronomy 8:1-20; Luke 12:13-34; Micah 6:6-8; Mark 10:17-31.
- 4.) **Economy: Ordering Our Lives Justly** — Injustice brings about the abuse of the earth, Kaufman asserts, so to live sustainably means finding ways to live justly. An important part of this area is land tenure policy in order to ensure that the many rather than the few have access to the land. In addition, Kaufman states, "Economic decision-making must be returned to its rightful place — the household, rather than being a function of the marketplace, the government, or the technician." Texts include: Leviticus 25:8-24; Deuteronomy 15:1-15; 1 Kings 12:1-20; Ephesians 4:1-16.

Worship On Care Of The Earth

Through the years, I have come across worship resources that have enabled church people to focus on care of the earth. Following are some of the materials I have found helpful. These are meant to be more suggestive than exhaustive.

Rogationtide

Rogationtide as a part of the church calendar traces its origins more than 1,500 years ago in the city of Vienne, France where bad weather, fires, and earthquakes brought crop failures and widespread hunger. Saint Mamertus, the Bishop of Vienne, called for prayer and penance on the three days preceding Ascension Day. By the end of the eighth century, this practice became formally adopted by the church, and Rogationtide became part of the church calendar. A three-fold emphasis has developed with asking for forgiveness of sins, imploring protection from natural disasters, and beseeching for good crops. Philip H. Pfatteicher has prepared a four page piece, "The Stewardship of Creation," giving the history and a worship service, which can be ordered from Division for Congregational Life, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631-4168. The Lutheran Liturgical, Box 21201, Lehigh, Pennsylvania 18002 provides a Family Activities for Rogationtide for Rogation Sunday through Wednesday.

Earth Day

On Earth Day 1991, I used a story sermon telling of the life of Elzeard Bouffier from **The Man Who Planted Hope and Grew Happiness** by Jean Giono. During his life, Bouffier transformed a desolate area in southeast France into woods and forest through the methodical planting of acorns. The booklet can be ordered from Friends of Nature, Brooksville, Maine 04617. Another possible story sermon could be on John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, whose work grew out of his faith in God. William White, in his book **Speaking in Stories**, gives an excellent account of Muir's life. White's book is available from Augsburg Fortress, 426 S. 5th St., Box 1209, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440. As

from Augsburg Fortress, 426 S. 5th St., Box 1209, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440. As for worship resources, the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology, P.O. Box 14305, San Francisco, California 94114 can be contacted for materials.

Soil And Water Stewardship

Soil and Water Stewardship is an emphasis I have used for many years in late April or May. Its origins can be traced to the early part of this century when some congregations in the southern part of the United States commemorated "Soil and Soul Sunday." The editors of *Farm and Ranch* magazine made the suggestion to church leaders, in 1946, that one Sunday be set aside to call attention to the responsibilities to the land. With that impetus Soil Stewardship Sunday was started. Starting in 1954, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) sponsored a Sunday observance of this emphasis and the following year expanded it to a week. A packet of materials, (including a new theme each year), with a reference booklet, bulletin inserts and covers, worship litany including hymns and biblical passages, clip art, news releases, and children's materials may be ordered from NACD Service Department, 408 E. Main, P.O. Box 855, League City, Texas 77574-0855.

Some years I have invited elementary students who have participated in a county soil conservation speaking contest to give their talk as a part of the service. Other years I have asked one of the farmers to speak of what soil and water conservation means to them. Another idea is to show a film or slide show or videotape about stewardship. Still another possibility is to hold a service in the barn of a sustainable stewardship farm and then tour its conservation practices after a noon meal.

"Creation: Called To Freedom"

During the summer of 1991 the Luther Park Bible Camp of Chetek, Wisconsin focused on care of the earth with the campers. On Sunday mornings, staff members presented a worship service called "Creation: Called to Freedom" to congregations in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. This service could be adapted for the locale and situation.

LET'S GET READY

Prelude and Announcements

Beginning

L: In a land of pines and palms, sun and water we gather to worship our God.

P: We are God's people. Splashed with promise!

L: The Creator's promise takes us through all the seasons and surprises us with grace hidden among the colors of every race.

P: With the power of the creative word we are called to freedom.

L: The Holy Wind sings a freedom song.

P: God orders the chaos surrounding our lives and gives us light to see a hidden redemptive presence.

L: So we begin this day with the sign of the cross in the name of our God: Father, + Son, Holy Spirit.

P: With a splash and a word of promise we are called to freedom.

Entrance Song: "All Creatures of Our God and King"

Dying to Sin

All: Cover us with your mercy, O God. We forget so easily and quickly. Forgive us for failing to witness the power of your love with those with whom we work. Forgive us for not seeing your grace hidden deeply within creation. Uncover our busyness as an excuse and cover our sin with mercy. Our gentle, loving, caring hands have already turned into fists of anger. Restore us Lord to your new creation and help us to start all over again.

L: Do you renounce the devil and all his works and ways?

P: We do!

L: Do you reject the old, the dead, the life apart from God?

P: We do!

P: We are called to live free as God's people.

L: Will you live in your baptismal covenant, a life of service to the Lord, a life of giving and forgiving?

P: We will! In the name of the Father, + Son and Holy Spirit we will start all over again.

Rising to New Life

L: If we become one with Him in dying as He did, in the same way we shall be one with Him by being raised to life as He was.

P: Our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

L: We know that Christ has been raised from death and will never die again — death has no more power over him.

P: The death he died was death to sin, once and for all; The life he now lives is life to God.

L: We are God's creation! We are called to freedom.

P: It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

All: Amen!!

Hymn: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

Prayer of the Day (In unison)

The mountains echo your majesty, creator God. The hills roll with amusement. The oceans clap with praise, and the wind whistles for joy through the leaves on the trees. How wonderfully gracious you are. Enable us to see your redemptive power even in creation. Free us to celebrate life in your image, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

First Lesson Genesis 1:26-31

Psalm Psalm 65

Second Lesson Galations 5:1, 13-15

Gospel John 3:16-18

Special music

Message

WE RESPOND

Creation Creed

I believe that God has created me and all that exists.

He has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers.

He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day.

God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil.

All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it.

Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true. (Martin Luther's explanation to the first article of the Apostles Creed)

Offering and Offertory "Create in me a clean heart"

Closing Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Response of Faith

L: I hear God's voice in the vision of men and women who call us to a better way, a higher hope. We are God's creation! We are called to freedom.

P: For God works miracles in common clay pots,

Changing caterpillars to butterflies,

Changing seeds to oak trees and night to day,

Changing winter to springtime,

Changing lives from ordinary to abundant

L: We as God's celebrants dance through this world together.

P: Listening to God's music

responding to God's word,

praising God with clapping hands and moving feet,

praising God with justice and mercy and humbleness,

Part IV

Keepers Of The Earth

"We who believe in sustainable ag, believe that we are all captains of our own ships. We believe that there is a more natural and less pollutant way to farm and we don't mind being independent, going against the grain a little bit, and do what we feel is natural and right for our cattle, our land, our environment and ourselves. Hopefully the days are gone when farmers who overspend, overexpand, and overpollute, stop putting the blame on the bank, or credit services when they get in trouble because the chemical company told us to do it, the university people because they told us to do it, or some farm publications because they told us to do it. We are the captain of our own ship and we alone bear the responsibility for our success. Our own common sense should be the rule.

"Now, a little bit about me so that you know that, like you, I am at least trying to do something about the environment in my little corner of the world. My wife Suzanne and I and family were fortunate to be named Wisconsin's Outstanding Conservation Farmers for 1990. That of course does not mean that I know everything because I don't. I just try to do my best with what I have. Like most sustainable farmers I mistrust advice from universities and farm publications unless it passes the acid test of common sense.

"I am making money with 31 stanchions and no outside income. So what's the difference? Why can I make a good living with less than 3000 cows? Does industry want to sell us a bill of goods?

"I have a small dairy farm with nothing fancy. I've been chisel plowing for 12 years. We have the usual contours, water control structures, and a wildlife food plot. I experiment a lot but they are not controlled studies. I just go with what seems to make sense. Other people are much better than I in describing in dollars how much one practice is better than another. Everyone probably has to decide what works best for them in their situation."

—Dale Gilles of N 3241 Co. Rd. S., Plum City, Wisconsin. *Newsletter of the Western Wisconsin Sustainable Farmer's Network*, February 1992, page 3.

Challenges Of Sustainable Agriculture

When Denny Caneff, executive director of the Wisconsin Rural Development Center, introduced speaker Howard Richards, Caneff described Richards as a secretary of agriculture with manure on his boots. Richards, who gave a major address at the 1991 National Conference on Rural Ministry at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, served as secretary of agriculture in Wisconsin for four years. He came to that position from a farrow-to-finish hog operation near Lodi. Upon completing his term of office, he went back to the countryside and together with his son-in-law raises 2500-2600 hogs a year and farms 400 acres of cropland for cattle feed and cash grains.

Caneff also characterized Richards as a person with convictions and principles. The Richards family has farmed for five generations. In addition Richards takes his Christian faith seriously as he serves as an elder in his Presbyterian church. From his perspective, living and working on the land is defined not so much as ownership as it is stewardship. He sees a responsibility to the Creator God for how the soil and water is used.

In beginning his address, Richards pointed to the establishment of a state sustainable agriculture program as one of his proudest achievements while in office. This project made use of oil overcharge monies refunded to the state. With awards of grants to farmers to carry out sustainable agriculture projects, the program was able to foster increased awareness of a way of farming, which is more sensitive to environmental protection and decreasing the amount of purchased inputs. Such farming substitutes management for inputs. Richards pointed out that sustainable agriculture is not a miracle, but an objective.

Difficulties Encountered In Sustainable Agriculture

To begin with, Richards acknowledged that he felt like the man assigned to wear the black hat at the gathering. Conference planners had asked him to relate the difficulties inherent in implementing sustainable agriculture and to give a dose of reality to the discussion. Early on, Richards pointed out how the use of the term "sustainable agriculture" itself brings about a mixed reaction. From his conversations with farmers, Richards notices some indifference and even antagonism. Richards registered a disappointed response to the attitude of some young farmers who do not seem open to sustainable agriculture. Many big grain farmers without cattle seem to react negatively, while dairy farmers seem more responsive. "Environmentally concerned agriculture" would be a better term, Richards believes.

Richards also contended that the mass media sometimes portrays sustainable agriculture in an unfavorable light. He recounted how one TV program showed conventional farmers driving big combines, while shots from a living history farm were used to show sustainable agriculture. In his estimation, this attitude implies that farmers should be going backwards, rather than thinking progressively. "We are not willing to return to the back breaking methods of a previous time," Richards stated. "Our women have worked too long and too hard. We want our families to be like others in enjoying material rewards of life."

According to Richards, farm families have some tough choices to make. Balancing the way one would like to farm with the way one can afford to farm can be difficult. Farm families, too, like nice clothes and band instruments for their children. Some drastic changes have occurred for the farm population. Richards told how in 1954, dairy farmers

in Wisconsin numbered 130,000; in 1989 the number had dropped to 34,000. In the country as a whole, as of 1988, there were 513,771 farmers — less than the number of doctors and teachers. Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota accounted for 28% of that number. Two hundred feedlots feed half the cattle, while four farms produce 39% of the poultry. Rented land accounts for 52% of all farm acreage; while that figure is 65% in Wisconsin and Illinois. “I am concerned that we may end up with a landed gentry,” Richards expressed. “There are going to be some farmers who do well, but the farm sector as a whole is vulnerable.”

Debt has shot up. In 1960, 10% of the gross income went to service debt; in 1970 it was 17%; in 1980 it went to 45%. “Many forgot what a retired farmer told me in 1980 — ‘Don’t buy the second farm until the first one is paid for,’” Richards commented. One dollar in ten had to be written off, while wages for farmers has only followed the minimum wage. Desperate people often do desperate things, Richards added, like working seven days a week, bidding up at auctions, and forcing children to work with unsafe machinery.

In another dose of reality, Richards asserted that the traditional idea of a family farm needs to be redefined. Especially in livestock operations, two adults from two different families are needed, he stated. Expecting an individual farmer and family to be continually tied to the operation without ever getting away for a break is unrealistic, Richards said. In his operation, he works in partnership with his son-in-law who tends the herd.

Richards also pointed out some of the realities of employing certain conservation methods. Minimum tillage, as a case in point, takes more time and planning. With residue being left on top of the ground, plants are slower to emerge. A farmer cannot cover as many acres in tillage as with the chemical route, and some weeds continue to grow. Small, odd shaped fields are not as conducive to big machinery. More specialized implements are required. Some farmers already saddled with a large debt load become discouraged and express reluctance to take on a bigger risk.

Advice For Relating To Farmers

Richards gave some advice to pastors and for the church. Pastors need to find out where the farmers are at, Richards stated. When people came to this country, they found a deep, abundant soil, Richards commented, and most farmers traditionally have seen themselves as close to nature and in partnership with God. “Now, though, farmers have become more of interveners than partners,” Richards asserted. “At the same time they become defensive if told that they are abusing the soil and water.” Some advocates have high expectations of farmers, and pastors must realize that farmers are not always in a position to farm the way they know they should, Richards counseled.

For the church, Richards made a number of points:

- Encourage those who can to do direct marketing. A sum of \$450 would buy all the needed food if bought directly from the farmer.
- Be aware of the various problems that farmers encounter in seeking to carry out a more environmentally concerned agriculture.
- If the goal is to reduce chemical usage, more progress could probably be made in simply working on conventional farmers to reduce by even 15% rather than expecting some of the farmers to go organic.
- Realize that farmers are making progress.
- There is no more worthy goal than to leave the agriculture resources better than they were.

Western Wisconsin Farmers Form Sustainable Agriculture Network

When I received a letter announcing an initial organizing meeting of a network for sustainable farming in western Wisconsin, I figured maybe 25 to 30 people would show. Ten minutes before the scheduled starting time at the basement of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Mondovi, Wisconsin, about that many had come, and I considered that number and a few more would be the extent of the participants. Somehow within the next 10 to 15 minutes, many more flowed in for a total of over 80 at the event. My expectations had been much too low. As I reflected on how the number had exceeded what I had thought, I had to give credit to the organizers for their preliminary work in getting people out.

Beyond that, I realized many farmers and citizens interested in keeping families, soil, and money on the farm through the practices of low-input/sustainable farming were ready for such a gathering and I ended up pleasantly surprised. Coordinator, Paul Schaefer, explained the purpose of the network: to promote farmer-to-farmer communication about sustainable practices and to provide support, from farmers and non-farmers alike, for sustainable farming in the area. By carefully structuring the event, he wanted to judge the extent of interest in this network, have farmers begin getting acquainted with one another, gather input for network activities, and select a network steering committee.

Karl Stieglitz, board member of the sponsoring organization Wisconsin Rural Development Center (WRDC) and a sustainable dairy farmer, related his own experience in putting a system of rotational grazing into effect for his herd of cows and young stock. "We are not alone," he stated. "A network can help in sharing what works and what does not work." He went on to offer that part of the problem is that farmers so often feel alone. Instead of focusing so much on the problems, he noted, people can concentrate on what needs to be changed. In addition, he argued, "We must get beyond thinking of simply total production. Net income is important. The ultimate goal is resource protection."

After a short break in the meeting, Schaefer had the people break into small groups to work on three goals for the network and three methods to achieve those goals. In a large group setting afterwards those results were shared. With the meeting starting on time and ending on time and moving with purpose during the gathering, people left with a sense of having participated in a meaningful group process with more to come.

Gordon Riesgraf Demonstrates Learnings From Years Of Practice

After the initial organizational meeting, I wanted to learn more about how sustainable farming is put into practice, so I arranged to visit one of the planners of the event, Gordon Riesgraf, who farms near Stockholm. When I arrived at the place, Paul Schaefer happened to be there as he too wanted to see the operation and learn from his experience. Gordon lives with his wife Rose and five children on a 240 acre farm overlooking Lake Pepin. As Paul and I walked the farm with Gordon, we could not help but admire how the natural beauty of the spot was enhanced by the contoured layout of the fields and pastures. Specifically we looked first at how culverts and landscaping along a steep bank next to the road was installed to prevent washouts. For this work with the soil conservation service as well as overall exemplary conservation efforts, Gordon was to be awarded the Outstanding Cooperator of 1991 by the Pepin County Land Conservation Committee later that month.

In order to give an overview of the land, Riesgraf showed an aerial drawing of the farm to us. Referring to all the contours, he jokingly told how the workers at the soil conservation office often kid him about all those long lines on his contour map. One of my interests was to see how he used the technology of electric fencing to rotate the pasture grazing. Gordon showed a practical streak in keeping the costs down by spacing the posts wider than conventional fencing and by using railroad ties for corner posts without bracing. In one stretch along the woods he did not even see the need for a fence. "The cows aren't in, but they're not out either," he stated. By this he meant that there was no fence to keep them in, but the cows preferred the lush grass to the woodlot so they did not get out. The system proved its worth to him during the drought year of 1987 when he had continual pasture through rotation. During 1991 he was able to pasture some fields four times.

Riesgraf raises organic beef, which he markets directly to the food cooperatives in the Twin Cities. The cattle were doing what comes naturally, grazing on green grass. By moving them regularly to fresh pastures, they looked contented and well fed with a good sheen to their coat. A bull roamed with the cows and calves without seeming perturbed at our presence. Riesgraf even admitted, "Sometimes I would like to stay out here with the cattle and play with them awhile." He pointed out which calves belonged to which cows and when he had bought such and such an animal. In addition he raises approximately 800 organic broiler chickens a year, which he feeds his own formula of homegrown feeds and sells locally. The chickens are also allowed to range about the farm yard for bugs and worms.

As we walked through fields of corn, soybeans, and alfalfa, Riesgraf told his philosophy of growing crops without the use of chemicals. "You may notice a certain amount of weeds in these fields," he pointed out. "There are more than in the fields of other farms where weeds are controlled by chemicals. These rows are not perfectly clean; I have learned to live with a certain amount of weeds. My yields have been consistently good in dry and wet years." He even told a theory of productivity that I had not previously heard. "Many people talk about manure credits, but I think the yields on one of my fields also have to be attributed to cattle urine," he offered. Paul and I suggested that we bring that theory up for discussion around the kitchen table, but both of us had the good sense not to.

At supper that night with Gordon and Rose, their children, and friends of the family, we talked of how the Riesgraf family was involved in the operation with the children doing chores and helping out with field work. In addition Gordon does carpentry work, and Rose does consulting work in the nursing field. With this diversity in income, they are able to make it as a large family and do what they like best, living on a family farm. While the work is long and hard, a sense of excitement and optimism prevails. Interspersed with the conversation, I pumped Gordon with some of my own questions on how to get started. He seemed most willing to relate his learnings. Afterwards, I told Paul that the experience had been a good indication of the value of the network and strongly suggested that he have Gordon put on a demonstration day in order to assist other farmers.

Coordinator Explains Sustainability

As coordinator of the Western Wisconsin Sustainable Farming Network, Schaefer is often asked, "What is sustainable agriculture?" He related how he used to answer by listing a set of cultural practices that protected the farm's resources, and eliminated or reduced synthetic chemical inputs and off-farm energy requirements. Now he has expanded his definition to state, "Sustainable agriculture is an environmentally, economically, and politically sound way of farming that takes into account the intimate and necessary relationships between soil, crops, animals, human beings, and human institutions."

To elaborate on that definition, he began by explaining how a sustainable farm requires a sustainable farmer. Talking about healthy, balanced soil does not always address healthy, balanced farm life, he pointed out. Therefore he asserted, "A healthy farmer is one who not only works hard but routinely gets plenty of sleep, eats the right kind of food in the right way, is very careful around farm hazards, takes times from the farm for family, friends, church, and community, and occasionally, can shift into neutral and idle away a half hour daydreaming about nothing in particular." Closely connected to the sustainable farmer is the sustainable farm family. Here Schaefer urged time together for working, playing, eating, enjoying each other's company, and dealing with differences. He argued, "Simply put, and I know this is heresy in our full production farm economy, more attention must be paid to family members than to crops and cows. We can always raise another crop of corn, but not another family."

The principle of sustainability can also be applied to community, Schaefer said. Questions need to be asked: "Does the school curriculum have any local components, or does it teach kids that 'the way up is out' of the community? What happens to local money after it is put into the bank? Is it invested locally? What about the local government contracts? Do they go to local bidders? Turning around a declining community is a tall order, but how long can we operate a sustainable farm in a non-sustainable community?" Together with this area comes a concern for a sustainable policy on the local, state, and national levels. "We'll let our state and federal representatives hear about our agenda, urging them to make it theirs in Madison and Washington. And if they don't, we'll work hard to replace them," Schaefer told. In all of these areas — from the sustainable farmer to sustainable policy — a better balance is needed, he stated. "Everything is interconnected, and our actions in one area have implications for other areas," Schaefer concluded.

Network Sponsors Institute Of Sustainable Agriculture

Based on the responses of participants in the organizational meeting, the experience of farmers like Gordon Riesgraf, and the thinking of coordinator Paul Schaefer, the Western Wisconsin Sustainable Farming Network offered a 1992 Winter Institute of Sustainable Agriculture. The institute was designed to introduce farmers to the ideas, practices, and principles of sustainable agriculture. Presenters included farmers and others with experience in and knowledge about sustainable farming. A wide range of appropriate written materials were handed out at each session. Twenty to thirty participants brought questions, concerns, and personal experiences with sustainable agriculture to the sessions. The institute, which met on eight successive Wednesday afternoons, addressed the following areas:

- History and overview of sustainable agriculture
 - a history of alternative agriculture
 - a personal account of farming in a sustainable manner
- Soil health and productivity
 - testing your soil
 - soil health; NPK and the rest of the story
 - soil amendments
- Pests in perspective
 - weeds and insects, a sustainable approach
 - sustainable weed and insect management
- Nutrient management
 - nitrogen credits for animal and green manures
 - composition, storage, and handling of manure
 - appropriate applications of manure
- Rotational grazing: dairy, beef, and poultry

- Farming in a sustainable manner
 - safe and healthy farming and the sustainable family
 - small-scale sustainability
- Economics of sustainable agriculture
 - farm costs and profitability
 - myths and realities; the role of a sustainable agriculture in a modern farm economy
- Policy issues in sustainable agriculture
 - federal policy, a history and critique
 - Wisconsin state policy, an overview
 - university policies, an overview and critique
- Philosophy of sustainable agriculture

One example of a presentation was the Farm Analysis Project as a part of the economics of sustainable agriculture. Marv Kamp, who organized the effort for WRDC, told how for at least 15 dairy farms in western Wisconsin, reducing nitrogen and pesticides makes economic sense. The project analyzed 45 farms on an enterprise crop and livestock basis by dividing them into three chemical use groups — routine, low, and no-chemical inputs. According to Kamp, the no-chemical farms showed the highest net returns and net cash returns per acre as well as overall lower per cwt. production costs. Data from three years consistently concluded that, at least for the crop enterprises, low- and no-chemical farms have lower production costs, comparable yields, and higher returns. In 1989 no-chemical farmers received \$162 per acre vs. \$110 per acre for the routine-chemical farmer; in 1990 the no-chemical farmer received \$177 per acre vs. \$126 for the routine chemical farmer.

Strategy For Organizing Around Sustainable Agriculture

Denny Caneff, WRDC executive director, gave some insights on how farmers can organize around sustainable agriculture in the decade of the 1990s. His organization carries on work at three levels — information and education, community networks, and policy reform and advocacy. They have focused on sustainable agriculture in order to help farmers cut costs and to lift up concern for the environment. Using finances provided by the state from money refunded by Exxon for oil overcharges, they have been able to fund a number of sustainable agricultural research projects.

"This is the information age," Caneff began. "Farmers can share information with each other from their own experience. One of the best things to come about in sustainable agriculture is to get farmers on each other's places." Together with this, Caneff told how one saying has urged, "Think globally and act locally." He would like to turn that saying around to read, "Act locally, and the globe will notice. If you do one thing well, other people will take note and come knocking at your door. There is a limited amount of work we can do in Bangladesh, for instance, but we can do something here."

From an organizational standpoint, Caneff offered some insights. "Help farmers to believe in the family farm system. Choose a strategy of taking on fights where you have a chance of making a difference," he stated. While he respects the efforts of certain farm activists, he wonders aloud how realistic they are in bringing about change. "The farm has been a symbol of frustration," he continued. "The day of the tractorcades is over; that kind of protest is very limited now. Time is better spent on homework." Caneff also urged a healthy mistrust of institutions, but at the same time an awareness of good people within those institutions. A list of enemies should be kept short, he maintained, so that an organization can engage in constructive dialog. Institutions can be made more humane, he said, citing the work of his organization in compelling the university system to take sustainable agriculture seriously.

Family Entrepreneurs

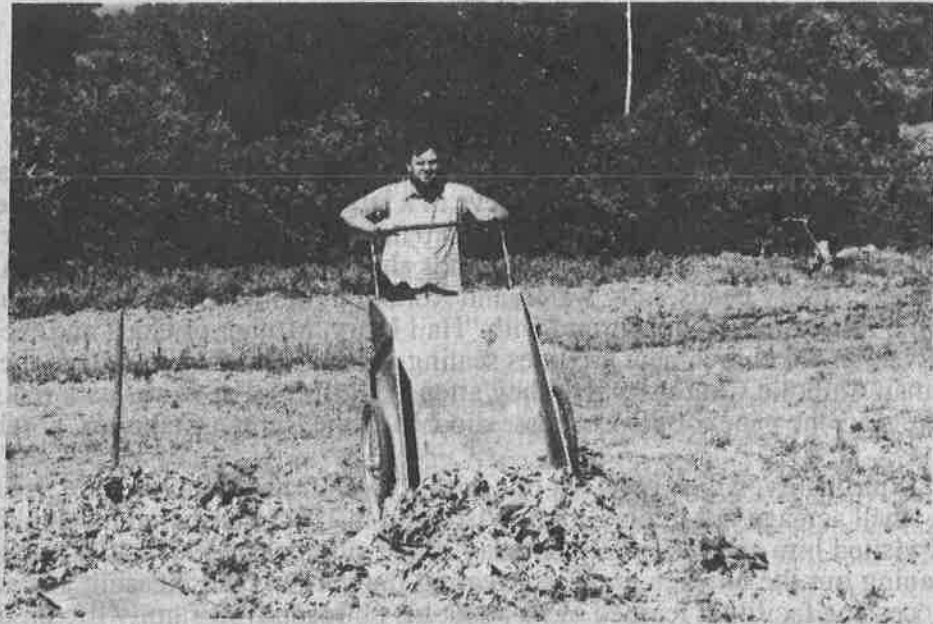
Patrick and Teresa Slattery are about as Irish Catholic as you can get. Both come from large Roman Catholic families, and they believe in a large family, too, as can be attested by their six children. As parents they have given them names that are either biblical or Irish in background. Many of their Catholic couple friends also have several young ones. A picture of Virgin Mary, Rosary beads, holy water, and Roman Catholic devotionals can be found in their home. Prayers before meals end with "Hail Mary, Mother of God" and the sign of the cross. Even an old church pew provides seating at the kitchen table. Across the road is a large Roman Catholic Church, which they attend faithfully. Pat works as a reporter for the *Times Review*, the paper of the LaCrosse diocese of the Roman Catholic Church.

A strong spirituality, which grew out of a Irish Roman Catholic upbringing, led them to locate on a small acreage in Middle Ridge, Wisconsin in 1984. Pat shared his thinking with me when I visited him and his family one day in the summer of 1991. As I worked with him in cleaning out the chicken coop, cultivating the garden, and clearing a space for a chicken processing facility, I learned more about his philosophy of family life on the land. With a forward manner characteristic of his Irish background, Pat asserted, "Everybody should have a little piece of land. When you have your hands in the dirt, you are regenerative. You are in touch with the earth. I have a deep and abiding love for the land."

In keeping with their affection for family, Pat stated, "The farm is the most natural and proper place for children to grow up. It's where the lessons of the three R's — respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness — are most easily taught." I witnessed how he and Teresa put their beliefs into action. The children had chores to do, whether it be taking care of the animals in the barn, picking weeds in the garden, or washing dishes in the kitchen. Their house served as a magnet for neighborhood children, many of whom did not have anything to do except to watch television. Pat and Teresa gave them jobs to do also as a reflection of their attitude, "Everybody works." No TV can be found in the Slattery home, as Pat maintained, "I do not see how you can maintain Christian values while watching it."

Home is very important to the Slattery family. In fact, Pat claims to be a "home radical" by which he means that he tries to spend as much time at home as possible. Their two story, white frame house is located on the outskirts of the unincorporated village of Middle Ridge. A white picket fence runs along the front of their lawn. On their rolling five acres of land is a small barn Pat built from scrap lumber as well as garden plots laid out in various areas. When Pat alerted me ahead of time that his was not a model farm, he was right. The place differed from those of his German neighbors who took great pains to make for a neat tidiness, but the Slattery place felt attractive because it was lived in and full of energy. "I find it much easier in the country," Pat explained, "to cull essentials from frills. I rarely, if ever, need the services of shopping malls, restaurants, or sporting arenas. Instead my entertainment is found at home. What great freedom is purchased at such a little price."

Pat's gregarious attitude was complemented nicely by Teresa's good natured temperament, so that I could see how the house was often filled with visitors. They enjoy practicing hospitality as Pat related, "Farms are places full of fun and life. Almost any child recognizes this. Good food, chances to talk, opportunities to create and work, and times to be alone are some of the advantages of rural life." Together with hospitality is the emphasis on neighborliness. While he acknowledges that neighbors are far from perfect, and have more than their share of gossiping and back-biting, they still look out for each other. In fact his vision of eternity is that of a rural place in which he will be among country folk.



Pat Slattery dumps shredded paper used as chicken bedding onto his strawberry beds for mulch and fertilizer.

Pat and Teresa and their children practice a family entrepreneurial spirit. For about three years the family has been marketing their produce through the Coulee Region Organic Produce. In the early part of the summer, when I visited, he was working with spinach and lettuce. Family members set out about 1,000 lettuce transplants the first part of May. He believes the market for greens is huge and virtually untapped. But he is moving more towards direct marketing in order to eliminate those in the middle. Being Irish does not hurt either. "Irish are good at sales work," he said, "because they are not afraid to get out and talk to people." Half of any small farmer's success will be determined by marketing skills, he believes. He used to raise feeder pigs, but sold them to his brother-in-law when a neighbor complained of the offensive odors. Convinced that hogs can be fed alternative food sources and grazed on pasture, he would have liked to continue if he had more land.

Pat even cites Pope Leo XIII in his first modern encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, that it behooves the prudent to save up money in order to purchase a small piece of land to make for life's essentials as encouraging of part-time farming. In addition, he points to those Roman Catholic teachers who have put Pope Leo's vision into reality — the English Dominican Father Vincent McNabb, the distributivism of Hillarie Belloc and G. K. Chesterton, and the small-is-beautiful urgings of E. F. Schumacher. In this country, Msgr. Luigi Ligutti of Granger, Iowa spoke out as a family farm proponent for the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. He is known for his rally cry for part-time farming, "One foot in the city, one foot in the country." Slattery also refers to Jesuit Father Al Fritch of Lexington, Kentucky who is an advisor to the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology and is a spokesperson for sustainable living and responsible use of natural resources.

Building on contacts he has developed in the past, Pat is raising black broiler chickens to sell to the Hmong from LaCrosse. He got his first batch on March 21 and in the early part of May had 400 birds on feed, with another 350 chickens coming in the next week. Plans are to raise 3,000 to 4,000 to a weight of 3 pounds and sell them for \$3.00 each. The Hmong butcher the chickens themselves in facilities he built in order to meet state regulations for a place over 1,000 birds and to be eligible to receive food stamps for payment. In

addition, Slattery purchased two Jersey bull calves around the first of the year for a small amount and fed them outdated milk from the stores for three to four months and hay and grain after that. The Hmong had agreed to purchase them in November for use in their New Years festival. Jerseys remind them of their small animals back in Southeast Asia, and the black broiler chickens are also the kind they are used to.

There is no end to the number of ideas Pat Slattery possesses. His family sells lemonade and barbecue sandwiches at a music and crafts festival and makes \$1,000 for a weekend of work and also homemade apple cider and caramel apples at another weekend festival and makes \$500. Together with a neighbor farmer, they are planning on marketing cheese to target audiences in urban areas. In a building next to their property, the Slattery family is considering starting a small store in order to market their produce. Value added products, such as jams and jellies from their raspberries and strawberries, would be an example of the items offered at the store. A willingness to risk as well as a sense of confidence propel Pat and the family. "I'm more optimistic than I've ever been about the farm's future, and definitely am convinced we're gaining ground and are on the right track." He was willing to share his insights with me about past experiments and failures. Jokingly, Pat interjected, "As Thomas Edison once said, 'I haven't failed 10,000 times; rather I've found 10,000 ways that won't work.'"

Pat admitted, "Some of the neighboring farmers must think I'm nuts." But he asserted, "I know a good many farmers, and to be truthful, few of them are overenamored with the way they live. They often consider themselves suckers for working too hard and making too little. The spirituality of their everyday work is too often obscured by tires that go flat, rain that won't fall, and bills that remain unpaid." He contended that today's commercial farming is a nerve-wracking, high-stakes gamble of a way to make a living. Many of them have large debt loads, he acknowledges, where farming has become a burden, while others he knows go to Las Vegas in the winter and buy a new car every other year. For this reason, he believes people wanting to settle on the land should think of part-time farming.

Slattery believes many people would like to move to the countryside to be closer to the land. "Hidden in the hearts and souls of many is a desire to work with plants, animals, and soil — to be farmers! I wish to throw out this imposing challenge for the 21st century: that for the psychological and physical health, as well as the spiritual well-being of the society-at-large, we'll need many more rather than a select few who'll live in the country and earn at least a part of their livelihood by raising food," he asserted. He predicts that a goodly number of spiritually minded people will somehow find their way back to earth-connected ways of living where they can be more in touch with nature and the Creator God. Some of these may be people who work in the city but live in the country. Others may be those who can use micro-computers to work out of their homes in the countryside, while some may start home-based enterprises. Still others may be early retirees who plant gardens and trees while pondering the mystery of creation.

What advice does Slattery give to aspirants for life on the land? "First and beyond all, I ask you not consider becoming a full-time commercial farmer. Don't buy a section of land in Montana to grow wheat and raise cattle, a half section in Iowa to grow corn and feed hogs, or a quarter section in Wisconsin to grow hay and milk cows. These kind of enterprises require half a million dollar investments. The odds of making a livelihood from these pursuits are, at best, slim." He went on to add, "Due to technological advances and changes in food consumption, they are in shrinking industries. God bless and preserve as many of them as possible, but in order to survive you need to be well advantaged, ferociously competitive, and damn good at it." In conclusion, he urged, "Do it! Plunge into something, and pursue it with full enthusiasm. We need rural entrepreneurs if we harbor any realistic hope of revitalizing rural America."

Conference Task Force Addresses Environmental Concerns

Members of the Environmental Concerns Task Force of the Dairyland Conference in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America presented ways people can be responsible stewards of the gifts of creation, with a booth at an environmental fair. The event at London Square Mall in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, February 21, 1992, provided an occasion for the church to make its presence felt in concern for the environment. Task force member Marie Morrell explained her involvement by stating, "There is so much anti-Christian sentiment in the environmental movement. I would like to see Christians make a stand." Pastor Paul Tobiason added, "We wanted to do something rather than simply sit around and talk about the problem." Lutherans, he believes, have a unique perspective to bring to the environmental discussion. "Our stress on vocation becomes a way to speak of the responsibility to care for the earth," he said.

Mission Statement For Task Force

Pastor Stephen Sylvestre drafted a mission statement adopted by the task force to guide its work. This piece focuses on what "stewardship" means for people of faith.

Over the centuries humanity has been in the process of assessing its relationship to creation. In the last few decades we have been pushed in their direction by the realization that our planet and its various ecosystems will not be able indefinitely to sustain human life unless we substantially change our treatment of nature. Individual Christians have been involved with this movement toward a responsible environmentalism since its very beginning. On the whole, however, it has not been until recently that the church as an institution has begun seriously to address the despoliation of the earth.

In part the institutional church has kept its distance and maintained its silence because of the questions facing us did not appear to be theological in nature. Participation of church members in the movement was often encouraged, but more than anything this was done out of a sense of expediency. That is no longer the case. Many Christians are beginning to say that what is involved here is more than a mere question of survival. What is at stake is our identity as persons created and redeemed by God.

It has long been held by Jewish and Christian tradition that humanity is the crowning glory of God's creation. Having seldom felt the need to prove this, we have just taken it for granted. After all, the first book of the Bible, Genesis, says that humans alone are created in the "image of God", and are given "dominion" over the earth. Such language would seem to suggest that one may do with nature whatever one wishes.

Yet many contemporary theologians and laypersons alike now define dominion as "stewardship." The concept of stewardship insists that because of our responsibility toward God's people (and some would say that this extends beyond responsibility only for the human world), we must be thoughtful users of God's gift of creation. Having been created in God's image, we are to exercise mature judgement in utilizing natural resources so that those presently as well as future generations may have an equal share.

Most Christians agree with this idea of our responsibility to be good stewards of creation. But some say this does not go deeply enough, that there is a larger theological

(although that is certainly important), but to the prior question of how it is that we relate to the rest of creation. For if we are stewards of creation, then we are in some way separate from creation, existing in an intermediary position between God and the non-human world. In effect, the question is whether we are in any position to "manage" nature, and are we to be allowed to "use" it?

It is this question of our relationship to God and the world which should be at the very heart of the Christian response to the environment. For in our tradition, the classical definition of sin is the desire to be one's own god. Or, put in other words, sin is dissatisfaction with creaturehood. This is the root of our problem.

Our desire to separate ourselves from the world, thereby freeing us from the belittling burden of creaturehood, drives us to extend our powers to the utmost. And as we do not possess the ultimate power, the power to create, we will necessarily seek to express ourselves through destroying that which has been created. Without redemption that desire will make itself known regardless of our efforts to address our environmental realities, it is exceedingly important that we change our identity of ourselves so that we will accept, or better yet, embrace the fact that every facet of God's creation is sacred and we are only a part of it.

The mission statement concluded by stating that from a faith perspective, the task force believed they had something important to say at this Peace and Environmental Fair. The question of identity must be addressed in order to look to the future, the task force asserted.

Ways Churches Can Practice Environmental Stewardship

The task force also compiled a list of suggestions for congregations to implement in order to use fewer of the earth's resources. Following is a list for church facilities.

- Have an energy audit conducted on the church building(s). Most local utilities offer these free of charge.
- Establish and follow an action plan to implement the recommendations of the energy auditor. These can range from caulking and weather stripping to new heating plants or windows.
- Establish efficient building use patterns. For example: do not heat a whole section of the building for one occasion. Adjust the meeting location or time instead.
- Use energy-efficient heating and cooling methods such as passive solar heating, ceiling fans, and ventilation instead of air conditioning.
- Eliminate the use of incandescent light bulbs wherever possible. Switch to high energy efficiency fluorescent, mercury or sodium vapor, or halogen. Use indoor and outdoor lighting only when necessary.
- Operate lighting only when and where needed.
- Use clean, efficient heating fuels such as solar or gas. Do not heat water or buildings with electricity or oil.
- Insulate tank style water heaters. When buying a new one, switch to a tankless model which supplies hot water only on demand.
- Install water efficient toilets (less than two gallons a flush) and low flow shower heads and aerators. Urinals should flush upon usage only.
- Set hot water temperature to the lowest safe setting — usually 130 degrees.
- Regularly monitor for and repair energy wasters such as leaking toilets, doors or windows not sealing properly, lights or heating zones operating when not in use.
- When purchasing new appliances or equipment, choose the most efficient units available.

- Install a solar hot water system. These are economically feasible in most areas.
- Do not water the lawn. Mow at 3" to 4" and plant shade trees instead. If watering is necessary, collect rainwater from the roof for this purpose.
- Have church buildings tested for asbestos, radon and lead. Initiate mitigation activities if needed.

In another category in their suggestions for congregational action, the task force told of specific things to do in church life and daily operations.

- Eliminate the use of all throwaway items such as tableware, styrofoam cups, paper napkins and towels, communion cups, beverage cans, paper or plastic tablecloths, and disposable diapers. Use washable tableware, returnable bottles, and cloth instead.
- Critically evaluate all purchases and uses of church resources. Are they necessary? Can they be done in a more environmentally friendly manner? Does the manufacturer have a good environmental record and policy?
- Make a practice of purchasing products which can be reused, refilled, or repaired.
- Use recycled paper with high post-consumer content, which has not been chlorine bleached.
- When it is necessary to use printed materials, use both sides of the paper.
- Avoid the purchase and use of hazardous and toxic substances. Use biodegradable, organic cleaning supplies. Baking soda, vinegar, and lemon juice can perform many cleaning functions.
- Use soybean based inks for printing purposes.
- Find ways to reuse items rather than throwing them away. Whenever possible, repair broken items.
- Separate and recycle all waste. Compost all organic waste.
- Participate in the collection of items such as clothing, used appliance, and toys for distribution to the needy.
- Sponsor a church or community organic garden.
- Encourage the serving of more healthful foods. Avoid foods which contain high levels of salt, sugar, refined grains and fat. Offer items made with whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and alternatives to meat. Offer fruit juices and herbal teas as an alternative to coffee and milk.
- Encourage the use of locally raised organic produce over that which is shipped long distance and treated or raised with synthetic chemicals.
- Walk, bike, use mass transit and carpool whenever possible.
- Encourage and support church leadership in speaking out on subjects such as the affluent life-style, hunger, homelessness, and sustainability.
- Support efforts to help the poor and hungry learn to raise their own food with appropriate methods. Speak out against efforts to consumerize and industrialize the Third World.

In its last suggestion, the task force urged people to become active in the public arena for the preservation of the environment and to work against that which is harmful to the earth's resources.

Resources For People Of Faith

In order for Christians to articulate their unique insights in the midst of the environmental discussion, the task force wanted to provide the names of books, magazines, and organizations. In their collection they demonstrated the growing body of literature available to socially involved Christians.

- Bhagat, Shantilal, **Creation In Crisis**, Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, 1990.
- Berry, Thomas, **The Dreams of the Earth**, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, California, 1988.
- Berry, Wendell, **Home Economics**, North Point Press, San Francisco, 1987.
- Brueggemann, Walter, **The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith**, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1977.
- Cusack, Gregory D. and Evans, Bernard, eds., **Theology of the Land**, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987.
- Gray, Elizabeth Dodson, **Green Paradise Lost**, Roundtable Press, Wellesley, Maine, 1981.
- Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley, **A Worldly Spirituality: The Call To Take Care of the Earth**, Harper & Row, New York, 1984.
- Hall, John Douglas, **Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship**, Friendship Press, New York, 1986.
- Hart, John., **The Spirit of the Land**, Paulist Press, New York, 1984.
- Jackson, Wes; Berry, Wendell; and Colman, Bruce, **Meeting the Expectations of the Land: Essays in Sustainable Agriculture and Stewardship**, North Point Press, San Francisco, California 1984.
- Joranson, P., and Butigan, K., eds., **Cry of the Environment: Rebuilding the Christian Creation Tradition**, Bear and Company, Sante Fe, California, 1984.
- McDonagh, S., **To Care for the Earth: A Call to a New Theology**, Bear and Company, Sante Fe, California 1984.
- Santmire, Paul H., **The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Promise of Christian Theology**, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1985.

The task force also recommended four religious organizations that are publishing eco-magazines. The last two listings are other organizations worthy of mention.

- Eco-Justice Project Network: Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853. (Publishes *The Egg: A Journal of Eco-Justice*).
- Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality: Holy Name College, 3500 Mt. Blvd., Oakland, California 94619. (Publishes *Creation* magazine.)
- Land Stewardship Project: 14758 Ostlund Trail North, Marine on the St. Croix, Minnesota 55047. (Publishes *The Land Stewardship Letter*).
- The North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology: P. O. Box 14305, San Francisco, California 94114. (Publishes *Firmament*).
- Rocky Mountain Institute: 1739 Snowmass Creek Road, Snowmass, Colorado, 81654. (Publishes *Newsletter*).
- World Watch Institute: 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20077. (Publishes *World Watch* and the annual report, *State of the World*, with W. Norton Press, New York).

Congregations Carry Out Care Of The Earth Concerns

What can congregations do to carry out care of the earth concerns? In this chapter, I draw heavily on the ideas of two persons who have been deeply involved with thinking and action on this matter: student pastor Matthew P. Miller and coalition member John Munter.

Recycling In The Local Congregation

One of the first ways a faith community can begin hands-on efforts is by recycling. Matthew P. Miller, a student pastor of the United Methodist Churches of Wyoming and Baldwin/Monmouth, Iowa related his experience as a part of a panel discussion on The Church and Environmental Awareness at the 1991 National Rural Ministry Conference at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Miller told how he was thinking about the biblical and theological perspectives on care of the earth, and how he could put those beliefs into practice when he noticed a statement by John Wesley, "The world is my parish." From this statement, Miller began to explore the relationships of the people of the earth to the air, land, water, and animals.

Some facts informed his perspective about being a better steward of the earth's resources: Paper — Every Sunday more than 500,000 trees are used to produce 88% of newspapers that are never recycled; recycling of paper can reduce water use by 60%, energy use by 70%, and pollutants by 50%. Glass — Every two weeks enough glass bottles and jars are thrown away to fill the 1,350 foot twin towers of New York's World Trade Center; the use of 50% recycled glass in the manufacturing process can reduce water consumption by 50%, mining wastes by 79%, and air pollutants by 14%.

Aluminum — American consumers and industry throw away enough aluminum to rebuild the entire commercial air fleet every three months; recycling aluminum can reduce energy use by 95%, with similar reductions in water and air pollutants. Steel, tin, iron — Enough of these metals are thrown away to continuously supply all this nation's automakers; recycling of these materials can reduce energy consumption by 70% with similar reductions in solid wastes, air, and water. In addition enough office paper and writing paper is thrown away to annually build a 12 foot wall from Los Angeles to New York City, while 2.5 million plastic bottles are disposed of every hour, and each year 24 million tons of leaves and grass clippings are thrown away.

Miller initiated a recycling project in the congregations he was serving as a student pastor and discovered in the process that recycled materials can be used in a variety of ways. Recycled newspapers can be made into many other products such as newsprint, insulation, and cereal boxes, while shredded newsprint can be used for animal bedding. High grade paper, such as typing paper, notebook, ditto, mimeograph, photocopy, and writing paper can be recycled provided the colored paper is separated, while paper with food residues, carbon paper, cellophane, self-stick adhesives, wax, plastic, or foil coatings cannot be recycled. Any commercial glass container can be recycled as long as the bottles and jars are rinsed with metal caps, rings, and lids are removed. Because lower temperatures are needed to make new containers from recycled materials, energy is saved.

Aluminum in its various forms — foil, pie tins, TV dinner trays, lawn furniture, and even house doors — can be recycled. A 95% savings of energy can be realized when 20 aluminum cans can be made from the same energy required to make one from virgin ore. Steel, tin, and iron are found in what are called tin cans often used to contain food with the molded seam on the side and magnetic property, (as opposed to aluminum cans with no seam and nonmagnetic property). Plastic found in various forms such as milk jugs, laundry detergent, juice and anti-freeze containers are able to be recycled and can be used to fill sleeping bags, down jackets, and made into drain pipes, traffic cones, and plastic lumber. Miller recommends giving usable clothing, as long as it is dry and clean, to charitable organizations. Organic wastes, such as grass clippings, leaves, and some kitchen wastes can be composted in order to produce a soil conditioner that can be used on flowers, shrubs, trees, and vegetable gardens.

Student pastor Matthew Miller made some practical suggestions for church people to be more conscious of their caretaking responsibilities of the earth's natural resources:

- Place brown paper or plastic grocery sacks back in the vehicle and use them when shopping at the grocery store.
- Learn what products sold at the stores are able to be recycled and try to avoid products with double and triple packaging.
- Have an extra recycling container next to the garbage in the kitchen so that glass, tin, aluminum, and plastic can be recycled instead of discarded.
- Get other churches, civic groups, others in the community, even the local school involved. His local school had a dance where the admission was an item able to be recycled.

Beyond Recycling

The Minnesota Interfaith Ecology Coalition seeks to address the subject of earthkeeping with a specific focus on what communities of faith can do. In seeking to inspire others to action around and after Earth Day 1991, coalition leader John Munter related the following accounts of ecological stewardship in the Minneapolis-St. Paul and surrounding area.

- St Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Minneapolis has had an environmental concerns committee for three years. They hosted the Survival of the Planet Conference in October 1989 that gave birth to the Minnesota Interfaith Ecology Coalition. With its own banner and T-shirts, the church participated in the Earth Day '90 parade. They shipped hundreds of phone books to an experimental phone book recycling project. Their group took a nature trip down the Mississippi River to watch bald eagles and trumpeter swans. In January through April of 1991, a monthly series of four environmental forums culminated on Earth Day when the guest speaker was the president of the Minneapolis City Council.
- Advent United Methodist Church in Eagan has a core group meeting monthly which sponsors an Ecology Corner in their bulletins. They have conducted letter writing campaigns and organized conferences. They have sold fluorescent light bulbs and ceramic mugs with the lettering "The Earth Is The Lord's." They have a traveling display of Alternative To Household Hazardous Cleaners And Products.
- Judson Memorial Baptist Church in Minneapolis, as a result of a 10-week series of classes on land preservation and eco-justice retreat, is exploring community supported farming. The church has bought a share in a farm in exchange for produce. They are now considering the need for a life style audit.

- Hope Presbyterian Church in Richfield, with 2200 members, has reduced its annual garbage bill from \$7,200 to \$4,000 by reducing its use of plastic, making smaller bulletins, and recycling office paper. The congregations participate with three other churches in a junk mail recycling program that last year earned \$275 from Waldorf Corporation for five tons at \$55. They also purchase recycled paper.
- The Universalist Church in Minneapolis has included Environmental Service, Education and Political Action as one of the three projects in its five year social action plan. In addition to recycling and ride sharing, the core group writes letters to public officials and promotes "green" products. The other two projects are support of an inner city childhood learning center and Habitat for Humanity. They celebrate Earth Day by cleaning up nearby Minnehaha Creek.
- The Orthodox Ecology Committee, initiated by St. Herman's Orthodox Church in Minneapolis, in the spring of 1990 distributed 200 tree seedlings among members of six Orthodox churches. In November, at St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, they sponsored an ecology conference with 65 participants. In 1991, several of the churches focussed on energy efficiency, beginning with 'walk-through' energy audits, courtesy of Center For Self Reliance and Northern States Power Company.
- University Lutheran Church of Hope in Minneapolis recycles cans, glass, and paper. They planted 200 trees in 1990 for the Department of Natural Resources. The church honors Environmental Sabbath in June with special services, classes, and planting trees as memorials. They have used the Lutheran Synod's Environmental Audit on their building, which they now keep closed one night a week to save energy. They set a 1991 goal of 500 fewer car trips to church. Bikers, bus riders, walkers, and car poolers check in on a special chart in the lobby. Persons offering or needing a ride contact the secretary.

Together with the previous examples of what communities of faith are doing, Munter gave numerous suggestions for what other churches can do for Earth Day and beyond:

- Form an Ecology Core Group for celebration, study, and action.
- Celebrate Earth Week or Earth Month. Use earth stewardship as a theme one day each month in worship, preaching, and music.
- Invite other congregations in the community to celebrate Earth Day with you.
- Insert care for the earth into regular religious school teaching materials.
- Have an eco-justice section in your congregational library.
- Schedule educational forums throughout the year on the implications of eco-justice: the legislative, economic and life style changes needed to be made.
- Sponsor an interfaith mini-conference on the Environment as a Religious Concern.
- Create a Care of the Earth Calendar for the year.
- Raise money for an eco-justice project with an Ecology Tourathon in which sponsors are secured for the group's visit (on their behalf) to the environmental sights; for example, a land fill, a garbage burner, deteriorated housing, a state of the art energy efficient building, an organic farm, a nature center, a restored wetland or prairie.
- Join other organizations in environmental clean up and recycling.
- Plant trees or start a neighborhood composting project or use church property for a community garden.
- Adopt a wetland or section of a highway.
- Create a Land Conservancy Trust.
- Conduct an energy audit in your buildings; switch to energy efficient lighting.
- Recycle, reduce, reuse.
- Use products that do not harm the environment.
- Promote car pooling.

Part V

Personal Action On Planet Earth

"If I stayed long enough in one place, I would be involved in local politics, because I think state politics should be like a local community. I am done with great things and big things, great institutions and big successes, and I am for those tiny, invisible, molecular forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if you give them time, will rend the hardest monuments of man's pride."

—Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement.

Remember, Repent, And Renew

When I traveled to Peru and Bolivia in April and May of 1989, I heard of an upcoming gathering, 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance, which was to take place in the summer of 1990 in Quito, Ecuador. At that event approximately 350 Native American people from North, South, and Central America and the Caribbean — including Yanomanis, Mapuches, Kunas, Quechuas, Caribs, Navajos, Hopis, Lummis, Lumbees, Osages, Inuits, Crees, and Seminoles — met for the first ever intercontinental *encuentro* of Native Americans. The assembled people produced a statement, The Declaration of Quito, in which they committed themselves to confronting Columbus's Quincentenary. Whereas many white people in the European and North American communities were preparing to celebrate the "discovery" of the Americas, this international group of indigenous people pledged their solidarity to exposing the nature of the "conquest" and to forge the dawning of a new era.

Upon returning home, I began to hear more of the plans by people of conscience in North America to call into question the meaning of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. A number of denominational organizations are asking for 1992 to be a year to Remember, Repent, and Renew. In this chapter, I would like to offer a few reflections related to the title of this booklet, **The Earth Is Our Home**.

Through a growing awareness of the underside of history of peoples and cultures, I have come to *remember* what I did not learn in my elementary and high school history lessons. Like most other students, I was taught that American history began with the arrival of whites on this continent and omitted mention of the people already here. By contrast I have come to learn that the plundering of the land and the enslavement and killing of the Arawak peoples in the Caribbean by Columbus, proved to be the model which Cortez carried out in Mexico, Pizarro in Peru, Carbarl in Brazil, and the English in Massachusetts. As a result of my travel seminar hosted by Lutheran World Relief, I came to learn how the colonization produced destruction of people and land. The Spanish conquistadores brought a greed for minerals of the earth and subjected the indigenous population to extracting the gold and mercury. Whereas native peoples originally numbered 15 million in that portion of the vast Inca Empire now known as Peru, the number was reduced to 1.5 million by 1571.

In this country, I have come to acknowledge the destruction in similar proportions. While the native peoples numbered 25 to 40 million in 1492, they have been reduced to 1.5 million today. Much of that slaughter happened in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, so that in 1776, when the United States was established, some 100 nations had survived numbering two to five million people in the lower 48 states and speaking more than 750 distinct languages. From 1776 to the late 1800s, the indigenous people lost some 95% of their land holdings, from about three million square miles to 200,000. Being subjected to methods ranging from the violent use of force to the making of treaties often later ignored, indigenous people were driven off their lands to make room for settlers.

As a result, I now must come to terms with the fact that this part of the "earth" in the upper Midwest was "home" to an indigenous people long before my Scandinavian ancestors came to the plains states in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. Furthermore, the name "Homestead" for the village near which I was born, was also used for a governmental act in 1862 to parcel land in 160 acre tracts to settlers. The very land upon which I am now living once belonged to Chief Nanongabee. After his death, the native people were removed and the lands sold by the U.S. Government to railroads, timber barons, and homesteaders to pay for the development of Cornell University in New York.

With this remembrance of the history of native peoples, I move toward *repentance*. Each Sunday in my particular religious tradition, we use a phrase that speaks of a captivity to the powers of sin. This way of expressing repentance has taken on deeper meaning with my growing awareness of the desecration of the earth. Oftentimes sin is thought to be individual misdeeds, and great difficulty comes in seeing sin as something that imprisons people. How is it that good, honest Christians who supposedly are able to choose between good and evil can be held in captivity?

The answer for me comes in acknowledging my complicity. I am part of the problem, for I benefit from the exploitation of the earth. Even though I may take individual steps to attempt to be less wasteful, I still attain the material goods made possible by an extractive economy. The price I pay for food does not come close to the real cost to the earth in giving the crops and feeding the animals, nor do those who labor to grow the food receive their due rewards. Much of what I buy was produced in a way that does not respect the earth and by workers who did not earn fair compensation. While I know that the supply of fossil fuels is limited and shrinking fast, I am still very dependent upon these sources of energy for transportation, heating, cooking, and many other uses.

As a result of this repentance, I am free from self-justification. I can acknowledge my participation in the structures of society without having to pretend that I am morally clean. Strident self-righteousness has no place when I come to terms with the depths of my complicity. Because of God's act of justification in Jesus Christ, I am free to pursue peace and justice. In doing so, I cannot adopt a simplistic "us against them" mentality; I must grapple with moral ambiguity and difficult choices. At times the decision comes down to the lesser of two evils rather than black and white. In the end, I may not know the final consequences of my actions, but by the gift of hope I am empowered to care for the earth.

Remembrance and repentance lead to *renewal*. My encounters with indigenous peoples in journeys to the Central American countries of Mexico, Nicaragua, and El Salvador; the Latin American countries of Peru and Bolivia; the West African countries of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal; and the Philippines has provoked renewal in my life. In each of the travel seminars, I can recount times when one of the well-meaning members of the group would ask people native to the countries, "What can we do *for* you?" Implied in the question was the altruistic notion that somehow people from a richer nation could help people in a poorer country. On almost each occasion the response was the same: "The best action you can take is to go back to your home and change conditions there so that we can be more free here." In other words, the hardest part is going home.

Another way of putting what these people have to say is: "Get your foot off of our necks so that we can get up and be able to live more human lives." The voices and faces of people whom I met in my travels remain alive in my consciousness and motivate much of what I am doing. They do not need me in their country trying to "help" them; they need me to consume less of the world's resources so that they can have more of life's most basic essentials. The earth is home to them as it is to me. Somehow or another, I believe, we need to figure out a way for people to live within the carrying capacity of the earth. That process has to start with personal renewal and move to the larger social sphere.

This emphasis of "remember, repent, and renew" is not only appropriate for an alternative to the 1992 Quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas; the theme can guide people of conscience through the decade of the 1990s in order that the prospects for a sustainable future can be open to all people into the next century.

Revisiting The Garden Of Eden

In the introduction of this booklet, *The Earth Is Our Home*, I told of the remarks by Wes Jackson to the effect that this country's dependence upon fossil fuels would exert tremendous pressure to maintain access to those resources. The automobile, he said, is the most powerful symbol of affluence and decay, and we are unable to give it up. His words proved to be prophetic in a poignant manner when the U.S. invaded Iraq the next year. At stake, according to those who supported the war effort, was the need to protect the oil reserves in the surrounding energy rich Middle East countries.

In a tragic irony of history, this brutal method of conflict resolution was carried out in the homeland of the original Garden of Eden. By seeking a "quick fix" to the "problem," the Western powers returned to the very origins of their own civilization. Along the banks of two rivers — the Tigris and Euphrates — we are told that civilization began. According to the biblical account, God placed man and woman in the Garden of Eden. There everything was provided that was needed to sustain life. God gave a command to the first people to coax from the land food bearing plants and to care for the earth as a gift from God.

At the same time, these people were commanded that life was to be lived within certain parameters. They could eat of all of the trees of the Garden, except one, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When they rebelled against God's ordered limits by carrying out the tempter's urging to be like God, they brought upon themselves the brokenness of relationships and the abuse of the earth. God expelled them from the Garden of Eden, and violence has characterized human interactions and human actions toward the created world. Humans have desired from the very beginning the power to be masters of the earth and to gain the power to destroy the earth and the people on it.

Iraq is also the place of other famous stories in the faith tradition. When God saw that the world had become corrupt, God sent a flood to cover the earth, but saved Noah and his family in order to start over. Later on the people decided to build a monument to heaven, so that God was compelled to confuse their languages lest they become too powerful, and the place was called the Tower of Babel. Abram, whom God selected to form a chosen people, came from Ur of the Chaldeans in what is now the southern plains of Iraq. Later on the chosen people would be exiled to Babylon; this memory of their history explains some of their resentment towards Iraq and the longstanding nature of their feud. Jonah, one of the prophets, was sent to the city of Nineveh to preach repentance.

One of the crucial periods in early civilization can be studied in the ruins of the first city — Uruk. Archaeologists tell us that the walls were built when the urban center had increased in size four times in just a few generations. People flocked from the countryside into the city, so that the population of the Euphrates plain is said to have increased ten times in those important two hundred years. At one time the land yielded wheat with yields as high as the Midwest and Canada. Eventually the demand for more intensive cultivation of the land in order to feed the people destroyed the environment. From the very beginning a crucial question can be asked: "How can a balance be achieved between conserving the soil and water, on the one hand, and producing sufficient food, on the other hand?"

This history from the biblical account and early civilization as well as the highly complex involvement of foreign powers in Iraq during the 19th and 20th centuries was largely ignored in the desire to attain a military solution. The deep-seated problems have not been solved, but have only become more volatile and crucial.

Besides the need to protect oil reserves for Western nations, another compelling motive drove the U.S. and its allies in the destruction of the Iraqi army and the country's infrastructure as well as the degradation of its environment. In his new book, **Brave New World Order**, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer asserts that the U.S. provoked the Gulf War in order to maintain the military power and foreclose on the peace dividend at the end of the Cold War. Speaking in an interview for the Spring 1992 *Global Perspective* newsletter of the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College, Nelson-Pallmeyer insisted, "We didn't win the Cold War. Today one in every four U.S. children are born into poverty.

"The United States now has the highest murder rate, the highest rape rate, the highest per capita prison population, and the highest international debt. We're 22nd in infant mortality. We're the only industrialized country, aside from South Africa, without a national health program. We face tremendous economic problems." He added that there are forty million people who die of hunger each year while living in Third World nations victimized by the international market economy of the United States and its Western allies.

If you are like me, you are probably convinced that the national leadership of our country does not have a clue as to how to go about insuring the sustainability of the environment and the economy. As evidenced by the carnage in the Gulf War, the National Security Establishment seems to have won out in the belief that the U.S. must use its military superiority in order to hold onto access to raw materials in Third World countries. The real answers on how to care for the earth will not come from the top down but must come from the bottom up. People like yourself — who are willing to work towards a vision of sustainability — are the key to the future.

In this concluding chapter, I would like to suggest that revisiting the Garden of Eden can give some clues to people of faith on how to live at home on the earth. To begin with, the Garden is given as a gift. God saw all that God had made, and behold it was very good. Nothing that humankind could ever do would earn the favor of God in the form of the Garden. Also the Garden is provided as a dwelling place with God; God is portrayed in human terms in the Genesis story as one who walks in the Garden and talks with the people whom God has made. Living in the Garden brings a sense of identity. To be truly human is to acknowledge one's creaturehood. When pride and arrogance take over and the attempt is made to be as God, then life becomes filled with violence and degradation.

In addition to being a place of dwelling, the Garden is a place of responsibility. The Garden does not yield its fruits to the fullest extent without the tilling of the soil and tending of the plants and animals. With wilderness on one side and civilization on the other, the Garden is where humans must discover how to use the earth without abusing it. As part of the process of working with the earth, the discovery is made that God continues to create and sustain. In other words, a mutuality is experienced. God has given the responsibility of sharing in this ongoing creative work.

Then, too, the Garden is a place of both beginnings and endings, births and deaths. All of life experiences change; nothing stays the same. At times we may be fresh and full of enthusiasm; at other times we may be drained and depleted of energy. In the end, each of us returns to the earth — from which we have come as earthlings, and to the humus — from which we have come as humans. The earth has given us life and in the end receives us unto itself. The earth is our home from the first to the last.

Appendix A

You Can Make A Difference

(The following list is taken from the brochure, *Earth Day 1990*, put out by Earth Day 1990, P.O. Box AA, Stanford University, California 94309.)

Recycling

- Recycle aluminum, glass, newspaper, cardboard, white paper, and colored paper.
- Buy products in recyclable containers.
- Avoid plastics, disposable plates, cups, and utensils.
- Use cloth diapers rather than disposables.
- Use rags instead of paper towels.
- Use a coffee mug instead of disposable cups.
- Use both sides of paper sheets.
- Recycle used motor oil.
- Compost food wastes and yard debris.
- Mend and repair rather than discard and replace.
- Buy packaged goods in bulk.
- Buy used goods (junk yards, thrift stores, garage sales).
- Take your grocery bags back to the store for reuse.

Home Energy Use

- Insulate, caulk, and weatherstrip your home.
- Install a timer on your thermostat.
- Insulate floors with carpeting.
- Install double-paned windows.
- Wear a sweater rather than tune up the thermostat.
- Install a solar water heater.
- Insulate your water heater and storage tank.
- Keep your water heater at 120 degrees.
- Use energy efficient appliances.
- Use fluorescent in place of incandescent light bulbs.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Plant trees to shade your house in the summer.
- Hang your clothes in the sun to dry.
- Keep lint screen and outside exhaust on dryer clean.

Water Conservation

- Install a water-saving showerhead.
- Take showers rather than baths.
- Install a space-occupier in your toilet.
- Install sink faucet aerators.
- Turn off the water between rinses when shaving and brushing teeth.
- Use a broom rather than hose to wash walkways.
- Do not let the hose run when you wash your car.
- Wash your car with a bucket of soapy water.
- Water plants and lawn in the morning to minimize evaporation.
- Install a drip-irrigation watering system.
- Plant drought-tolerant plants.

Pesticides/Eating Habits

- Eat lower on the food chain.
- Buy organic foods to discourage pesticide use.
- Grow your own food using alternatives to pesticides.
- Buy foods without additives and preservatives.
- Avoid highly processed foods.
- Support food co-ops and farmers' markets.
- Buy goods grown or produced locally.
- Be creative with leftover food.

Transportation

- Use public transportation, car pool, bike, or walk.
- Drive a fuel efficient car.
- Keep your car well tuned.
- Live close to your place of work.
- Call ahead before you shop and consolidate errands.

Trees

- Plant trees in your community.
- Plant fruit and nut trees in your backyard.
- Do not buy products made from tropical hardwoods.
- Buy a living Christmas tree.

Hazardous Products

- Use biodegradable soaps and detergents.
- Use alternatives to toxic household products.
- Dispose of household hazardous wastes properly.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Purchase appliances with alternatives to ozone-damaging chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- Think about purchasing a car without air conditioning to avoid using CFCs.
- Purchase a halogen-free fire extinguisher.

Activism

- Educate yourself and others on environmental issues.
- Purchase from environmentally responsible businesses; support small, local businesses.
- Know the voting records of your elected officials.
- Write letters to your representatives supporting environmental action.
- Get involved in local politics to influence local environmental policy decisions.
- Take time to learn about and enjoy nature.

Following is a list of specific accomplishments Earth Day 1990 hopes to achieve:

- A worldwide ban on chlorofluorocarbons — chemicals that destroy the ozone layer and contribute to global warming.
- Slowing the rate of global warming and the spread of acid rain by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- A halt to global deforestation coupled with a program to plant a billion trees.
- Implementation of strong, effective recycling programs in every community and a ban on packaging materials that are neither recyclable nor biodegradable.
- A comprehensive hazardous waste program, emphasizing source reduction.
- Organization of a powerful international agency with authority to safeguard the atmosphere, the oceans and other global commons from international threats.
- The adoption by all countries of strategies to stabilize their populations within limits that are sustainable using environmentally available agricultural and industrial processes.

Action And Reflection

Part I Homemaking

- 1.) What does the word "earth" mean to you? What does the word "home" mean to you? In your mind, how are the two words related?
- 2.) Recount your sojourn so far on the path of life, especially how care of the earth has informed your journey.
- 3.) Make a list of the environmentally respectful practices you are doing at the present time? What other changes could you make to bring your home more in keeping with the needs of the earth?
- 4.) Determine how you can be more self-sufficient in providing your own food.
- 5.) Organize a Habitat for Humanity work project to volunteer at an established site. Consider putting together in effort in your locale.

Part II Sustainable Agriculture Requires Citizen Democracy

- 1.) Frances Moore Lappe tells the story of how children can learn to engage in measures to protect the environment. Think of ways in which you can enable children to take initiative and accept responsibility for their actions.
- 2.) Identify a community project you could start. Spell out how the activity would be characterized by citizen democracy.
- 3.) Explore the history of Native Americans and early settlers in your area.
- 3.) If you do not grow a garden or raise animals, seek out someone who is willing to sell or barter these food items. Consider joining or forming a community supported agriculture effort.

Part III Biblical And Theological Perspectives On Earthkeeping

- 1.) John Schramm makes a distinction between having Bible studies and doing living word encounters. What difference do you see such a change of outlook would make in relating to environmental issues?
- 2.) Dean Freudenberger asserts that by the middle half of the next century the supply of fossil fuels may be depleted? Do you agree or disagree with this assessment? How can you and others prepare for such a situation?
- 3.) Talk with your pastor and worship committee about ways care of the earth can be lifted up in the Sunday morning services.

Part IV Keepers Of The Earth

- 1.) Howard Richards asks that people understand the realities under which conventional farmers operate. Image yourself as a full-time farmer working under the conditions that Richards describes: how would you seek to practice environmentally concerned agriculture and still maintain economic viability?
- 2.) Think of some people in your area with whom you could get together to exchange information, work, and machinery. Consider forming a network.
- 3.) Pat Slattery argues that many more people are needed to live in the countryside and earn at least part of their livelihood by raising food. What do you think of his assertion?
- 4.) Suggest ways that your congregation can put into action some of the ideas mentioned in chapters 14 and 15.

Part V Personal Action On Planet Earth

- 1.) Reflect on the theme of "Remember, Repent, and Renew." Articulate how this theme can carry on through the decade of the 1990s.
- 2.) The author lifts up the meaning of the Garden of Eden as gift, dwelling place, identity, responsibility, and life and death. In what ways does this perspective make a difference in caring for the earth.
- 3.) Respond to the statement, "The real answers on how to care for the earth will not come from the top down but must come from the bottom up. People like yourself — who are willing to work towards a vision of sustainability — are the key to the future."

THE EARTH IS OUR HOME

Gerhard Frost has included a new Bible passage he calls his Hezekiah 37:14: "The reason mountain climbers are tied together is to keep the sane ones from going home." From this phrase Dr. Frost fashions a radical message of our creaturely need for community. He says he needs you and me to help him from returning to the sanity of unbelief.

Chief Seattle shared the same message but more inclusively. Creation is a web. Each part or strand lends itself to the strength and stability of the whole creation. The new science of "Chaos" echoes these words in a significant principle. "Simple systems lead to complex behavior. Complex systems lead to simple behavior."

Bolstad's writings are the mountain climber's rope for us. He skillfully and insightfully yet gently reminds us of the whole, of the web. He weaves the strands of individual, congregation, and community contributions into the complete fabric of the creation. His use of the particular helps us see the whole more clearly. Once more he has connected us with brothers and sisters of all kinds and in all sorts of places. It is this kind of message that keeps us from returning to the "sanity" of unbelief. "God draws all things unto herself."

Larry H. Olson — Pastor/Farmer
Granite Falls, Minnesota

The Earth Is Our Home is a challenging book inviting action with others. Lowell Bolstad has a gift for making connections global and local, individuals and groups. He introduces us to farmers, theologians, house builders, organizers, local citizens who are knowledgeable and venturesome stewards of the earth. He takes us around to "earth summits" in kitchens, fields, schools, churches, conferences, markets. We hear the questions and ideas of people who share techniques for sustainable agriculture, organize recycling projects, establish environmental practices for their homes and churches, form supportive networks, study scripture, address public policy. "The real answers to how to care for the earth will not come from the top down," Bolstad says, "but must come from the bottom up." This book celebrates this sure and active movement, a widening community and growing common will for sustainability for our home the earth.

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Prairie Farm Press
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Prairie Farm, Wisc. 54762

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