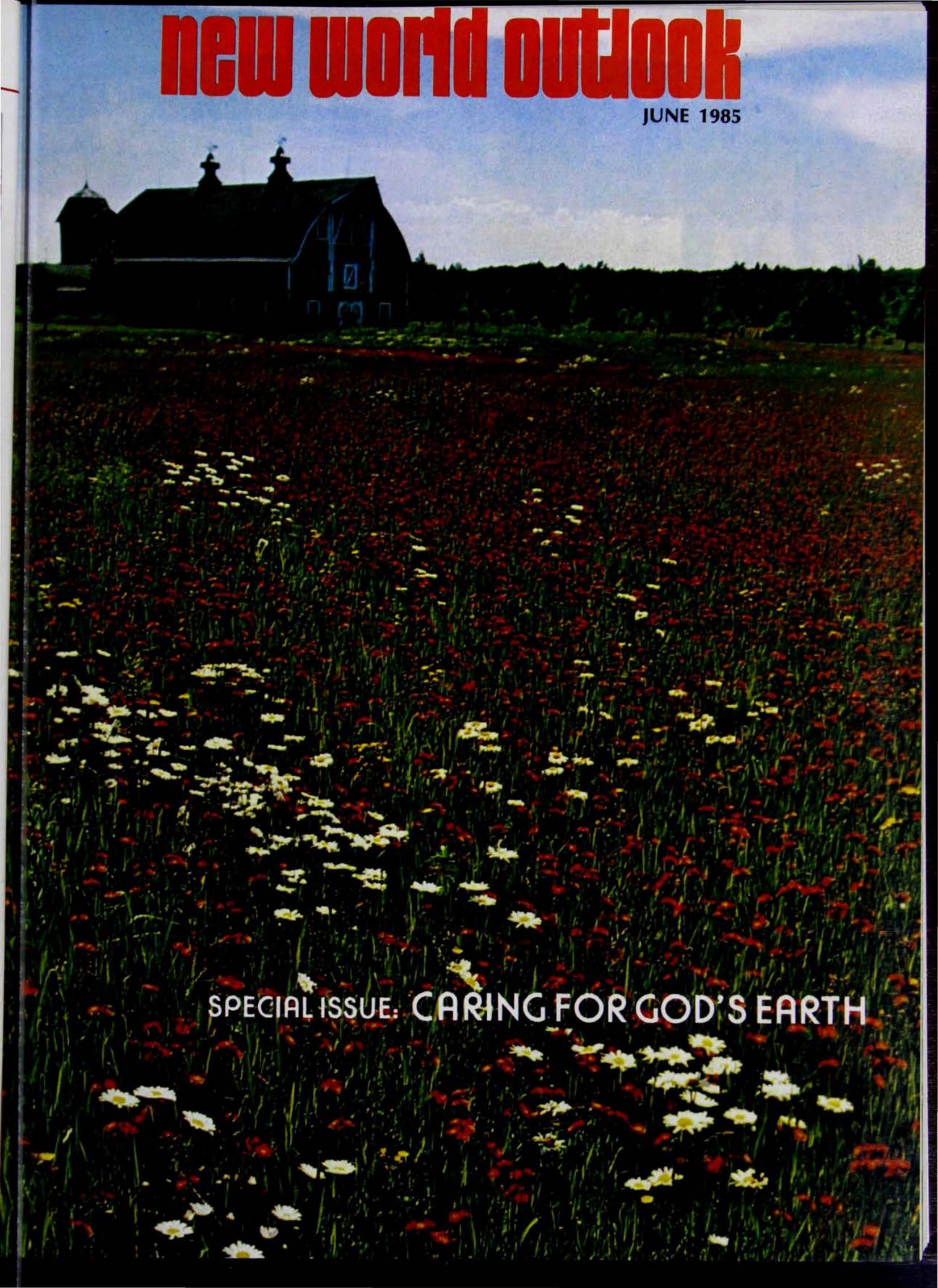


# new world outlook

JUNE 1985



SPECIAL ISSUE: CARING FOR GOD'S EARTH

# new world outlook

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# MISSION MEMO

News and Analysis of Developments in Christian Mission

June, 1985

Divestment. Twelve U.S. multinationals operating in South Africa must cut off all ties with South Africa's apartheid regime by the end of 1986 or face sharp escalation of protest activities, including possible divestments of multimillion-dollar investment portfolios currently held in these corporations by 50 major protestant denominations, Roman Catholic orders and other religious organizations participating in the anti-apartheid campaign. Combined total investment portfolios held by the group in all U.S. corporations have been estimated at over \$12 billion. "If the response of these dozen companies to this most reasonable request is no," said Dr. Randolph Nugent, general secretary of the UMC General Board of Global ministries, "then we shall divest securities in these companies, shall not buy their stock in the future and shall urge throughout our church the divestment of stock owned in these corporate partners in apartheid." Dr. Nugent joined Dr. Arie Brouwer, general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ, the Rev. Daniel Driscoll of the Maryknoll Order, and Dr. Audrey Smock, world issues secretary of the United Church of Christ Board for World Ministries at a May 20 New York press conference called by the Interfaith Committee for Corporate Responsibility, an NCCC-related body that has been spearheading the churches' anti-apartheid campaign for the past 15 years.

In singling out the 12 corporations--Burroughs, Chevron, Citicorp, Control Data, Fluor, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, IBM, Mobil, Newmont Mining and Texaco--the four church leaders said their group had decided to pursue a "new strategic approach toward U.S. corporations whose presence in South Africa undergirds the South African Government's ability to enforce its policy." Prompting this new approach is the widespread belief shared by many religious leaders that the corporations, despite much-publicized improvements in working conditions of black workers, have on the whole only succeeded in providing stability to the country's white minority government. "We have agreed that our goal is not to encourage U.S. corporations to ameliorate the efforts of apartheid but to play their part in dismantling that system," the group's statement said.

Antigua and Barbuda. The group expected no red carpet at the airport, but they couldn't believe the immigration agents who told them they were not welcome and must leave on the next plane out of the two-island Caribbean nation. "We were shocked by this sudden refusal," said Ruth Harris, a UM World Division executive and leader of a 29-member delegation of Agricultural Missions Inc., popularly known as Ag Missions, a rural development agency of the National Council of Churches of Christ. The group had gone to Antigua-Barbuda on April 23 for the agency's annual meeting. The airport incident came just after some group members had gone through customs. Others had their passports seized upon arrival. Lawrence Lewis, Ag Missions director for agricultural technical services, was detained almost an hour before being expelled. Officials of the agency promptly lodged a formal protest at the State Department and with the Antigua government. They demanded restitution from the Antigua government for expenses incurred in travel to the island and for

arrangements made for the aborted meeting. In the absence of any explanation from the Antigua government, Ag Mission officials speculated that the group was refused entry because the agency has supported projects that have been considered unpopular with the government. These projects include the Antigua-Caribbean Training Institute and the Consumer Cooperative of Antigua, which train women and youth in food marketing, retail and other skills. Aside from Ms. Harris, who serves as president of Ag Missions, four other United Methodists were part of the delegation. They were: Chester Jones, Franklin Smith and Barbara Weaver, all GBGM staffmembers, and Pat Callbeck Harper, a director of the Women's Division.

Twenty Million Members. Having 20 million members by 1992 may be "unachievable" for The United Methodist Church, according to the official in charge of implementing last year's decision of the General Conference to dramatically boost the Church's membership rolls within the next eight years. "For us to more than double our denomination is a ludicrous goal, and I suspect will handicap us," said Bishop Richard B. Wilke of Arkansas at the early May meeting of the Council of Bishops in Seattle. "But our great danger is that we cannot even turn the ship around." Nonetheless, he said, the 9.4 million-member denomination can take some comfort from the fact that, despite previous warnings of impending doom, its long-running membership decline seems to have slowed down in the last few years. He further noted that although U.S. membership had been declining until recently, United Methodism has been growing rapidly in certain churches overseas, especially in Asia and Africa.

Worship Abroad. An American who happens to be in Paris or in any of 95 other cities all over the world need not miss a Sunday service in English, often with large numbers of fellow Americans. Ranging in size and prominence from the well-known American Church in Paris to a small Bible study group in a Cairo apartment, English-language congregations have become important and ever-present institutions catering to American travelers and expatriates away from home. "We try to help these churches meet the spiritual and fellowship needs of thousands of Americans living and traveling overseas," said the Rev. Russell Spry Williams, who directs the International Congregations and Lay Ministries program of the National Council of Churches Of Christ. "So many times these people feel uprooted, particularly spouses who come to settle with someone on assignment abroad. While the people working have a social network, their wives or husbands may not. These congregations help them ease the transition and the loneliness."

Each church has a unique history and and operates under unique circumstances. Larger congregations such as those in the Philippines and in Frankfurt, West Germany are heavily related to the American military and economic presence. The Protestant Chaplaincy in Moscow serves an international community of diplomats which shares English as a common language. Little churches in places like Aruba and Libya draw most of their members from the petroleum industry. Although each congregation is independently run and funded, the NCCC offers support services such as recruiting and training pastors and providing consultations for them, as well as worship materials for the church members.

Nairobi. More than 4,000 women leaders from all over the world are about to hit the road to Nairobi to attend Forum '85, the 10-day international celebration marking the end of the United Nations' Decade for Women. From July 10 to 19, they will be participating in what Dame Nita Barrow, the conference's convenor, describes as "a smorgasbord of workshops." Briefing media representatives at New York's Interchurch Center last April 24, the prominent Methodist layleader from Barbados said the

world gathering at Nairobi's giant Kenyatta Conference Center will feature plenary sessions on 11 major areas of women's concern, ranging from equality to aging to education. Asked whether planners were prepared to deal with the explosive Arab-Israel conflict which divided participants at previous Women's Decade gatherings, Dame Nita said, "We're not there for areas of conflict but for how issues affect women. We have a working group on peaceful resolution of conflict."

Aside from the plenary sessions, the gathering of nongovernmental women's groups will feature an international film forum, an arts and crafts marketplace, technology displays, other cultural events and possible visits to village projects around the Kenyan capital city.

Scholarships. Talented but financially needy United Methodist students can look forward to more scholarship money from the denomination's Nashville-based Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The good news is a direct result of a recent \$8 million trust fund given by unnamed donors to enhance the scholarship programs of UM-related colleges and local churches around the country. Dr. F. Thomas Trotter, the board's chief executive officer, said the donation, the largest single gift ever received by the agency, will boost invested assets of the board by 60 percent and could increase available scholarship funding by as much as 33 percent annually. In 1984, the board's total assistance to 2,052 students in 128 UM-related schools, colleges and universities was \$1.45 million. In addition, the board operates a student loan program involving 10,000 accounts.

Interfaith Gathering. The UM Council of Bishops has formally called for a national gathering of Protestants, Catholics and Jews to discuss issues such as peace, nuclear disarmament, economic development, hunger, social justice, and human rights. The proposed gathering will seek creative alternatives for interfaith involvement and actions. Among reasons prompting the proposed gathering, the bishops said, was the 1983 furor over media charges that some mainline churches support leftwing causes and revolutions in third-world countries. A seven-member committee of bishops headed by UM Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel of Washington, D.C. found no grounds for the charges aired by CBS' TV's "60 Minutes" and Readers' Digest Magazine, but did point to several inadequacies in governance and accountability.

Norwegian at the Helm. For the first time in its long history, the UMC Council of Bishops has elected a non-American as its presiding officer. Bishop Ole E. Borgen, who heads the UMC's Northern European Central Conference based in Stockholm, assumed the most prestigious office open to United Methodist clergy at the close of the council's spring meeting in Seattle last May 3rd. He succeeds Bishop James S. Thomas of North Canton, Ohio in the one-year council post. His designated successor is Bishop James M. Ault of Pittsburgh, Pa. (A profile on Bishop Borgen will appear in NWO's coming July/August issue).

New Responses. Farmers hits by foreclosures, refugees and sanctuary workers targeted by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, ethnic minority churches, communities seeking self-empowerment and communities rocked by plant closings will be receiving more attention from the GBGM's National Division. The decision to formulate new responses to the needs of persons and communities overwhelmed by economic and political forces was made during the division's mid-April meeting in New York City. "Persons from widely varying walks of life are being victimized by the same principalities and powers," said the Rev. Rene Bideaux, chief executive of the division, "whether they be farmers who have had a substantial piece of the rock or immigrants being hunted like criminals. All feel

unable to control their world, to make the major decisions in their lives, to be fully human." Among concrete steps voted upon were a comprehensive plan of action on the rural crisis, direct investment by the board in rural banks, assistance for hardpressed farm families, "friend of the court" briefs in cases involving sanctuary workers, and a boycott of non-union table grapes in support of the United Farmworkers (UFW) and Hispanic workers in California.

Deaths. Ms. Lillian Hazel McCray, 91, died March 18 in Chino, Calif. A retired missionary, she served almost 19 years in Bolivia...Mr. Stewart Meacham, 74, died March 24 in Santa Rosa, Calif. A former missionary who served four years in India, he rose to prominence as a leader of the movement against the Vietnam War. In the mid-1960s, the Philadelphia native served as peace education secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization. In 1968, he and two other antiwar leaders went to Hanoi and helped arrange the release of three American airmen imprisoned in North Vietnam. He was also co-chairman of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte, one son, Stewart D., and several grandchildren...The Rev. Joseph W. Moore, 93, died April 30 in East Providence, R.I. He served 35 years in the Philippines. He is survived by his wife, Emma...Keith David Butner, 33, died of a respiratory ailment May 1 in the Ivory Coast. He had just started service as a World Division missionary associate in the West African nation seven months ago...Ms. Keighley Fassett, 20, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Whitewolf and Nancy Fassett, died in a car accident last May 12 in Anchorage, Alaska. Her father, formerly an associate general secretary of the UM Board of Church and Society in Washington, D.C., has been superintendent of the Alaska Missionary Conference for the past two years. Surviving the University of Alaska sophomore student, in addition to her parents, is an older sister, Kimberley...Dr. Mary C. McLanachan, 79, retired associate editor of Response magazine and a member of the UM Communicators Hall of Fame, died of cancer May 13 in Dayton, Ohio. Born in 1905 in Elizabethville, Pa., she served in various publications of the United Brethren, Evangelical United Brethren and United Methodist Churches for a total of 41 years beginning in 1927. A graduate of Pennsylvania's Lebanon Valley College, she held doctorates in humane letters from her alma mater and from Nebraska's York College. She returned to Dayton after her retirement in 1970.

A Great Person. For the Nashville-based Black College Fund, \$38,000 is a lot of money--in fact, the largest single amount it has ever received in behalf of 12 United Methodist-related predominantly Black colleges and universities around the country. The recently announced gift came from Ella Tackwood, an 80-year-old former high school teacher and county education official from Waycross, Ga., who passed away in February 1984. Educated at UM-related Paine College and at Tuskegee Institute, the Louisiana-born Miss Tackwood was known as an eternally optimistic and lively person who was taking piano lessons and driving around a new car until the very day she died. "She was a grand woman," said Mrs. Viola Walker, a close friend and neighbor, "she worked till her day was done and she slept overnight. The following day she was gone."

Neither arthritis nor the three automobile accidents she suffered could slow down Miss Tackwood in her last years. A devoted longtime member of the local King Solomon UMC, she volunteered to purchase land for the church's parking lot. Her bequest to the Black College Fund, along with an unspecified donation to her church, apparently came from lifesavings. "She wasn't wealthy," said Mrs. Walker, "but she worked hard and saved a lot. She lived modestly in a neat house. She never married. She was just a great person."



# EDITORIALS

## THE BLACK COLLEGE FUND

There are times when voices of doubt are raised about the need for predominantly black colleges. "After all," some of their detractors have been heard to say, "aren't other colleges good enough!" By *other* they mean predominantly white colleges and universities.

But all of those who seemingly fail to understand the necessity for black colleges are not white; one does not have to look far to uncover even some Blacks who unabashedly regard black colleges generally as inferior institutions. However, the late Ella Tackwood, who was born in Louisiana about 80 years ago and died last year in Waycross, Georgia, where she was a former high school teacher and education official, was not one of *them*.

Ella Tackwood was a product of two black colleges: Paine in Augusta, Georgia, one of 12 black such institutions related to The United Methodist Church, and Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. A member of King Solomon United Methodist Church, Miss Tackwood, according to a neighbor and close friend, worked hard, lived modestly in a neat house, and saved a lot. By the time she had died in February, 1984, she had saved enough to leave \$38,000 to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Black College Fund, and an unspecified amount to her local church.

Miss Tackwood's contribution to the Black College Fund is the largest individual gift ever received by the Fund. Until Miss Tackwood's gift, the largest contribution had been a \$1,000 bequest from the estate of Dr. Samuel G. Zegler, a United Methodist minister who died in 1981 in Lebanon, Ohio, at the age of 96.

There are today about 105 predominantly black colleges and universities, mostly scattered across the southeastern quarter of the United States. Practically all of them were founded at a time when hardly any attention was being given to the education of more than four million newly emancipated slaves. And among them are the 12 enormously respected black col-

leges that are related to The United Methodist Church.

From the beginning the mission of these institutions has been the development of the intellectual and vocational skills of blacks that include both an academic challenge and a strong emphasis on personal ethics. They also have provided a sense of identity on the part of black students and the black community. Much of the leadership in The United Methodist Church (including most of its black bishops, 90 percent of its black pastors, and roughly 85 percent of its local church leadership) are graduates of historically black colleges and universities related to The United Methodist Church, and which the Black College Fund strives to support.

Prior to the Fund's establishment by the 1972 General Conference, financial aid for these institutions came from foundations, the United Negro College Fund, alumni, student tuition, fees, sympathetic philanthropists, and the church's annual Race Relations Sunday offering. But this assistance was marginal; in 24 years, from 1940 to 1964, only about \$5.6 million was raised through the Race Relations Sunday offering. Less than \$20,000 annually for each school.

The churchwide Black College Fund was initiated as a new funding program and started out to raise \$6 million annually for the schools. The Fund has never reached that initial goal but in 1984, its best year so far, the Fund did achieve 82 percent of it (\$5,919,669).

This is a remarkable record and this outpouring of support for black church-related institutions probably has no parallel in modern history.

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

For nearly 50 years affirmative action programs have worked quite well by providing racial minorities and women access to jobs that had been denied them in government, business and industry.

Now, under the guise of attempting to achieve a color-blind and sex-blind society by doing away with preferential treatment and quotas, the Justice Department is maneuvering to dis-

mantle 50 court-approved affirmative action plans in city, county and state jurisdictions.

We would like to be idealistic enough to believe that all of the nation's citizens desire achievement of a color-blind and sex-blind society. Unfortunately, we believe the efforts of the Justice Department, if successful, will merely perpetuate injustice and inequality.

Affirmative action, in one form or another, has had a long and turbulent past. It took root, more or less, in the 1940s, when the country was emerging slowly and painfully from the most severe economic depression in its history racism was tearing the country apart.

With the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. was catapulted into a war it was unprepared to fight. To mobilize for the war effort, hundreds of thousands of persons were drafted for the armed forces and factories were pushed to full capacity to produce munitions, supplies and other weapons of war. Neither patriotic fervor nor our involvement in a protracted global conflict, however, dimmed the racism that prevailed throughout the nation.

Confronted with prospects of a divided nation in the midst of a war, President Roosevelt, on June 25, 1941, signed into law an executive order prohibiting discrimination in defense industries as well as in the federal government itself. Subsequent executive orders have extended the conditions to apply to subcontractors as well as military prime contractors, to civilian as well as military purchases, and to services as well as goods.

But it wasn't until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that job discrimination was prohibited in private business, and in 1965 that federal contractors were required to take *affirmative* action to ensure that hiring practices were not discriminatory because of race, color, religion or national origin. The order was amended in 1967 to include "sex."

The problem with the Justice Department's efforts is that it is attempting to undo what these and other successful programs have done to move the nation towards the very goals it says it desires to achieve. If programs that include preferential treatment and quotas, the most effective components of any affirmative action plan, are eliminated, then racial minorities and women will once again be placed at job disadvantages.

## CO-CREATUREHOOD AND DOMINION

# —A Biblical View of God's Earth

John B. Cobb, Jr.

In the fall of 1983 The Environmental Protection Agency issued a report on the effects of industrial activity on the weather. It agreed with earlier projections such as that of Robert Heilbroner in *The Human Prospect*. Industrial activity, especially the burning of fossil fuels, is raising global temperatures. This is resulting in the melting of the polar icecaps and the raising of ocean levels. Projecting a steady increase in production, the EPA anticipates that the oceans will rise seven inches by the year 2000. When the icecaps are fully melted the ocean level will have risen around twenty-five feet. By that time much of New York City and the state of Florida—to give but two examples—will be below sea level.

The EPA report is very cautious. It recommends more study rather than panic. But what interests me most is the direction of its proposals insofar as it makes any. One might have supposed that given the alarming prospects of flooding many of the world's greatest cities along with vast coastal plains all over the planet, there might be proposals for research on radically different forms of economic life not so dependent on fossil fuels. But the EPA dismisses any such direction as unrealistic. It assumes that we will burn the fuel and raise the ocean levels. The question is rather whether and where dikes will be cost-effective.

This recent incident deals with only

one of the many ways we are "fouling our nest." It is useful here to illustrate the characteristic habits of mind of our culture. We pay little attention to the destruction of our environment until it happens. Then we respond with technical solutions which often add to the destruction. Why?

Part of the answer lies in the power and success of science and technology. Science seems almost omniscient, and technology seems almost omnipotent. Many people look to them as earlier generations looked to God. We do not understand them. We are often troubled by the evil they inflict. Nevertheless, many see science and technology as the only hope, and a few view them as the sovereign powers which must be served even if they are destructive.

### Environmental Destruction

But we cannot hold science and technology entirely responsible for our fatalistic acquiescence in environmental destruction. Science and technology can serve other ends. If science is half as wise as is supposed, and technology half as powerful, why not let them provide alternatives to further destruction?

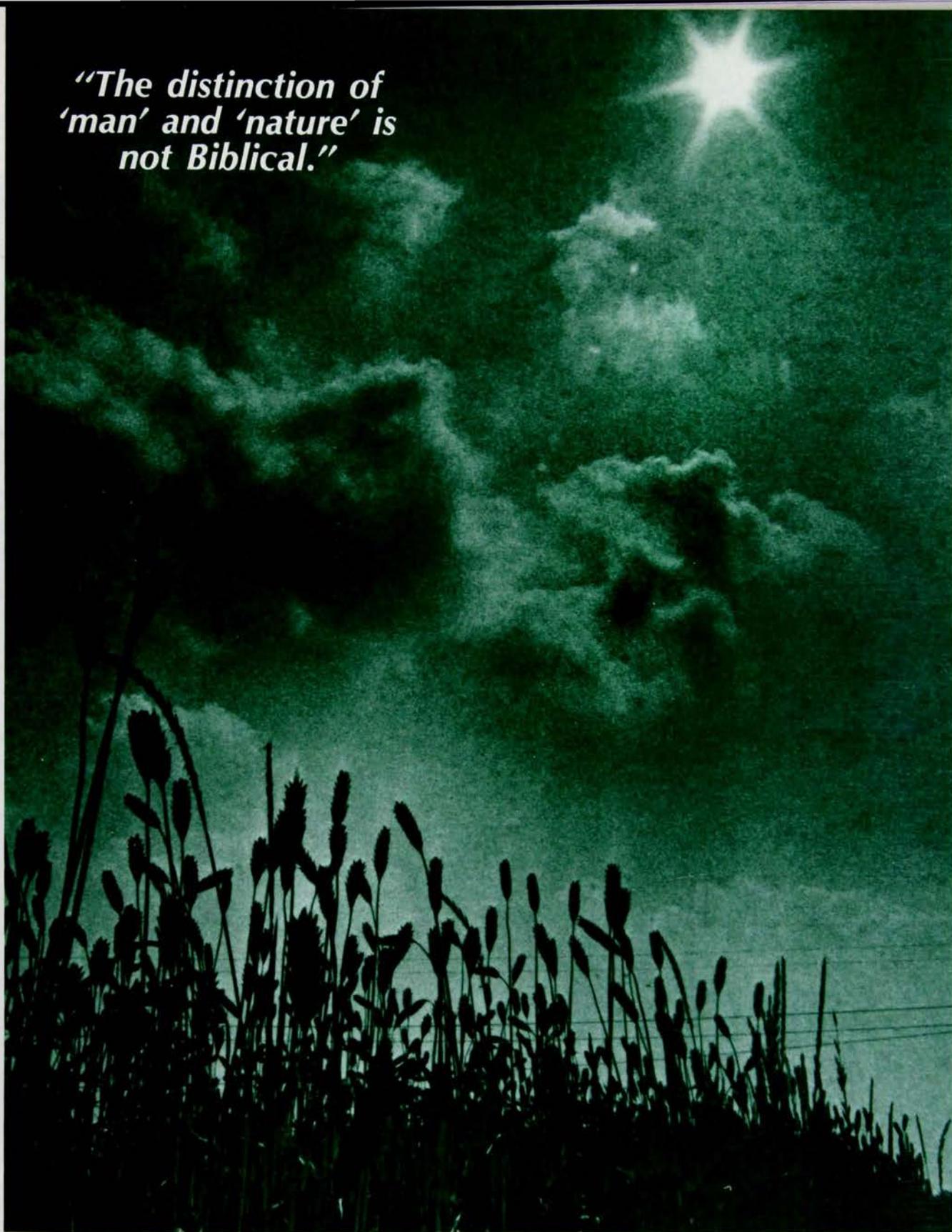
The reason this is not done is partly economic. The task of the economy is to provide goods and services for all. In the present economic system this

requires continual expansion. It is this expansion that must be served by science and technology. To interfere with this expansion, it is supposed, would be to deprive people of what they need and want. If this entails environmental degradation, that must be accepted.

There is some truth to the idea that the pursuit of legitimate economic goals inescapably damages nature. In many times and places the growing demands of an increasing population have indeed turned once forested lands and fertile plains into deserts. This is particularly apparent in the Near East, but every inhabited continent has large man-made deserts. Today they are growing faster than ever. And now in our continuing quest of economic improvements, we are adding to this agricultural and pastoral local desertification a global industrial destruction of the environment.

But we cannot hold economic needs and growing population fully responsible for our unwillingness or inability to consider alternatives to contemporary industrial economics. History does give examples of large populations developing sustainable economics—with minor use of fossil fuels. If we devoted to the development of alternatives a fraction of the money and genius now given to military "defense", there are good reasons to believe that the icecaps need not melt.

*"The distinction of  
'man' and 'nature' is  
not Biblical."*



### **Deep-seated Beliefs and Attitudes**

Why, then, do we all collectively acquiesce in the ongoing destruction of the planet? The answer must include reference to deep-seated beliefs and attitudes, many of which are hardly conscious at all. These are not universal human beliefs and attitudes. If we saw ourselves and our relation to the land as many Native Americans have, we would not be able to acquiesce in these new blows against it. But we do

not see things that way. The land, in our view, is the "environment" of human action and consists of "natural resources" for our exploitation. If "progress" hastens the exhaustion of resources—in this case the loss of land to ocean—that is the price we must pay.

Where did this attitude come from? In 1966 Lynn White discussed this topic in a lecture to a national scientific association entitled "The

Historical Roots of the Ecological Crisis." Many scientists were shocked by the argument that faith and theology play an important role in human affairs. Many Christians were shocked that we were blamed as major contributors to the crisis. But, with various minor qualifications, the thesis has withstood criticism, and the essay has become a minor classic.

White shows that an attitude of exploitation of nature developed early



**"And God has dominion over all." This artist's image, using the conventional picture of God as an old man, illustrates this concept of dominion.**

among Christians in Western Europe. It was explicitly associated with the divine command in Genesis that we should exercise dominion over the earth and all other living creatures. It was this attitude, White believes, that provided a context for rapid technological progress and for the rise of science.

Meanwhile the image of "man" above "nature", exploiting it, developed in modern philosophy into the dualism of "mental substances" that

think and "physical substances" that are extended. Finally, Immanuel Kant taught us to view the natural world as mere appearance or phenomenon.

Our ethics followed our philosophy. While God faded into the background or disappeared altogether, human personality became sacred. Everything else became mere means to human ends. Economic theory followed ethics. For it, human desires are sovereign. The remainder of creation consists in "natural resources". How

strange all this is to our Native American sisters and brothers. What violence and violation of the earth is involved in this human arrogance. And what violence and violation we inflict on one another in the process—man against woman, rich against poor, white against black.

#### **Does the Bible Support Exploitation?**

The question for us, now, is whether our ancestors in Western Europe read

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the Bible rightly and drew the correct conclusions. Does the Biblical faith really support the exploitative spirit? Let's look again at those first chapters of Genesis that have played so decisive a role in our history.

When we do so, we discover immediately a contrast with modern philosophy, ethics, and economics. Before there were any human beings, at each stage of creation, God saw that it was good. That means that other creatures are good, that they have value in themselves and apart from us, that they are not just means to human use and enjoyment. If God sees that they are good, human indifference to their well-being cannot be justified. Human beings, like all else except God, are creatures. We are co-creatures together with other animals, plants, and planets. The distinction of "man" and "nature" is not Biblical. There is the Creator, and there is the creation within which human beings, like planets and plants and other animals, all have a place.

On the other hand, the Biblical account does give to human beings a very special place and a very special value. It is only after human beings have been introduced into creation that God sees that the whole is "very good". Also, human beings have a special relationship with God. We are created in "the image of God." Also, and here we come to the passage that has proven so fateful, we are to have dominion over all other creatures. The Bible does affirm hierarchical relations. Animals have dominion over plants. Human beings have dominion over both. And God has dominion over all.

There is a tension here between the creation story in Genesis 1 and the story of the fall in Genesis 3. In the Garden Adam and Eve were not dominating other creatures. It was only after they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge that they were expelled from the life of gathering and were forced to subdue the earth. The domestication of plants and animals that is the foundation of agricultural and pastoral economies is here associated with sin. Nevertheless, read together with the earlier account we can only conclude with Luther that we should "sin boldly"! For once the possibility of living by gathering alone

is foreclosed, the great majority of human beings must "subdue the earth" or die. The Biblical story assures us that God supports and affirms this human violence against other creatures, even if it is involved with evil. God has given plants to animals for their food, and both plants and animals are given to us for ours.

### What Does Dominion Mean

But does this warrant what our Western history has made of it? Only if dominion is understood as rule for the sake of the ruler. Dominion has often been understood in that way, but that is not the Biblical view. Jesus gave the classical Jewish-Christian statement, "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." (Luke 22:26)

So how are we humans to relate to all the other creatures? First, we are to recognize that we are creatures among other creatures, each with its own value, all interconnected in one creation. Second, we are to affirm our special and particularly important place within creation. We are in the image of God. The Bible does not tell us just what that means, but it is connected with our dominion. Third, dominion involves the right to use according to real needs. But it does not

justify exploitation that disregards the inherent value of the other creatures. On the contrary, dominion must always be, first and foremost, for the sake of those who are ruled.

Because, in spite of scripture, "dominion" is still suggestive of the exercise of power for the sake of the powerful, many prefer to speak of "stewardship". That rightly reminds us that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," (Psalm 24:1) and that our power is to be exercised in God's name and according to God's purposes. But even "stewardship" fails to suggest the inherent value and importance of those creatures for whose welfare we have responsibility—our fellow creatures. It is as creatures endowed with special capacities and special rights that we have special responsibilities toward all creatures—ourselves included. For our failure to fulfill these responsibilities, indeed for our blatant denial and violation of these responsibilities, we are called not merely to shame and regret, but to repentance, that is, to *metanoia*, to a reversal of our ways. ■

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"So how are we humans to relate to all the other creatures?"

# A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY

Lester R. Brown

Although human activities have always altered the natural environment, the scale of disruptions in the late twentieth century is unprecedented. The collective actions of a world population approaching five billion now appear capable of causing continental and even global changes in natural systems. As human pressures build, the relationship between people and their natural support systems can cross key thresholds, leading to a breakdown.

Nowhere is that breakdown more tragically evident than in Africa, where famine is spreading across the continent. As recently as 1970, Africa was essentially self-sufficient in food. In 1984, however, some 140 million Africans—out of a total of 531 million—were fed with grain from abroad. In the years ahead, the continent's dependence on imported grain will almost certainly be even greater.

The spotlight of public attention focused in late 1984 on emergency food relief; the media regularly attributed the famine to drought. But the drought, though a triggering event, is not the basic cause. Per capita grain production peaked in Africa in 1967 and has been declining nearly one percent per year ever since. The drought merely brought this long-term deterioration into focus. The decline is largely attributable to three well-established trends: the fastest population growth of any continent in history, widespread soil erosion and desertification, and the failure by African governments to give agriculture the support that it needs.

Population growth both expands food needs and contributes to endemic soil erosion, which is dimming the food prospect of virtually every African country from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope. A 1978 report from the U.S. Agency for International Development office in Addis Ababa indicated that Ethiopia was losing a billion tons of topsoil annually—foreshadowing the famine now gripping

that ancient country. In graphic language it described "an environmental nightmare unfolding before our eyes—a result of the acts of millions of Ethiopians struggling for survival: scratching the surface of eroded land and eroding it further, cutting down the trees for warmth and fuel and leaving the country denuded. Over one billion tons of topsoil flow from Ethiopia's highlands each year." Similar language could be used to describe the population-induced deterioration of forests and soils in much of Africa.

Amid all the media coverage of the African food crisis a fundamental point is being overlooked. There are no developments in prospect on either the agriculture or the family planning side of the food/population equation that will arrest the slide in per capita food production.

In addition, there is now evidence that population growth may be driving climate change in Africa. The sheer number of people seeking to survive on arid, marginal land may be driving a self-reinforcing process of desiccation, literally drying out the continent. Coming at a time of declining food output, this suggests a breakdown in the relationship between people and environmental support systems that could lead Africa into a crisis of historic dimensions—one that goes far beyond short-term emergency food relief. This continent-wide disintegration could gradually shift attention from the East-West confrontation, which has dominated world affairs for a generation, to the deteriorating relationship between people and life-support systems that now threatens the security and survival of so many.

## Africa Not the Only Area Affected

The deterioration of our environmental support systems is not restricted to Africa, however. It takes many forms and can be seen in industrial and developing countries alike. Acid rain and air pollutants from the combustion

of fossil fuels in automobiles and power plants are laying waste to the forests of central Europe. Indeed, acid rain may be destroying the forests of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and West Germany even faster than the axe and plow destroyed those of India and El Salvador. More serious than the immediate loss of forests in Europe is the failure of reforestation efforts in the devastated areas where newly planted seedlings have withered and died.

The loss of forests is not the only cost of growing dependence on fossil fuels. Their combustion is also releasing carbon dioxide to the atmosphere on a scale that is likely to cause climatic shifts that could disrupt food production, reduce dependable water supplies, and eventually jeopardize coastal cities and towns.

When natural systems are severely stressed by human activity, their vulnerability increases. One graphic il-

“  
The collective actions  
of a world population  
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natural systems.  
”

lustration of this: In 1983 a forest fire spread through Indonesian Kalimantan (Borneo) destroying some 3.5 million hectares of forests and defying the conventional wisdom that moisture-laden tropical rain forests will not burn naturally. Drought combined with forest degradation from logging, agricultural settlement, and the spread of shifting cultivation to dry out the forest and provide a layer of kindling. Fires ignited by lightning and slash-and-burn cultivators began to burn uncontrollably. As fires blazed and smoldered for some three months, valuable timber tracts were destroyed

and countless plant and animal species disappeared in an evolutionary instant. This conflagration, little noticed outside the scientific community although it consumed an area larger than Taiwan, may be a harbinger of disruptions to come in other tropical rain forests.

### Facing Difficult Choices

As our numbers move steadily toward five billion, new manifestations of population pressures are surfacing. In China, authorities are now trying to conserve land by encouraging cremation instead of interment in the traditional burial mounds seen throughout the countryside. Where mounds occupy too much cropland, Beijing recommends that ancestral remains be consolidated in a single community plot. Veneration of ancestors continues, but in this crowded country the living compete with the dead for land.



(Top) Acid rain and air pollutants are laying waste to the forests of Central Europe. (Above) As human pressures build, the relationship between people and their natural support systems can cross key thresholds, leading to a breakdown.

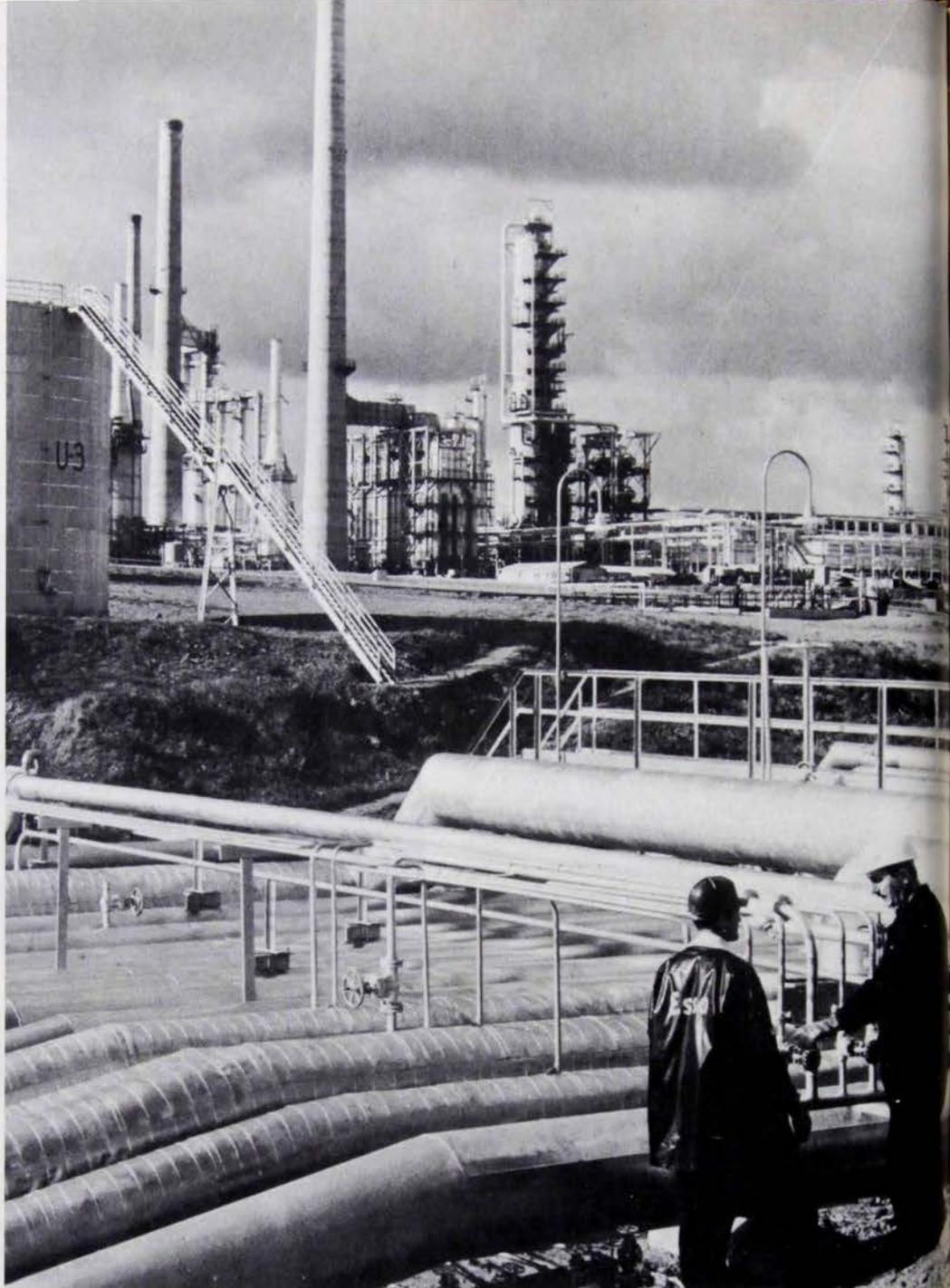
Difficult choices are not confined to China. West Germans may now have to choose between reducing automobile use and sacrificing their forests. For many Third World countries the choice is between an abrupt lowering of birth rates and a certain decline in living standards.

Trade-offs between food and energy are particularly difficult. In Brazil some 1.3 million hectares of cropland were planted to sugarcane in 1984 as part of a massive government program to become self-sufficient in liquid fuels. This reduced the outlay of scarce foreign exchange, but it also increased the pressures on soil and the competition with the food sector for resources.

Although these new signs of environmental stress appear each year, many people find them easy to ignore. The world has been lulled into a false sense of security by recent progress in slowing population growth, reducing dependence on oil, and replenishing granaries. Only when environmental deterioration begins to affect the economic statistics does the world seem to take notice.

Economic trends and ecological systems interact continuously in ways that we sometimes fail to understand and with consequences that we frequently do not anticipate. Policies that are economically successful in the short run can be ecologically and economically disastrous in the long run. The U.S. crop surpluses of the early eighties, for example—sometimes cited as a sign of a healthy agriculture—are partly the product of careless overplowing. The very practices that lead to excessive erosion often yield short-term production gains or even surpluses, creating an illusion of progress.

Our understanding of these new stresses is far from complete. Unfortunately, the consequences of our action or inaction are of an entirely new magnitude. National energy policies could determine the extent and pace of a world-wide change in climate. Population policies may help determine whether Africa becomes a virtual wasteland. The scale of environmental disruptions we face lends urgency to our efforts to return to a sustainable path—to bring population growth and our economic and social



**"The global economic slowdown reflects the depletion of oil reserves and the associated price hikes."**

systems into a long-term balance with the resource base that supports us.

### **The Economy/Ecosystem Interaction**

Despite the central importance of the economy/ecosystem relationship, relatively little attention has been devoted to analyzing it. There are several understandable reasons for this neglect: Rapid, sustained growth of the world economy is historically rather recent; an analysis of the interaction is a difficult interdisciplinary undertaking; and ecosystems are not well understood. Since mid-century the world output of goods and services has nearly quadrupled, an unprecedented achievement and a testimony to human energy and inge-

nity. Unfortunately, this explosive growth has left little time to assess the effects on the earth's natural systems and resources.

The interactions between the global economy and the earth's natural systems, cycles, and resources are legion. Acid rain affects forest productivity, which in turn raises costs in the forest products industry. Population growth hastens deforestation, which may reduce rainfall. Fossil fuel combustion raises atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, which in turn alters climate and eventually world agriculture. The growing demand for protein triggers overfishing, which in turn leads to the collapse of fisheries. These are but a few of the important links between the economy and the ecosystem.

## Soil Erosion and Third World Debt

Of these linkages, one that seems destined to attract attention soon is that between soil erosion and Third World debt. Soil erosion can undermine not only a country's food production capacity but its debt servicing capacity as well, for it leads to widening food deficits, mounting debt, and eventually to food shortages. A nation whose people face starvation can hardly be blamed for failing to make debt payments.

The changing relationship between the global economy, now producing some \$12-trillion worth of goods and services per year, and the natural systems and resources that underpin it raises difficult questions in analysis and in the conduct of international affairs. Unfortunately, there is no overarching body of theory that integrates economic trends and ecological forces. Economic analysts turn to highly developed theory in their field and ecologists rely on well-established ecological principles. But there is no easy way to integrate the two approaches.

Despite this lack of integration, experience tells us that the ecological indicators of today foreshadow the economic trends of tomorrow. If we are interested in food prices at the end of the century, we should be looking at soil erosion rates today. The less soil we have, the more food will cost. For some idea of the cost of lumber and the price of housing a generation hence, we should be following deforestation rates today. If we want to know what types of seafood we will be eating a decade from now, we should be analyzing the areas of overfishing today.

### Food—Like Oil—Is a Global Commodity

In effect, the emergence of a highly developed international economy provides a way of transmitting scarcities from one country to another, a sort of domino theory of ecological stress and collapse. Soil erosion, for example, has historically been a local problem: civilizations whose food systems were undermined by erosion in times past declined in isolation. But in the integrated world economy of the



**"More worrisome is the realization that population growth may now be indirectly undermining efforts to increase output of essential items such as food."**

late twentieth century, food—like oil—is a global commodity. A country that loses an excessive amount of topsoil needs to import more food and thereby raises the pressure on soils elsewhere.

These forces interact not only among countries but also between generations. Fossil fuel combustion today promises to alter the climate of tomorrow. Our inadvertent destruction of plant and animal species impoverishes the world of our children and grandchildren. At issue is whether we can act on behalf of future generations by moderating our reproductive behavior and by shifting to technologies and consumption patterns that are sustainable.

### The Loss of Economic Momentum

In last year's *State of the World* report, we noted the loss of momentum in world economic growth since 1979, a trend that 1984 data appear to confirm. The present recovery, led by the resurgent U.S. economy, has only marginally boosted the average economic growth for the past five years. With a slowdown in prospect for 1985, it appears more and more likely that world economic growth during this decade may not average much more than two percent annually.

Most immediately, the global economic slowdown reflects the depletion of oil reserves and the associated price hikes. These increases, initially engineered by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, are not the result of the absolute exhaus-

tion of reserves, for vast reserves still remain. Rather, they are supported by a subtle shift from a buyer's to a seller's market, a shift that in turn stems from several factors. New oil resources are generally more costly to develop, particularly those involving offshore drilling in new fields and the use of secondary and tertiary recovery methods in older ones. Perhaps even more important, this market shift reflects the realization that there is no alternative to cheap oil. All other options are more costly, some much more so than others.

An analysis of world economic growth over the past 34 years shows it has slowed markedly following each of the two major oil price increases: During the 23 years from 1950 through 1973, when oil was priced at roughly \$2 a barrel, the world economy expanded at a robust 5.0 percent per year. After the 1973 oil price hike, the rate of growth averaged just 3.5 percent per year through 1979. Following the second oil price hike it slowed further.

Global economic growth during the eighties is scarcely keeping pace with that of population, a sharp contrast with the situation from 1950 to 1973. When the world economy was increasing at some five percent per year, it far exceeded even the most rapidly expanding national populations. Now that it is only two percent, however, this is no longer the case. Countries with rapidly increasing populations that are merely keeping pace with the global rate of economic growth are experiencing declines in per capita income.

The abundance of cheap petroleum associated with the exceptionally rapid 7.6 percent annual growth in oil production from 1950 to 1973 made it relatively easy to expand both industrial and agricultural output at a healthy pace. In effect, cheap oil sharply boosted the earth's carrying capacity. Since the oil price hikes and the associated rise in energy costs across the board, rapid expansion has been far more difficult. In the agricultural sector, for example, before the first oil price hike world grain output was expanding at over three percent a year. Since 1973 it has grown at just under two percent annually, barely

keeping pace with population growth. The shift from a buyer's to a seller's market in world oil has affected grain production in two ways. First, it has increased the cost of production inputs, thus reducing the amount farmers can produce with a given investment. Second, it has slowed the growth in demand for grain by virtually eliminating gains in per capita income.

### The Loss of Topsoil Through Erosion

Oil is the first major resource whose supply has been restricted enough to measurably constrain economic expansion, but over the long term the loss of topsoil through erosion is likely to be more important. In *State of the World-1984* we estimated the worldwide loss of topsoil from cropland in excess of new soil formation at 22.7 billion tons annually. This year, based on fresh data for the United States and China, we have raised our estimate to 25.4 billion tons. Afflicting industrial and developing countries alike, soil erosion is draining lands of productivity on every continent. For subsistence farmers in Africa or Andean peasants in Latin America, where use of oil-based inputs is negligible or nonexistent, the loss of topsoil is a more serious threat to food production than oil price rises are.

Supplies of fresh water are also constraining both agricultural and industrial expansion. Food is being produced in key agricultural regions of the world by the overdrafting of water supplies. Groundwater overdrafts are rampant in many of China's northern provinces, for example. In the Beijing-Tianjin region of northeast China, a combination of agricultural and industrial uses is lowering the water table by one to four meters per year. And in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, irrigation expansion has lowered the underground water table some 25-30 meters over the past decade. Overdrafting in the water-short Soviet central Asian republics commonly takes the form of excessive river withdrawals. These have reduced the amount of water reaching the Caspian and Aral seas, shrinking both. In the United States, the depletion of the Ogallala aquifer in the

southern Great Plains and the diversion of irrigation water to Sunbelt cities in Arizona, California, and Florida have led to an unanticipated decline in national irrigated area of three percent since 1978. Aquifer depletion is now taking its place beside oil depletion and soil erosion as a constraint on growth in world food production.

### Limits on Fishing and Grasslands

Other constraints on global economic expansion include those imposed by the sustainable yield of fisheries and grasslands, two of nature's major protein-producing biological systems. After more than tripling between 1950 and 1970, growth in the world fish catch slowed abruptly. Averaging nearly six percent annually before 1970, it has dropped to a mere one percent in the years since. In per capita terms, the world catch has fallen some ten percent from its peak in 1970. Within the total harvest, the fish farming segment accounts for about one-eighth and is expanding steadily, indeed rapidly in some local situations. As with agriculture, however, aquacultural growth is constrained by the availability of land and water.

Although less carefully monitored, growth in the world production of beef—the principal product of the world's grasslands and second only to fish as a source of animal protein—came to a halt in 1976. Except in a few locations, grasslands cannot support more beef cattle. World beef output has not expanded significantly over the last eight years, despite the continuing conversion of tropical rain forests into grasslands. As a result, per capita beef production worldwide has fallen one-tenth since 1976. The decline has been disproportionately great where grassland deterioration is more extensive (as in the Sahel), where red meat consumption is being reduced for health reasons, or where income drops have been precipitous (in Brazil, for example).

Fish production can be expanded through fish farming and beef production can be raised by improving grasslands and by putting more cattle in feed-lots, but these are both much more energy-intensive and capital-consuming than were the inputs that

led to impressive worldwide gains during the fifties and sixties, when these two biological systems had not yet been fully exploited.

Contributing to the overall economic slowdown of the last five years is the reduced growth of world food output, a matter that should be of concern to policymakers everywhere. Average life expectancy in the Third World jumped from 43 years in 1950 to 53 years in the early seventies. But progress since then has been less impressive. Indeed, in those parts of the world where the food situation is deteriorating, life expectancy may actually be declining.

### Existing Policies Not Working Well

These trends raise two key questions: Why, in an age of advancing technology, is the world no longer able to sustain the economic and social gains of the century's third quarter? And, closely related, what needs to be done to get the world back on track? How can we restore the broad-based improvement in living conditions that existed throughout most of the third quarter of this century?

The trends described above indicate that existing policies are not working well. Policy adjustments are needed, particularly with regard to population growth. Underlining the urgency of reformulating these policies is the realization that rapid population growth often has two negative effects. On the demand side, it requires a rapid expansion in the output of food and other basic goods merely to maintain the status quo. But more worrisome is the realization that population growth may now be indirectly undermining efforts to increase output of essential items such as food. Such a scenario is unfolding in Africa, where population growth may be driving climate change, leading to a reduction in rainfall and, ultimately, food production. ■

Lester R. Brown is president of the Worldwatch Institute. This article is adapted from *State of the World-1985*, a Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society, published in the U.S. by W.W. Norton and Company. The entire report is a useful resource.



## Common Heritage: Who Is Responsible for God's Earth?

Barbara A. Weaver

**W**ho is responsible for the ever moving, pounding, bountiful ocean?

Who is responsible for the lush meadows teeming with wild flowers?

Who is responsible for the mysterious glades nestled in thick pine-scented forests?

Who is responsible for the expansive plains accented with meandering creeks and rivers?

Who is responsible for taking care of the gifts God has given us?

As United Methodists, using the guidelines of John Wesley, we would

answer, through our reading of scripture, our study of tradition, our understanding of a variety of experiences, and our own reason, that we are responsible for taking care of the gifts that God has given to us. And so we say that. But what does that really mean? How do carry out our responsibilities?

Let's take the ocean for an example. The ocean and the wetlands that border it are the major source of renewable oxygen and water as well as weather and are important links in the food chain. The ocean is a major

way of transporting goods from one country to another; approximately 98% of all international trade makes at least one ocean voyage. The ocean is one linked body of water and more critical to our well-being than we often recognize.

The resources of the ocean are finite and can be destroyed by our continued pollution. More than 80% of the pollution in the ocean comes from land-based sources, primarily from the industrialized nations of the world. Although many nations are trying to clean up the problems, they are faced



Areas where the common heritage concept might apply include the oceans and the Arctic. This search for oil is at Prudhoe Bay.

with competing economic dilemmas that make the choices more difficult.

### Ways to Assume Common Responsibility

In the early 1970s the international community, rich and poor together, began to look for ways to assume collective responsibility for and access to the ocean. They looked for ways to establish a fair and equitable system of rules and regulations to govern the many uses of the ocean, and stop the dangerous abuses. In 1973 over 130 countries began formal negotiations through the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. They began to meet to write international law that all countries could agree to and work to implement. Delegates discussed issues such as how far out into the ocean a country could claim

as its territory, fisheries management and protection, navigation rights, environmental concerns, marine scientific research, the settlement of ocean-related disputes, and deep seabed mining.

One particular area in the Law of the Sea negotiations that reflected the cooperative and responsible vision of the time was the common heritage principle. Delegates specifically talked about the area of the deep seabed, outside of the jurisdiction of individual countries. They set aside this area for the international community. The benefits were especially to be shared with the poorest of the world's nations, who did not have the technology to utilize the resources on their own. And the delegates worked on an international organization that would manage the common heritage area and be responsible for its environ-

mental well-being.

The responsible and cooperative spirit of the early and mid-1970s in the international community was also found in the churches. The 1976 General Conference of The United Methodist Church "urge(d) all United Methodists to become informed about all aspects of the 'Law of the Sea', one of the most critical and least understood issues of our day. (And) further urge(d) all United Methodists to call upon their governments to commit themselves to the development of a just and equitable treaty through the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, and to the ratification by our respective governments."

Although many of the issues within the Law of the Sea were extremely important to different countries, and no one country was able to have all of its dreams met within the international treaty, the common heritage emerged as an admittedly imperfect ideal. The principle became a focal point for much of the negotiations during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The principle emerged as an idea closer to our own Judeo-Christian heritage than the ideas generally articulated in the larger U.S. society.

### Our Biblical and Theological Heritage

The 1984 General Conference Statement on the Common Heritage reminds us of our biblical and theological heritage: "The common heritage concept has its roots for people of faith in the biblical understanding that all creation is under the authority of God and that all creation is interdependent. Our covenant with God requires us to be stewards, protectors, and defenders of all creation. The use of natural resources is a universal concern and responsibility of all as reflected in Psalm 24:1, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.'

"The New Testament confronts us with the implication of the Old Testament understanding when it asks us how we use our resources in relation to our brothers and sisters. John the Baptist prepared us for Jesus' ministry by stating, 'Those who have two coats let them share with those who have

none; and those who have food let them do likewise' (Luke 3:11). This philosophy was carried forth into the early church by incorporating the belief that the way in which one shares one's goods is a reflection of how one loves God. This is stated in I John 3:17, 'But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?'

"The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church applies these basic biblical perceptions to how we use the resources of creation when it says: 'We believe that Christian faith denies to any person or group of persons exclusive and arbitrary control of any other part of the created universe. Socially and culturally conditioned ownership of property is, therefore, to be considered a responsibility to God.'

"The Social Principles also reminds us that 'upon the powerful rests responsibility to exercise their wealth and influence with restraint.' Furthermore, the statement says that as United Methodists 'we applaud international efforts to develop a more just international economic order, in which the limited resources of the earth will be used to the maximum benefit of all nations and peoples.'

"United Methodists have affirmed the common heritage since 1976 and have worked to see the common heritage become codified into international agreements for Law of the Sea, the moon, and Antarctica."

The General Conference sums up the principle in this way: "The common heritage is a pioneering concept in actual international cooperation and sharing of the benefits of the world's resources. This concept stems from the underlying premise that resources outside control of different nations should be under a just and equitable system of management. Several principles are a general guide to what a common heritage area may be. These include the need for full participation in decision-making for all nations; the use of the resource area only for peaceful purposes; no nation allowed an exclusive claim; the transfer of technology; and development of the resources for the benefit of all humanity while insuring future gen-

erations the use of the area and resources as well."

### Idea a Startling One

For many of us, the idea of the common heritage is a startling one. We are not used to areas of the world that are not owned, in the usual sense of the word, by a person, family or corporation. But if we look back into history, the idea of the common heritage has its roots in some of the world's "earliest civilizations—Greek, Roman, African, and Asian. Native Americans regarded land not merely as community property, but as elemental wealth held by community tenure. Land was so critical to life that no single generation could be trusted with ownership. Not only American Indians, but people throughout the world who had a direct tie to the earth and its resources considered hunting grounds, grazing regions, and upland watersheds to be held by the community as a trust. The European concept of land as property was totally alien to the Indians. When the Native Americans lost their tribal common lands, they suffered a cultural earthquake that shattered their world." (Bernard Shanks, *This Land Is Your Land: The Struggle to Save America's Public Lands*, Sierra Club Books, 1984.)

### The Parks System

If we continue to think of the common heritage as belonging to the community, let's look at a common heritage system we have in the United States—that of city, state, and national parks. For those of us who have enjoyed the sunshine in a tree or flower-shrouded haven that felt far away yet was close to the concrete and asphalt or marvelled at the Grand Canyon, we have benefitted from earlier generations' understanding of community land or a common heritage.

"One of the greatest benefits public lands provide individuals is physical freedom. In a world ever crowded and confined, the freedom to roam over big mountains and wide valleys is priceless. Private land often becomes a personal fortress for people threa-

tened by crime, crowds, and urban pressures. It is often closed in. On public lands the open space and human freedom that guided a national destiny and shaped a democratic heritage can still be experienced." (Shanks)

The preservation and conservation of park lands was not easy. The history of the U.S. is punctuated with expansion, land takeover from native peoples, purchases from other countries, with growth. Through the private and Congressional discussions and battles, the vision of a national heritage for all people did prevail.

"Public lands are far more than territory. They are an artifact of history, a source of beauty, inspiration, and greed. They are a durable standard of public wealth, a source of both economic and personal power. Public lands are part of our national heritage. The finest national gifts we have received and can give to the future are parks, wildlife refuges, and wild rivers. In contrast, the darkest tales of nineteenth-century American development were woven around the waste, destruction, and theft of public land and resources." (Shanks)

Just like the common heritage area in the Law of the Sea Convention, the parks system has rules and regulations for their use and protection. And in order to maintain the parks on behalf of the population, governments can use some of our tax money to care for them. The Law of the Sea process is still developing the rules and regulations that will govern the deep seabed.

The principle of the common heritage can provide us with a vision of how to be responsible for God's gifts, cooperative with our sisters and brothers and nature, and protective of our future. The principle needs more study, but could possibly apply to the air we breathe, all water, Antarctica, the moon and other planets, outer space, and genetics. The common heritage is a vision that is being acted out right now through the Law of the Sea. ■

Barbara Weaver, executive secretary for development education, Women's Division, GBGM, formerly headed the Law of the Sea Project.

# Stewards of Earth's Water

John A Murdock

Someone has suggested that if we were viewing this planet from a great distance we probably would name it Water rather than Earth because the oceans would be its most prominent feature.

The huge quantities of water that create a hospitable environment for our form of life have always been available for us to use and abuse in our homes, industries and farms. Now the evidence is growing that we must treat fresh water in a much more responsible manner if we want to have enough for all to use.

One of the problems with clean water supply is that it simply is not available in adequate quantities in some parts of the world. In those areas that are overpopulated in terms of available water supply there is constant threat of famine and disease because there is not enough water. Continuing population growth and the forced movement of people because of political upheavals and wars mean that more and more people live where there is not enough water.

In some cases the problem may not be unmanageable. Perhaps new technology could produce deeper or more productive wells or better irrigation ditches that would solve the problems of supply and distribution. Or perhaps the futuristic ideas of towing icebergs from polar regions to desert areas that border the sea will become possible and feasible.

Better supply and distribution for the present population will not solve the later expansion of people onto more waterless land unless the problems of displacement because of warfare and population control are solved.

The rich nations are not free of this problem of adequate supply. They, too, have arid areas into which more and more people are moving, including the southwestern United States. And they have other areas where long-used resources are dwindling from overuse, such as the Ogallala aquifer which runs from the Nebraska-Colorado area down into Texas.



This debris-laden scene is in Chesapeake Bay, near a steel mill.

## The Need for Clean Water

Even larger numbers of people suffer from other problems with water. In their cases there is an adequate supply of water, but it is not safe for them to use it.

The nations that make up the World Health Organization (WHO) have adopted the theme "Health for All By the Year 2000". The 1984 General Conference also adopted the theme as an important program goal for the church. In the process of trying to reach that goal, WHO has designated the 1980s as the Decade of Clean Water. WHO says that approximately eighty percent of the people who are sick at this moment are suffering from a water-borne disease.

People in the rich nations tend to be unaware of how important it is to have clean water to drink. Our public health methods of waste disposal and water purification have reduced dramatically the incidences of such killers as typhoid, cholera and other contagious diseases spread through contaminated water.

Impressive efforts are made through WHO and national governments to control those killing diseases in poor countries through medical means such as immunization programs. But immunization by itself cannot solve the problem as long as the water remains contaminated. Only when the water supply is clean will good health be possible.

Much of the recent opposition to the sale of infant formulas in poor nations was because in many areas there is no clean water with which to mix the formula powder, so many babies were being given food that made them sick.

There is no glamorous or quick high-technology solution to the problem of producing and maintaining an adequate supply of clean water. It involves digging latrines and ditches and laying pipes to remove human wastes as far as possible from human habitation and resources. And it involves purifying water that may have become contaminated.

But while those efforts are basic and simple, they require money. It is money that many nations have not devoted to water resources. A few years ago an estimate was being talked

about concerning money spent for arms and money spent for water. The conclusion was that the money spent for all kinds of arms in a few months would be enough to provide clean running water in every household on earth.

## Rich Nations' Water Also Polluted

The rich nations do not escape water problems, but they have different kinds of problems. While our treated water supplies usually are not contaminated with disease organisms, they may be contaminated by chemical wastes.

In many parts of the country the underground water supplies have been fouled by industrial chemicals that have seeped down through the ground from manufacturing or disposal sites. According to American Public Health Association, the following areas are among those where major contamination exists:

On Long Island, New York, the underground water sources for more than three million people have been seriously contaminated by industrial waste discharges and runoff from highways and agricultural practices;

At least one-third of Massachusetts' 351 communities have contaminated drinking water sources;

In this decade California closed 37 wells that served 400,000 people in thirteen cities, because of chemical contamination.

In Florida and other parts of the country construction practices have removed the earth and rock that protected the underground water supply and made it vulnerable to contamination.

A third type of problem exists where there are reservoirs for surface storage of water. Some of those reservoirs have been contaminated by fertilizers or animal or industrial wastes that have flowed into them.

While our water purification methods are very effective against organic disease organisms they may be ineffective against many chemical pollutants that may cause cancers in human beings. There is even a question about the safety of chlorine which is the basic chemical used to purify our water systems.



This community privy over the sea is in Western Samoa.

If we are to clean the water systems of the inorganic dangers we have to spend the money to improve our purification. In order to do that politicians want more public awareness of the problem, but we are much less aware of a chemical that might kill in twenty years than we are of a typhoid bacterium that might kill in twenty days.

Since it is even more important to have a clean supply of water underground or in the reservoir we must learn how to prevent the fouling of water.

What can United Methodists do in order to be better stewards of water?

—We can learn more about our own drinking water. Is it as clean and healthful as we would want it to be?

—We can seek public action to prevent further contamination and to clean up the sources.

—We can examine our personal and business practices to be sure that we are not adding to the problem of water contamination.

—We can support efforts to help people in other nations to improve their supplies of water. The United Methodist Church through the World Division and UMCOR support such development programs.

All of these concerns mean that we must be better stewards of a natural resource that we cannot live without. It is a valuable gift from God, and we must honor the gift. ■

John A. Murdock is Associate General Secretary, Health and Welfare Program Department, GBGM.



## Appalachian Land Use and Ownership

Malik Stan Reaves

For decades, people have wondered why there is such wide-ranging, abject poverty in this region so pregnant with vast stores of valuable mineral resources. Appalachian oil, gas and especially coal resources have powered steel mills, railroads, and much of the industry of the American industrial heartland east of the Mississippi. Yet Appalachia is also host to a poverty and destitution that has become legendary.

In Central Appalachia, 62% of the population had less than a high school education in 1976, 45% had less than eighth grade. Some 30% of the adults were functionally illiterate. Infant mortality rates are 9% higher for whites and 11% higher for black Appalachians. The black population, some 10% of the total with the largest concentration in the southernmost area, suffers higher unemployment rates and lower median income. Farm land loss has hit blacks especially hard.

As much as 25% of Appalachia's housing stock is substandard, a majority of which are also deficient in plumbing. At least 20% of all replacement units of total housing stock in

Central Appalachia during the last decade have been mobile homes.

"The Appalachian region has gone through two major phases in its development," says Jim Sessions, a United Methodist minister who is Coordinator of the ecumenical Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA). "The first period was characterized by 'corporate benevolence' from the firms that economically dominate the region. This has been followed by a period of some 20 years of major federal assistance with millions of dollars channeled through the Appalachian Regional Commission." Still, the region's low level of development has persisted.

### A Groundbreaking Study

Many members of the churches and community groups who have been addressing poverty in the region in recent years have suspected a connection between Appalachian poverty and increasingly concentrated land ownership. However, until completion of the Appalachian Land Ownership Study in 1981, they had no way to confirm that suspicion. No systematic

analysis of land ownership across the region except for farmlands had been done since before the turn of the century.

"Nothing like that had ever been done before." Dr. David Liden, an Appalachian scholar-activist (who is also part sheep farmer) says, describing the history-making study that set the stage for grappling with land issues in Appalachia.

"It was unprecedented too in terms of the nature of the people who did it," Liden said of the effort. "(The federal government's) model of research, as you probably know, has always been working with consultants, flying them in, doing a sample survey, then going home and telling the policy-makers in Washington what's really going on in Appalachia.

"(The Land Ownership Study) was done by teachers, farmers, church people, lawyers, unemployed people, housewives, students, journalists."

As recently as 1980, the multi-million dollar President's Coal Commission study found that "land shortages" in Appalachia were "in part attributable to coal companies, railroads and other corporations owning

much of the coal-rich acreage." Yet it hesitated to do a thorough study of the problem noting that "statistics for land ownership are often buried in inaccessible or untraceable county records."

Encouraged by the arrival of the War on Poverty in the 1960's, several studies of ownership patterns in selected counties and states began to trace the extent of corporate and absentee ownership. One study in 1972 in West Virginia, the only state completely in Appalachia, found that nine corporations owned one-third of the land in the state's nine southernmost counties. Only one of the nine corporations was based in West Virginia.

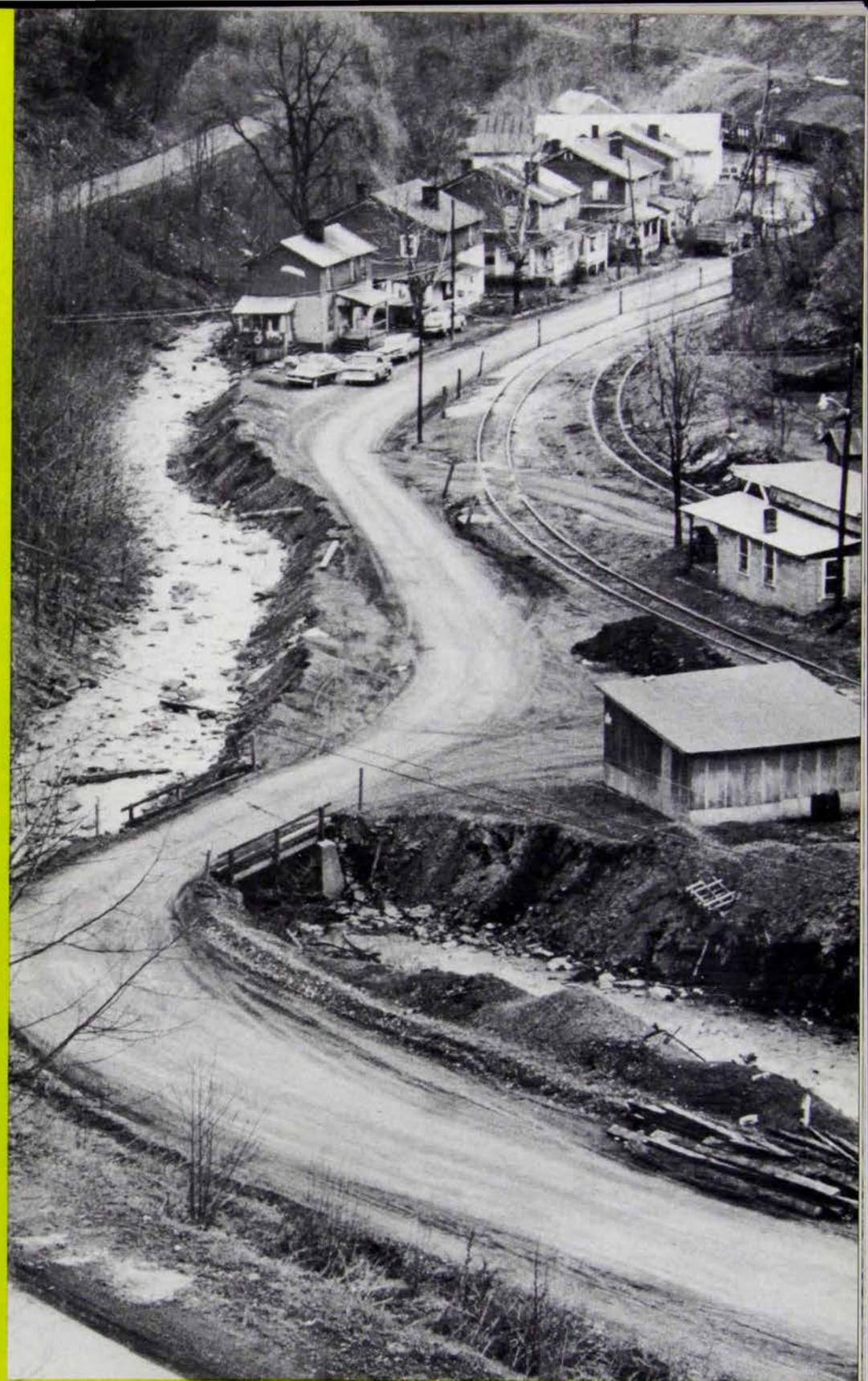
### The Largest Landowners Pay the Least Taxes

As Appalachian land research studies spread and deepened, a remarkable fact kept re-emerging—the largest landowners seemed to be paying the lowest taxes. A 1973 study by a team from the West Virginia Law School found 25 landowners owned about 44% of the land in the top 14 coal-producing counties. Yet they paid only about *one-tenth* of the real estate taxes.

Though a pattern was clearly emerging, no one knew just how extensive such inequities were nor precisely how they related to the general state of the region.

Then came the spring floods of 1977. Thousands were left homeless in Central Appalachia. Land abuses, including strip mining, were said to have intensified the flooding. But what shocked and angered residents most was the lack of available land on which to locate relief trailers and the government's refusal to seize corporate land for trailer sites. These problems "were manifestly traceable to the monopoly of local land by coal companies," wrote Charles Geisler in the introduction to the Land Study.

In reaction, "some three hundred community residents, scholars, church workers, organizers, and local folks gathered in the flood-ravaged town of Williamson, West Virginia, and formed the Appalachian Alliance," according to the Alliance



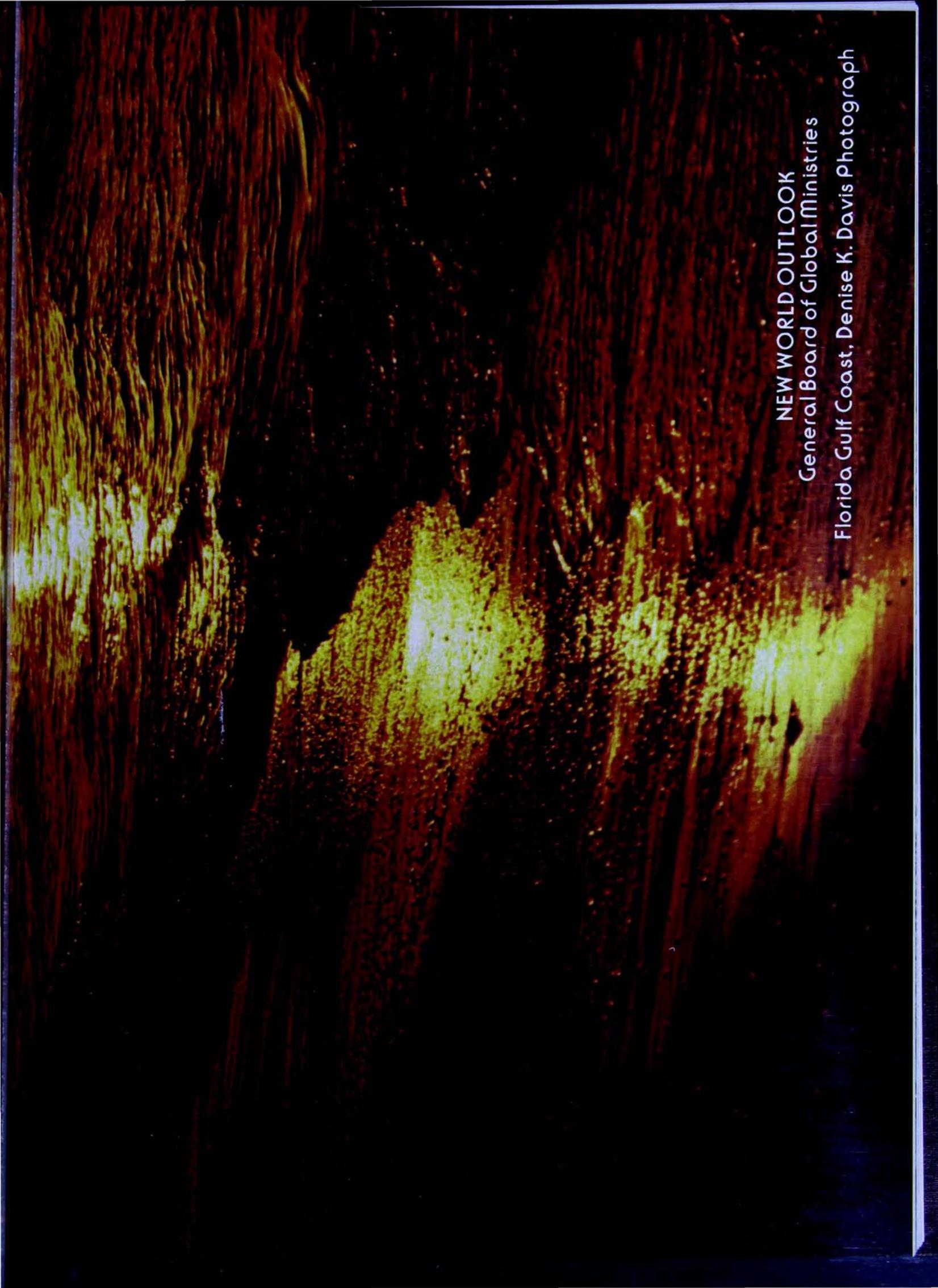
publication "Appalachia in the 80's: A Time for Action." Two years later, the Land Task Force of the Alliance initiated the Land Ownership Study, funded largely by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

For two years, this unique research group studied land ownership of some 20 million acres in 80 counties of six Appalachian states, examining over 800,000 pieces of information concerning 55,000 parcels of property.

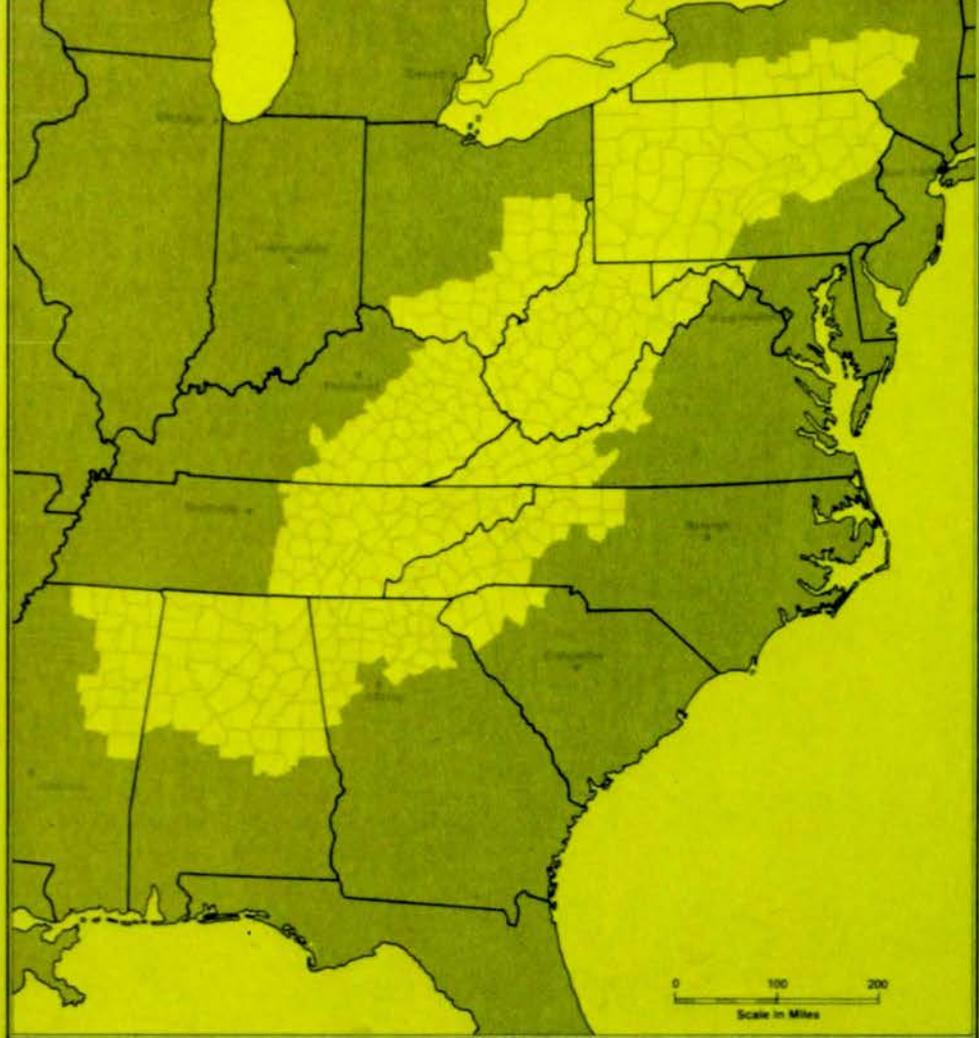
**This mining town in a hollow is thought of as typical, but the region covers part of thirteen states.**

# CARING FOR GOD'S EARTH





NEW WORLD OUTLOOK  
General Board of Global Ministries  
Florida Gulf Coast, Denise K. Davis Photograph



The counties surveyed extended from the southernmost sections of Appalachia in Alabama, through Tennessee, including the Central Appalachian coalfield counties of Kentucky and across West Virginia to its northernmost counties.

### "Surprising" Conclusions

The seven-volume study "produced a series of surprising, if not astounding, conclusions," wrote Joseph Hacala, a Jesuit priest who has been active in Appalachian land issues. Chief among them is the point made in the most quoted sentence from the study: "Only one percent of the local population, (together) with absentee owners, corporations, and government agencies, control at least 53% of the total land surface in the 80 counties."

"For many areas of Appalachia," says the one volume summation of the Study, "who owns the mineral rights is just as important as who owns the surface. Despite the fact that millions of acres of mineral rights in Appalachia are simply not recorded for tax purposes, the Study discovered almost seven million mineral acres...A large portion of these mineral rights is held

separately from the surface land." Significantly, of those seven million acres of mineral wealth surveyed, the Study found "four-fifths of the mineral rights in the survey are absentee owned."

Concentrated absentee and corporate ownership, the Study found, was consistently accompanied by alarming economic consequences. In this regard, the Study made some of its most devastating findings: "... over 75% of the mineral owners in this survey pay under 25¢ per acre in property taxes."

For example:

The Norfolk and Western Railroad Company owns 81,333 acres and has coal reserves in Martin County, Kentucky, valued at \$7 million. Yet it has paid an annual county tax of only \$76.05.

In Walker County, Alabama, the state's largest coal producing county, the 28 largest landowners controlled over 65% of the mineral wealth in 1978 yet paid only \$8,807 in property taxes on their mineral rights.

The Study found that in four of the six states surveyed, out-of-state owners paid less surface land taxes than local owners. And in most of the surveyed counties, out-of-state cor-

porations paid less than local corporations or local individuals. "While the market yardstick is used to value land, in some areas the concentrated control of land in a few unchanging hands has, in effect, taken the land out of the market, thus rendering the yardstick ineffective," the Study found. In these cases, property is assessed at old land values which no longer reflect its current value.

Local assessors frequently lack the technology to accurately assess mineral reserves and consequently are often dependent on the owners for data on the extent of these holdings. Other land, often rich in mineral resources, is held for speculation and is often taxed below commercial rates as woodland or mountain land. Large federal land holdings also hurt county tax bases because federal payments in lieu of taxes are lower than taxes on privately held land. In this way, other tax-exempt land holders such as schools and churches also affect the tax revenues of Appalachian counties. Harvard University is a major Appalachian landholder, controlling some 11,000 acres of surface land and mineral rights in eastern Kentucky.

"The effect, essentially, is to produce a situation in which small owners carry a disproportionate share of the tax burden; counties turn increasingly to federal and state funds to provide revenues," noted the Study.

### Low Tax Base Erodes Social Services

With the local tax base eroded, social services across the region are handicapped. In Martin County, Kentucky, one of the state's largest coal-producing counties, 66% of its budget has to come from state and federal sources due to an inadequate property tax base. In addition, a high concentration of absentee ownership means the majority of capital produced in a county is never deposited in its financial institutions. Lack of local capital means less funding for mortgages, business investments and retail trade, tending to promote a lowered development climate and a lowered standard of living.

In Wise County, Virginia's major coal producer, ten companies own most of the coal reserves and control over half of the county's surface land.



The United Methodist Church has been active on Appalachian land issues. This church is in Brumley Gap, Va.

Yet in 1978-79, the county's teachers were among the nation's lowest paid, averaging \$11,506 annually.

The Study traced a range of other impacts to the concentration of land ownership in corporate and absentee hands:

Concentration tends to promote single-industry economies which have little protection against the effects of business cycles, hamper industrial diversification and tend to concentrate political power and dependency.

Acquisition of land for mineral resources and increasingly for resort and second home development threatens the agricultural base. Appalachian farm loss is precipitous; more than a million acres was lost from the surveyed area between 1969-74.

The Appalachian housing crisis is fueled by lack of available land, inflation of land prices from a tight land market, lack of local financing and lack of social services.

Devastating environmental impacts result from corporate land abuse which is increasing as federal regulations are softened to encourage energy exploitation. Notorious in this area are the often criticized strip-mining practices of the coal companies which

promotes flooding from silt-choked streams, aural assaults from blasting, land erosion, and loss of tree cover.

### A Catalyst for Action

Yet, as sobering as the findings of the Land Ownership Study proved to be, it has served as a catalyst for action on the range of issues impacted by ownership. "From the beginning, the land-ownership study was viewed as a project that would integrate research, education and action," reads the Preface to the one-volume summation of the Study.

"It has helped local people gain control over their own lives," said Tina Willemsma, head of CORA's Social, Economic and Political Issues Task Force. "The people who participated never really were the same after that."

Several community-based advocacy groups either got their start or were significantly rejuvenated as a result of the Study. The Southern West Virginian Land Reform Project was formed to deal with corporate control of land, oil and gas leasing in that state. The West Virginia Education Project, founded by a member of the West Virginia Land Study research

team, has mounted several efforts to raise county tax rates for better schooling; they successfully got the courts to raise the tax rate of the Columbia Gas Co.'s 235,000 acres in Lincoln County from 14¢ an acre to 68¢ an acre, realizing valuable additional revenues for the school system.

Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM), a longstanding group in Tennessee, also used the Study's findings in local tax battles. SOCM has devoted much attention to ensuring that commercial properties are taxed at commercial rates. Local citizens in Campbell County, Tennessee, challenged the underassessment of major land owners, specifically targeting corporations such as Koppers Company of Pittsburgh. Local advocates charge that Koppers, the largest land company in the county controlling some 97,000 acres, has been underassessed by about \$13 million.

### The Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition

One of the most outstanding organizations focusing on land issues is the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition, also born out of the ferment generated by the Land Study. For the last several years, they have been pressing the state

legislature (which only meets once every two years) to make the tax on unmined coal equal to the tax on surface land, in an effort to overturn previous legislation taxing coal at the rate of .001¢ per \$100 value.

However, the KFTC soon found it was up against formidable opposition. "When we tried to introduce the bill in the 1982 session," said Joe Szakos, KFTC organizer, "they buried it in committee and we never heard from it again. Then we found out that the Speaker of the House, the Speaker Pro Tem and quite a few other legislators were representing coal companies in their private law firms. The press went wild, saying 'look at the conflicts that they have'. What I think it did was it showed people very clearly what the coal industry's power was all about."

In anticipation of the 1984 session, the KFTC went to work on expanding its constituent base, doing leadership development and helping empowerment and development of local community groups. It developed a base of informed and active people in 15 counties and a membership of about 500 people, up from about 30 in 1981. They expanded their advocacy work to include water problems and hired a hydrologist to help rural dwellers unravel problems of pollution, well drilling and others.

Then came the 1984 legislative session. KFTC was successful in getting passage of a bill limiting "broad form" deeds, which have given major landowners broad powers to do whatever they like to the land, irrespective of environmental impact. They also introduced legislation aimed at protecting the water supply. "There are three communities that either have or will have (water) systems because of support we have given them," said Szakos. But the unmined mineral tax bill again died in committee.

In the meantime, KFTC continues to organize and train at the local level. It has also filed suits to challenge tax assessment, in conjunction with the Southern Poverty Law Center. "There are things going on at the local level, the circuit courts, the court of appeals, the state supreme courts. There are just actions pending everywhere," said Szakos. "It's kind of go, on every angle."

### United Methodist Involvement

These groups have not been alone in their struggles. KFTC for instance has received the support of churches locally and regionally. Both the

“  
*That's a basic  
starting point, being  
responsible stewards  
of our own  
properties.*  
”

Women's Division and the National Program Division have contributed to support of their work.

The United Methodist Appalachian Development Committee has been the denominational body charged with coordinating the church's ministries in Appalachia. These include more than 28 United Methodist-related colleges and schools, economic development programs promoting community empowerment as well as emergency response centers. Model community development projects are generated by Jackson Area Ministries, Hinton Rural Life Center, Tyrand Parish, Red Bird Missions, Inc. and Henderson Settlement. About one-third of the church and community workers employed by the National Program Division serve in Appalachia.

Together and singly, these agencies work closely with local Appalachians in land use training, leadership and organizational skills development, and promotion of support for land-related issues within the church.

At a recent Assembly of the ADC held in January, several recommendations were made related to land issues. They included: Hinton Rural Life Center undertake a survey of UMC land ownership and use in Appalachia; the Board of Church and Society in each Appalachian annual conference support just land and mineral taxation within its state; closer coordi-

nation with other denominations to expand the church's impact on issues in the area; the church establish a national network on land issues; ADC take on a county-level land project in every annual conference; ADC identify resources for action on land issues; and that the general church recognize the problems around land and use its influence and resources on the resolution of these issues.

While the United Methodist Church has been active on Appalachian land issues, it has also striven to do so ecumenically where possible. CORA has been an essential vehicle in these efforts. Much of CORA's work recently in working out a broad working platform on land issues was sparked by a United Methodist caucus within it. One of the results of that initiative has been the beginning of a newsletter published by CORA and the promotion of land ownership studies by other denominations.

### A Practical Challenge

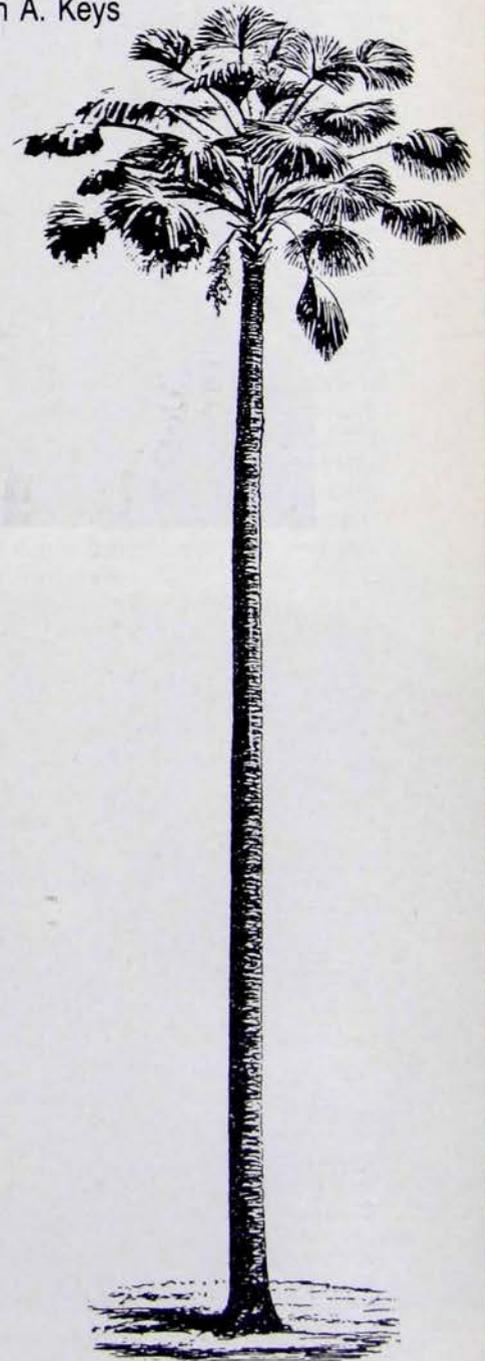
Given the importance of broad-ranging research and initiatives, the witness of the church has a very practical challenge before it at the level at which the local Appalachian lives. Because there is so much power and wealth amassed on the side of the landowners, fear and intimidation are not uncommon companions of those who promote change at the local level. "It's very important that there be people on the outside looking in," said CORA coordinator Jim Sessions. "That what's happening in this corner of this county is not going to be shoved under a rug or kept in the closet, but that people are monitoring this information. I think it kind of helps, and even saves people's lives.

"One thing we have to do is be self-conscious about what it is the church owns and controls and to use it responsibly," says Sessions. "That's a basic starting point, being responsible stewards of our own properties. When we are good at that, then we have credibility and have some things that will help us support others." ■

Malik S. Reaves is a producer/writer with the Mission Resources Section, MECPD, General Board of Global Ministries.

# Development And Ecology— God's Gift To the Generations

Joseph A. Keys



**D**id many people go without food when you were a boy, grandfather?" the small boy asked expectantly. "Drought times have always been difficult for our people," the wizened old man replied, "but when I was a boy we grew many different crops than you will see in the *shambas* today. Our people planted all of the food we needed rather than planting most of their farms in coffee, tea, or tobacco."

In order to understand the dynamics at work between development and ecology we must appreciate the changes in agricultural practices in much of the Third World reflected in this grandfatherly observation. Farming in the developing nations has changed dramatically from the traditional practices. In many places throughout the tropical regions of the world, particularly those with the greatest agricultural potential, people no longer farm as their grandfathers and grandmothers did.

Traditional farming was characterized by a variety of practices which met human needs in basically ecologically sound ways. People lived in harmony with their environment. Emphasis was placed on a variety of food crops. Over the years farmers had identified wet season and dry season crops suited to their areas. Certain stress crops were also identified which could be counted on to provide food during droughts or periods of excessive rainfall.

Interplanting was the common practice. Several different compatible crops were planted together in the same plot. Natural pest and disease control was provided by separating plants of the same species. Different rates of growth and maturing often kept the soil covered and protected for extended periods from the effects of sun and rain and made weeding much easier. Farmers were careful not to exhaust the fertility of their soil. They knew their lives depended on it.

## Impact of "Development"

What has been referred to as development has changed many of these traditional practices. At the beginning of the colonial era peasant farmers proved to be the greatest "unexploit-

ed" resource of much of the Third World. Often these people were viewed as lazy. They were accused of making poor use of land under their control. *All they were doing was feeding themselves and their families.*

Development set out to change this, capturing the labor and land of the small farmers. Emphasis was placed on the production of "useful" crops which could be marketed and consumed by the more powerful and affluent. Crops such as coffee, tea, cocoa, cotton, tobacco and exotic vegetables like french cut beans were aggressively promoted. Little or no thought was given to the conservation and preservation of fragile soil and water resources.

Farmers were encouraged to practice temperate zone techniques such as mono-cropping. This method of planting a single crop in rows on each field may be well suited to comparatively large scale, mechanized farming in the northern hemisphere, but it is neither necessary nor desirable on farms of five to ten acres in tropical zones.

The wholesale transfer of these inappropriate technologies resulted in delicate soils being left bare to the effects of tropical sun and intense monsoon rains. Rates of erosion and laterization (the oxidation ores in exposed soils which transform soil into rock) were greatly accelerated. The tons of soil washing into the Indian Ocean each year near the Kenyan resort town of Malindi represent not only an inconvenience for tourists but also an irreparable loss for the present and future farmers of the Kenyan highlands.

The British-American Tobacco Company (BAT) continues to encourage small farmers to grow flue-cured tobacco in fragile ecological zones in Africa. Cash income for some farmers has increased, but at what price? For every acre of tobacco grown, it takes a minimum of one acre of trees to fuel the fires for curing. Farmers in one area sum up the situation in this way: "every year we see the desert coming closer." It is a strange form of development which destroys the land to produce a crop that destroys the human body.

Efforts have been made to create



and expand markets for agricultural chemicals, including fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides, in the developing nations. Chemical fertilizers are costly and easily leached out of porous tropical soils and into rivers, lakes, and water tables by the often intense rainfall. Nor do they add organic matter so often needed to improve soil composition. Herbicides such as paraquat, one of the powerful ingredients in the defoliant Agent Orange, are widely marketed under a variety of trade names in developing nations with poison marking on the container being the only form of warning given to the users.

Agriculture in the Third World was transformed by development but this transformation too often resulted in depleted soils, accelerated erosion rates, receding water tables, and reduced food production for local consumption. Development and ecology are not simply two theoretical concepts to provide subject matter for international conferences and scholarly papers. They are at the heart of the hopes and future of the majority of the human community.

### Christians Respond

The United Methodist Church is seeking to exercise increasingly responsible involvement in development and ecology as it relates to colleague churches and persons in need around the world. We are guided by an understanding of development as the process of people working together to realize their God-given dignity and potential in harmony with their environment in responsible freedom, justice and peace. In practice, this translates into hundreds of programs with thousands of persons around the globe.

Christians concerned about development draw motivation and inspiration from sources which transcend many of the traditional approaches to development. We must begin with a commitment to persons and an affirmation that all of creation comes from God and therefore has value. Delicate resources of soil, water, plants and animals are not ours to squander for short term gain. They are God's gift to the generations. We can cooperate



This hillside (above) is planted in row crops, setting up conditions for severe soil erosion. (Top) This small farm couple with cows in a zero grazing unit is a more hopeful sign.



This grade school boy (above) has pack sprayer filled with chemical spray. This gully (below, left) resulted from improper planting and use of hillsides. A tobacco curing barn (below, right) with wood for curing fires stacked nearby.



with God's creative purpose or we can oppose it.

An essential starting point in many church development programs has been a growing awareness and affirmation of the traditional wisdom and values of rural peoples. Development does not begin in a vacuum. It is going on with men, women, and children whose ancestors have lived, worked, farmed and traded for generations in delicate ecosystems. Interplanting and mixed farming systems which seek the harmonious integration of soil, water, plants and animals into a sustainable, yet highly productive, agricultural unit are again being explored. Emphasis is once more being placed on food production for local consumption rather than promoting cash crops or food for export.

In the Meru District of Kenya the Methodist Church has been working with local farmers to help them establish small scale, zero-grazing dairy production units as an alternative to growing tobacco. The techniques involved will help to improve and stabilize the ecology of the region. Surplus milk can be readily marketed locally and makes a more productive contribution to the needs of the children and the nation than do cigarettes.

Agri-forestry, the integrated use of trees in production systems, has become increasingly important in the face of dwindling forests and the continued use of wood as the primary fuel for cooking. Rapid-growing

varieties of multipurpose trees such as leucaena have been introduced to assist farmers with soil and water management and improvement while increasing fuel wood production at the same time. Composting, green manuring and mulching are being promoted with small farmers as economically and ecologically sound methods of improving soil fertility and composition.

As Christians we are obligated to know about and understand the conditions faced by our sisters and brothers throughout the human community. Millions of persons in the developing nations are struggling to build better homes, farms, and communities.

United Methodists have an obligation and many exciting opportunities to share in these struggles. Together we must work to ensure that the environment is enhanced rather than destroyed, and we must move toward the goal that once again people around the world may feed themselves and their families. ■

The Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Keys is a World Division person in mission on home assignment. He served in Kenya where he had a distinctive double role. He had pastoral charge of Mikinduri Circuit, where he was the only minister for 21 churches. He was also coordinator of the rural development program for the Meru District, working with local groups on domestic water supply, food production, soil and water conservation and a variety of other programs.

# THE LAND, OUR HERITAGE AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Naomi Christensen



Farmer James Paul of Henderson, Iowa, uses the new conservation practice of no-till planting to keep crop residues undisturbed on the soil surface, reducing soil erosion by an average of one-half.

**B**ob, my husband, and I are Iowa farmers. We live in a state that is known for its agricultural productivity, which makes it possible for us to help feed the world's hungry, help balance world trade and also provide a solid basis for human interdependence.

We know that the land is one of our most precious resources. What is so special about our Iowa soil? It is a good blend of loams and clays, a mellow, fertile prairie-derived soil that was smoothed out by glaciers between the Mississippi and Missouri river.

We live in western Iowa where you find the loess, or windblown soil, near the Missouri River. Iowa has one-fourth of all the grade A farm land in the nation, as well as a growing season and climate that favors the growth of several major crops, corn, soybeans, wheat, and oats, which makes it possible to feed both humans and their animals.

The land is part of our history, our heritage and our future. Its past has shaped our lives. Its products provide our sustenance, and, along with the accompanying resources of water and air, it helps us meet our basic needs for life.

## A Limited Resource

But the resource of our land is limited. It is being depleted and weakened at an alarming pace. In Iowa alone, a state that provides one-tenth of the nation's food supply, one-half of our rich prime topsoil has been lost to erosion in 100 years of farming. As the land is blown away by the winds or is washed away by the rains, it takes with it the productive capacity for much of this nation's food and fiber.

Most Christians think of stewardship in terms of giving of their time, their talents and their money to further the work of the kingdom. As Christian farmers, Bob and I realize that the greatest responsibility we have is to be stewards of our land, which is our black gold. Hugh H. Bennett, founder of the Soil Conservation Service, reminds us that the land is our continuing heritage. "In this country we have been misled by our plentiful supply of land into a false philosophy of inexhaustibility," he says. "We have come to regard the land as a source of immediate wealth. We have forgotten that it is a fundamental

heritage belonging as much to our children's children as to us, in the little time we are permitted to remain here on earth."

As Christian farmers, we take seriously the care of our land, this trust that has been given to us and we try to protect it by using the following conservation methods on our farm.

## Following a Conservation Plan

We follow a conservation plan which is set up by the landowner or farm operator with the help of Soil Conservation Service technicians setting forth how farmland can be used in line with needs for its maintenance or improvement as far as soil, water and plant resources are concerned.

We do *Contour Farming*. Contour is an imaginary line on the surface of the earth connecting points of the same elevation. Farming on the contour, plowing, cultivation, etc. following the contour lines according to a point of the same elevation helps reduce soil erosion and washing. You cannot believe how much you retard the surface flow of water by planting crops

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on the contour—going around the hills instead of up and then downhill.

**Crop Rotation** is a system where different crops are raised in successive years on the same field, as contrasted to continuously cropping with the same crop. One of the chief reasons for using crop rotation is the incorporating of organic matter into the soil, to aid moisture absorption and to help control insects. When we plant corn, the crop residue after the crop is harvested adds humus and organic matter to the soil, as well as helping to control wind and water erosion until the next planting season. Soybeans put some nitrogen back into the soil as well as loosening up the soil for easier tillage and crop root penetration. Soybeans in the rotation system break the corn root worm cycle, while corn breaks the soybean stem rot disease, thus enabling one to control disease and insects without additional cost of pesticides.

**Conservation Tillage**—it is ironic that the moldboard plow, used by generations to turn the ground completely upside down, burying trash and exposing new dirt, is no longer used by conservation minded farmers. We practice conservation tillage on our farm with the use of a heavy disk in the spring or a chisel plow if we want to do fall tillage. When you leave about 50% of the previous crop on the soil surface, it helps to control wind and water erosion during the winter months.

In fact, on our farm, we do not do fall tillage of any kind. We do not have a heavy soil which has to be tilled in the fall in order to be able to work it in the spring, so we let our stock cow herd glean the fields and do all our field work in the spring. We try to limit the number of trips over the field when tilling to the least number possible.

It took one painful experience of fall plowing a field just directly south of our house in the early 1960's to make us abandon fall plowing. It was a dry spring with a couple of days of high winds, and I had a dust bowl right in my home. The dust blew in through the cracks of our house and windows leaving drifts of dirt along the baseboards and windows. What a waste of good soil. What a lot of energy expended in cleaning up my home.

## Water Erosion

Most people get upset because they can easily see the results of wind erosion in the black snow and drifts of dirt along fence rows, but the water erosion carries off much more of our farmland than the wind.

**Grassed Waterways** are natural waterways on our land where the water usually runs down a hill if there is a heavy rain. We plant these areas with erosion-resistant grasses to conduct surface water from and off of the cropland without cutting ditches in the fields. These waterways are usually broad and shallow and easy to farm across.

**Terrace** is an embankment or combination of an embankment and channel constructed across a slope to control erosion by diverting or storing surface runoff instead of permitting it to flow uninterrupted downhill. Terraces break long slopes into shorter ones and thus carry surplus storm water in an orderly manner. We have moved to building mostly bench style terraces in our area. The front side of this style terrace can be farmed and the back side is seeded down making it easier to farm. The new bench terraces cannot be farmed down by using big machinery on them as was done with the channel terrace.

A **Dam** is a barrier, usually made of earth in the case of soil conservation,

built for the purpose of water storage, diversion, or to prevent erosion. On one farm a series of four dams were built across a gully. In a time period of thirty years, the gully is gone, all but one of the ponds behind the dams have filled in with dirt and are seeded down and pastured. You can drive across the land in a vehicle where once a ditch cut eight feet deep.

We also have a farm pond with a drop inlet at the lower end of it that allows the run-off water to escape. Silt deposited in the pond area will in time displace the water with rich, tillable soil. In the meantime our cattle can drink from this pond.

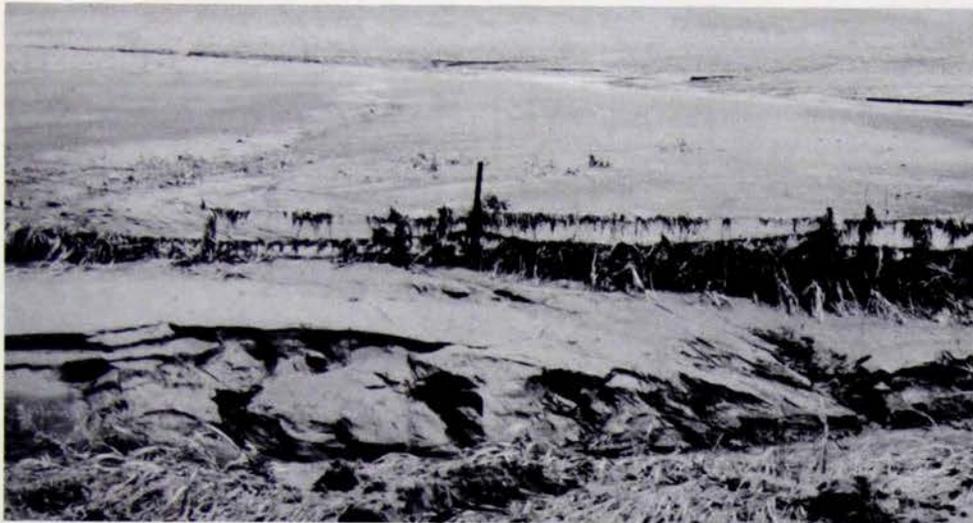
**Permanent Pasture** On our farm, land that is really not suitable for row cropping has been sown with perennial plants and goes unplowed. We use this land strictly for grazing. Last year we planted switch grass for the first time. Bob is trying to find a hot weather grass that will provide pasture for our livestock. Southwest Iowa, where we live, is prone to periods of drought as well as hot weather in the middle of the summer and we hope that this grass will be an answer to this problem. It will be a couple of years before we will be able to pasture it and really see if it will extend the life of our permanent pasture.

## Soil Conservation Costs Money

It cost a lot of money to put soil

**Landowner Leonard Goos (center) works with technicians from the Mills County Soil Conservation District in Constructing terraces (above). Grassed waterways (below) will move water across a field without causing erosion. This sedimentation and ditch (bottom) were caused by erosion in the field behind.**





Landowner William Jens, Jr., of Glenwood, Iowa, uses a combination of practices for a complete resource conservation plan to control soil erosion; they include contouring, terraces, crop rotation, grade stabilization structure and critical area planting.

conservation measures into practice. In 1972 Iowa became the first state in the nation to develop a state funded cost-share program. The maximum cost-share rate is fifty percent for voluntary cooperation in stalling permanent soil conservation measures such as terraces, field windbreaks, water diversion structures, grassed waterways and outlets on land used for agricultural or horticultural purposes.

Of course, with many farms needing conservation measures and only so much money available, one has to apply and wait and see if you will get any assistance. In 1935, federal legislation established the Soil Conservation Service, but in 1985 when farmers are struggling to survive, the federal government is making deep cuts into the budget of this department.

#### Urban Sprawl Taking Over Farm Land

We are not just losing top farm land to erosion "Iowa is losing five acres of rural land every hour to nonfarm uses" says Iowa Agriculture Secretary Robert H. Lousberry. "This amount is the equivalent loss of 140 entire farms of 300 acres each in a year's time." So urban sprawl is another area where town and country people are going to have to work together if we are going to keep our land from being chipped away silently. Hardly anyone seems to see or care because of our over production of food in the 80's, but what of the 21st Century? The decisions that Bob, I and other farmers make about our land in the 1980's are going to be vital to the future welfare of the world.

We are stewards of one of the most important resources God has given to the world, land. We must conserve this land well. It is not only the source of our economic livelihood but, in cooperation with the Creator, it is the very sustenance of life on earth. As Christians, and conservationists, we must turn over our land to future generations in a better condition than we received it. This is not only a charge, it is our trust for our children's children. ■

Naomi Christensen, both a farmer and an active churchwoman, is a member of the Women's Division of the GBGM.

# Colonization and Destruction of the Bolivian Amazonian Jungle

Wendy McFarren

**T**he Bolivian Amazonian jungles are in danger of destruction. Thousands of acres of fragile tropical rainforests are cleared away by road builders, by logging companies and by colonizers who have migrated from the highlands in search of productive and profitable land. This clearing will signify the disappearance of the Tropical Moist Forests (TMFs) and of the native Indian groups who have lived in harmony with the jungles for millenniums. Colonization is a controversial issue that raises many political, economic, social and ecological questions.

Yucumo is a new colonization area located in the dense jungles on the foothills of the Andes mountains. Two thousand families are migrating from the highlands and from valleys already infertile from previous use. The Bolivian Evangelical Methodist Church is opening a vocational school on an 800-acre track of land which has been set aside for the school by the National Institute of Colonization (INC), the supervising government agency of the homestead program. Since this institute is lacking in personnel and resources, it has given the church the task of educating the young of this area. The Yucumo School will be the only school above the fifth grade in the area and it will serve the children of families who live a subsistence jungle life. The church's work will be of great importance in the area.

## Program Is Controversial

Opening up the jungles with new roadways and relocating thousands of highlands residents is a much debated subject. One viewpoint is that colonization is the solution to Bolivia's food and land problems; introducing agriculture into the forests successfully is not only possible but it is a necessity since the Altiplano (highland plateau) can no longer produce enough for the population. Others believe that the soil of tropical forests is much too

fragile to withstand the uncontrollable mishandling of the land. Some add a political note to this argument, stating that the colonization program is a much too easy solution to the problems caused by the agrarian reform of 1952; major structural social problems have to change before one can stop the destruction of the jungles and the disappearance of tropical Indian cultures.

Bolivia's program of lowland colonization began after the 1952 agrarian reform which gave each campesino (peasant farmer) a small plot of land. "Minifundios", as these lands are called, are too small for the Indians to make an adequate living since the Altiplano soil has become like a desert in certain areas precisely because of deforestation hundreds of years ago. Very few trees exist to draw much needed humidity, and mishandling of the land has made it infertile. Another result of the reform was that by giving each campesino property it broke up the Andean system of communal organization, the "Ayllu," in which all shared the same land and its crop. Once independent, many campesinos could no longer survive with their small territories and couldn't rely on the community for support.

## From the Altiplano to the Tropics

The government's response to this problem was to open up the lowland jungles in Santa Cruz and in the Beni, giving migrants plots of land in which they could begin their new lives. Thousands of Aymara and Quechua Indian families have moved from their dry altiplano to the fertile and fragile lowland tropics. In Yucumo, each family is given 50x2.4 acres (50 hectares) of land. Bob Caufield, a North American World Program Division person in mission who is directing the school, explains that half of the territory must be used as a community endeavor while the other half can be used freely. Residents are then divided

into nuclei of forty families, depending on the characteristics of the land.

The resources of the government are limited and very little is done to educate the colonizers about their new way of life or to enforce reforestation laws. This training is important since the migrants' whole way of life—their eating habits, their clothing, their housing and their forms of agriculture—have to change. On the Altiplano they planted potatoes and fava beans, sowing the earth with oxen and by hand. The cold, windy temperature, combined with the extremely high altitude (13,000 ft. above sea-level), created an introverted and withdrawn character.

Life in the jungles is an antithesis to life on the Altiplano. Instead of being cold, dry and windy, the jungle atmosphere is hot and humid. Migrants accustomed to planting potatoes and fava beans change their diet to bananas, yucca and other tropical vegetables. Women don't know how to cook with the new foods they grow so their diet is poor and unnutritious. They have to shed a few layers of their traditional clothing which warmed them from the Altiplano winds. Women, however, still wear their hot many-layered "pollera" skirts because it is hard for them to adapt.

## Slash-and-Burn Farming

Most importantly, the agricultural methods they use change drastically and as a result, miles of tropical forests are destroyed. To prepare the delicate soil for planting, the migrants are limited to slashing-and-burning which is a technique for clearing the thick jungle brush rapidly. Campesinos cut off the wood they can use with a machete and then set plots of land ablaze. The burnt foliage is then allowed to disintegrate for a few months, fertilizing the soil. Banana trees, coffee and rice and corn, which are some of the most detrimental crops to the delicate earth, are planted and



(Above) Bob Caufield, the founder and director of the school in Yucumo, stands by a tree cut down to make room for construction.

(Below) These Chiman Indians were used to moving around according to the availability of hunting and game before the land was given by the government to settlers from the highlands.



give fruit for a few years. The land then becomes infertile after its use and the farmer has to move on to another plot, repeating the same process.

If slash-and-burn is done without knowledge of its destructive force, the land burned becomes useless and begins to erode. Soil with no trees or bushes becomes seriously flooded because no roots exist to absorb the moisture as well as no vegetation to cushion the powerful rain. The thin cap of fertile jungle soil disappears, with no chance of recovery. In Bolivia,

thousands of acres of forests have been lost in this manner.

In Yucumo, an estimated 250 types of trees exist, but the homesteaders have no way of exploiting them properly because they have no chain saws. They are therefore limited to what they can clear by hand with a machete or by burning. Bob Caufield believes that if each nucleus of families had access to their own sawmill, many trees would be saved from rotting or being burned. Homesteaders also have very limited access to

bank loans and the interest rates are extremely high. They have no way of clearing their land than by slashing and burning.

One solution to the jungle destruction which is often mentioned is that of fertilization. Unfortunately, this is not an adequate answer in areas where peasants live at a subsistence level; fertilizers are very expensive and difficult to transport in tropical areas where roads are impassable six months out of the year. Bringing in fertilizers would disturb the delicate balance of what subsistence farmers input and what their output is. It is much easier for farmers to cut and burn than to worry about bringing in truckloads of fertilizers on terrible roads.

### Is Education the Answer?

Those who believe the jungle soil can be used for agriculture see education as the clue to saving the Amazons. One technique that could be used and taught would be to first cut down trees that could be used as lumber and then to leave the area alone for about eight months. With the high temperatures and the humidity, the small bushes and weeds begin to rot, leaving a fertile topsoil. At the same time, trees should be planted and watched every day so that the jungle brush does not block the sun. With this combination of agriculture and forestry, the tropical moist forests can be used without destroying them permanently. After a few years of use, the soil will no longer be fertile and the farmer will have to move on again. In this way, however, they will be leaving behind earth that will come back to life years later.

Slash-and-burn in itself is not a bad technique if used correctly. If only sections of a plot are burned and trees are replanted the forest will recover over a long period, from twenty to fifty years. However, since the recovery rate is slow many campesinos prefer to exploit the soil so it will be more profitable without worrying about the results. "If I'm not going to live to see this tree grow, then why should I grow it?" This mentality is typical of many migrants who see their move to the lowlands as only a temporary commercial venture and who plan to go

back to the altiplano when they get rich. The children, the second-generation, are those who will care about what happens to the soil.

### The Tropical Indians

The destruction of the tropical rain forests also means the disappearance of indigenous ethnic groups who are delicately in harmony with jungle life. For hundreds of year, tropical Indians have roamed the jungles, hunting, planting and then moving on. The jungle is their land, and it is being invaded by colonizers and by logging companies who destroy vast expanses of earth which become deserts. The Indians live a perfect ecological relationship (symbiotic) with the forest and their sense of being is connected with the life of the trees and the animals. Roy May, a missionary in Bolivia who is against the colonization program, states that colonizers, businesses and government agencies are committing ethnocide, the elimination of ethnic groups.

Approximately 200 Chiman Indian people, who have been accustomed to moving around according to the availability of hunting and game, live in the Yucomo area; two thousand live outside of the homestead area. Their semi-nomadic life will soon have to change because of the distribution of land which previously had no owner. Colonization will affect them greatly, since they speak no Spanish and can neither read nor write. The INC has set aside some land for them but they are not accustomed to settlement living. To survive, they will have to adapt, forgetting much of their culture, learning Spanish, and settling in one place.

### What Is the Church Doing?

Considering all of these factors of colonization, what should the church do and what is it doing? In Yucumo, the Bolivian Evangelical Methodist Church (IEMB) is taking on the enormous task of educating the children of migrants. Eugenio Poma, National Secretary of Services of the IEMB, states that the church will teach a new consciousness to the young of the area. The clue to preserving the

jungles is educating them so that they will value the earth as their own and will see the positive long-term effects of reforestation. Operating the only high-school-level institution in the Yucumo area, the church's educational role is of great importance to the tropical moist forests' preservation. Poma also states that the church will work so that the Chiman Indians are given land and that their voice is heard.

Those who believe colonization is only an excuse for not solving the problems of the Altiplano state that the church should take a more active role in stopping the colonization program and not condone it by starting a new educational institution there. The church's emphasis should be on reforesting the Altiplano and changing the laws of the 1952 agrarian reform.

Even if this is the case, what should the church do in the meantime—let the tropical moist forest go to waste or provide education to those that inhabit it? Poma, for example, states that if no one creates programs for the Chimans and fights for their small plots of land, then the large logging companies will come in anyway. The church says it is not condoning colonization but it is providing an education to those that need it badly, with the hope of saving the forests.

It should be mentioned that the major destroyers of the rain forest are not the colonizers but rather the major corporations who cut the timber and clear the land with bulldozers. Major portions of Santa Cruz are deserts in the summer and inundated dirt in the rainy season because of deforestation. The government has a law that for every tree cut down, three have to be planted; but there is no enforcement.

The destruction of the tropical moist forests is therefore intricately related to social, political and economic issues. The church finds itself caught in the middle of all of this. It is providing a necessary education to the youth of the tropics who will live off the fragile lands but it is doing nothing to stop the controversial program of colonization. ■

Wendy McFarren is editor of *Highland Echoes*, the publication of The Methodist Evangelical Church in Bolivia.

# Love Canal Is Still Happening: An Update

James N. Brewster

Love Canal, 1985. Seven years after the discovery of the toxic dumpsite on the eastern edge of Niagara Falls, New York, the paint is peeling on the empty houses. Many have fallen into disrepair. Seventeen homes in the neighborhood were torn down last year because they had been burned by arsonists. Forty more houses are now slated for demolition. Trash accumulates on the lawns of the empty homes and again last winter there were problems with snow removal. The people who still live here wonder how safe it is. Some say they'll remain because their families were never affected. Many are moving out because most of the neighbors are gone.

Only seventeen percent of the residents remain in this suburban area. 762 homes have already been purchased. Only 75 homeowners still live at Love Canal.

Yet the interfaith community maintains a strong outreach program, not only to aid those still victimized by Love Canal and the several other inactive dumpsites in the area, but also to resolve the problems associated with the inappropriate disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes—purposes which led to the founding of the Ecumenical Task Force in 1979.

## Love Canal Has Not Been Cleaned Up

Contrary to the understanding of most, Love Canal has not been cleaned up. An underground collection system surrounding the sixteen-acre site gathers leachate into a treatment plant, but nineteen thousand gallons of the most hazardous materials are stored in large tanks, untreated. The vast majority of the 22,000 tons of toxic wastes dumped in Love Canal from 1942–1953 still remains buried beneath the clay cap, because the appropriate method of destruction has not been found. Contaminated sediments from storm and sanitary sewers and the creeks which drain the area have not yet been collected and "temporary" storage of these wastes is now being recom-

mended. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) is saying that there should be no resettlement in the neighborhood until this cleanup program is completed. In the meantime, those vacant houses continue to deteriorate.

When the Ecumenical Task Force on the Niagara Frontier (ETF) was begun, its functions were quite specific: to respond to the needs of those victimized at Love Canal, to educate the larger church community about the problems associated with the improper disposal of hazardous wastes, and to work toward resolving issues related to the problem. Little did we realize at that time the growing enormity of the work.

Twenty years ago, Michael Quoist's *Prayers* became a devotional classic. One prayer, entitled "Lord, Why Did You Tell Me to Love?", speaks of the pilgrim's progress from living comfortably and peacefully at home to that moment when God forces a breach in his defenses, and the pilgrim opens the door a bit to the needy. At first, he is quite comfortable in helping, then dismayed at discovering the "masses" of victims who stream into his life.

## An Unending Wave of the Needy

As in Quoist's prayer, the wave of the needy seem unending to the ETF. Direct aid and counselling is still provided for those affected by toxic waste sites here and across the country. The victims are varied: persons questioning if the home they'd like to buy is located "too close" to a dumpsite; a pastor from a church fifty miles away is alarmed that a chemical to be manufactured at a new plant in his town might be toxic; a man who has fought industry and government for twenty years needs to talk through his decision to move from the area; a scientist worries about the ethics of his work and studies; a newspaper reporter sharing her concerns about a sister ill from toxic pollution; a church janitor is angry over the injustice of the legal settlements at Love Canal.

Ministering to persons with these

needs is essential in an area we are now finding to be troubled with major problems of pollution. An important international study, provided by the state, federal and provincial governments bordering the Niagara River, was released late last fall and compares the quality of the water, sediments and biota in the river between Lakes Erie and Ontario. In all cases, there were significant increases in the amounts of toxic materials found in the samples downstream. Each day, more than 3,000 pounds of hazardous materials are discharged legally by industries and municipal waste water treatment plants into the Niagara. These wastes include P.C.B.s., pesticides, cyanides and metals. Altogether, such materials total as much as 566 tons per year, 90% of it originating in the United States. This total does not include those many inactive dumpsites located within three miles of the river and leaching into it. Sixty-one of these sites are designated as having "significant potential for contaminant migration." When the pollutants from industry and dumpsites are added, the contamination could be as much as 2100 tons yearly.

## A National Problem

Early in our experience in Niagara Falls, the ETF noted that Love Canal was merely the tip of a "toxic iceberg" and that the greater hazard still lay undiscovered but even more dangerous. The analogy has held true. Ours is truly a national problem!

In March of this year, the federal Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), the scientific and technological arm of the Congress, issued a major report criticizing the EPA for underestimating both the numbers of dangerous toxic waste sites and the amount of money needed for cleanup. The EPA had said there might be as many as 2500 nationwide, but the OTA concluded that there were more than 10,000 sites which would require cleanup in order to protect our public health. The EPA estimated that the cleanup might cost between \$16–22

billion. The OTA, on the other hand, cautioned that the price tag could be as high as \$100 billion, and that "underestimating national cleanup needs could result in environmental crisis years or decades from now."

The resolution on Environmental Stewardship passed by the 1984 General Conference of The United Methodist Church advocated that "governments devote sufficient monetary and human resources to assessing the extent of possible toxic and hazardous waste disposal problems within their jurisdictions." The statement also held that those parties causing the problems should be responsible for such cleanup and that those government agencies "responsible for enforcing existing laws...adopt a more aggressive strategy in responding to violators."

In recent years, the reputation of the Ecumenical Task Force has increased: the group has been recommended by the Church World Service Domestic Disaster Committee as an important resource for communities affected by hazardous waste problems; the ETF has acted as consultant in developing the interfaith response to the dumping of dioxin at Times Beach, Missouri; it is now finishing a major manual for church people facing such issues and, recently, the ETF's "National Response to those Affected by Hazardous and Toxic Waste" has been selected by The United Methodist Church as a national Advance Special for 1985-1986.

### An Attempt to Resolve the Problems

Foolishly or wisely (there are moments we're not sure which), the interfaith response adopted as one of its goals an attempt to resolve the problems of hazardous wastes. Such a strategy has led the group to champion the law passed by New York State in which an employee has the right to know the ingredients in chemicals with which he or she works and their potential health effects; members of the ETF have attended the annual meetings of companies, testified in government hearings, held press conferences, television interviews and been led into city hall, the court room and state capital in efforts to bring resolution to the problem.



Seven years after the discovery of the toxic dumpsite, only seventeen percent of the residents in the area remain.

Evaluating such activity, it appears that where we have not met with success, there has been a failure to break through those walls of conflict erected by factions who see each other as "enemies" over the problem. Industry has been suspicious of government regulation; environmental groups are uneasy about industry; the public is suspicious of all. As a result, the various factions seem able to communicate with each other only through their lawyers in court.

Encouraged by the Domestic Disaster Committee of Church World Service, the ETF is now attempting a major reconciliation of these "opponents", in bringing together representatives of the chemical producing and waste disposal industries, government, university, media, and church

to adopt an overall community strategy to resolve such problems. It is hoped that such a strategy will become a model for other areas in the country.

Given the enormity of the problems associated with the improper disposal of hazardous wastes, it is well to heed the warning of the General Conference resolution: "Many of today's 'environmental problems' have their roots in humanity's short-sighted use of God's creation." In response to all those victimized by these abuses, now is the time to redirect our priority and strategy. ■

The Rev. Dr. James N. Brewster is pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Parish in Niagara Falls and Lewiston-Youngstown, New York. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Ecumenical Task Force on the Niagara Frontier.



# viewpoint

Leontine T. C. Kelly



## Peace on Earth/Leontine Kelly

The Christmas phrase, "Peace on Earth!" is pertinent to this period of resurrection celebration. If we are to be truly Easter People we must work to reorder our thinking in so many ways. In its pamphlet on Environmental Stewardship *Faithful Witness on Today's Issues* series, the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church expresses clearly the denomination's position on Stewardship:

"Many of today's environmental problems have their roots in humanity's short-sighted use of God's creation. While focusing on the stewardship of monetary resources, we forget that the source of all wealth is God's gracious creation.

"In the Bible, a steward is one given responsibility for what belongs to another. The Greek word we translate as steward is *oikonomos*, one who cares for the household or acts as a trustee. The word *oikos*, meaning household, is used to describe the world as God's household. Christians, then, are to be stewards of the whole household (creation) of God. *Oikonomia* (stewardship) is also the root of our word *economics*. *Oikos*, moreover, is the root of our modern word, *ecology*. Thus in a broad sense, stewardship, economics, and ecology are, and should be, related. Indeed a "faithful

and wise steward" (Luke 12:42) must relate them.

"The Old Testament relates these concepts in the vision of *Shalom*. Often translated "peace" the broader meaning of *shalom* is wholeness. In the Old Testament *shalom* is used to characterize the wholeness of a faithful life lived in relationship to God. *Shalom* is best understood when we experience wholeness and harmony as human beings with God, with others, and with creation itself. The task of the steward is to seek *shalom*."

We have surely misunderstood the creative intent of an almighty God who initiated a world of *shalom*, so finely balanced, so abundantly resourced. As the quotation above clearly identifies, the God who created all things gave both the intelligence and the stewardship accountability for this world to the human creature. The "risk of God" has always been seen in the ability of the human creature to choose.

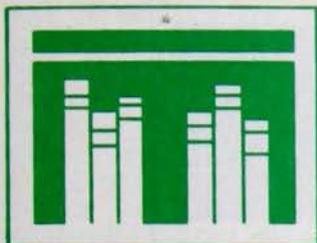
The imbalance of our present environmental crises is the result of many poor human choices. We sing of God's world and acknowledge that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," yet we fail to use natural resources efficiently and responsibly. We dump nuclear waste and dispose of toxic and hazardous substances with little regard to health damages. We pollute the air, chemically contaminate crops and soil,

eliminate diversity in plants, animals and fail to protect endangered species of both. Our water is impure and limited and our technological knowledge is geared to destruction of God's world rather than that of assuring the abundant life for all.

"Peace on Earth" is not just Christmas language. It is an understanding of relationships. Political designations of states and nations are human barriers to the equitable distribution of the earth's resources. Yet, even if we can justify boundaries as a manageable means of living out our stewardship responsibilities we are no less called to care for and to share with one another, and all of the earth.

Our nature grows more and more acquisitive, even in the midst of shortages. Catastrophe has become daily occurrence, and the future complexity created by our choice reads like a doomsday tome. But the airwaves carry a new carol of resurrection—"We are the world! We are the children." Soloists of every race and color remind us of our wholeness. We do want a brighter day, and while we are giving to the starving people of Africa, let's also start living as God's people, God's stewards ensuring *Shalom*, Peace on Earth.

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## Books

### CHANGES IN THE LAND

by William Cronon.

Hill & Wang, 1983. 241 pp., \$15.95 (cloth), \$6.95 (paper).

Over the past fifteen years, Americans have become more conscious of environmental issues, agricultural concerns and the struggles for justice of Native Americans. A number of acclaimed books have served to heighten that consciousness: Barry Commoner's *The Closing Circle*, Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America*, Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and, more recently, Peter Matthiessen's *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, which the governor of South Dakota unsuccessfully tried to ban.

In some ways, William Cronon's book uniquely combines some of the concerns expressed in those books. *Changes in the Land* is a very readable and well-researched analysis of the interplay between ecology, agriculture and native people. Cronon focuses on their interaction in one region—New England—during one period—the colonization of the area by Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Cronon's particular point of reference in his book is ecological change. He analyzes the ecology of New England at the time of the arrival of the first explorers and settlers, utilizing such primary sources as letters, diaries and other documents of the period. From that historical time forward, he explores the region's ecological history, demonstrating in the process the ways by which the nature-complementing ways of life of native people of northern (hunter-gatherers) and southern (hunter-agriculturalists) New England were displaced by the nature-dominating economic practices of English colonists.

A major reason for the ecological changes, as Cronon indicates, is the contradictory understanding about land that the English brought to America.

For the Indians, land could not be owned, only used; there was no private property in land. Cronon notes the Indians' distinction between *ownership* and *sovereignty*: "individual ownership [is] the way inhabitants of a particular village conceived of property, vis-a-vis each other;" and "collective sovereignty [is] how everyone in a village conceived of their territory (and political community), vis-a-vis other villages" (p. 58). Individuals could own and trade whatever they made

from the fruits of the land (corn, fish, furs, etc.), but the land itself was not owned, nor could it be bought and sold.

The European perspective was markedly different. People had to *own* the land in order to work it. Hence, *titles* had to be drawn up and *fences* erected to delineate private property boundaries. The English also imposed their legal perspective on the colonial situation. Since the Indians had no fences and no clear titles, then the colonists could take the land because, obviously (to them), it was nobody's land.

John Winthrop had declared that the Indians "inclose no land" and had no "tame cattle to improve the land by" (p. 130). "The change in property perspective ultimately meant," Cronon states, "that from the unbounded spaces inhabited by native people—in the hands of the colonists—New England had become a world of fields and fences" (p. 156).

Major ecological changes resulted from the change to English rule. Species of native animals (deer, wolves, beavers, moose) virtually disappeared from the region, while new animal forms (cattle, sheep, gray rats, cockroaches) came to America. Forestation patterns changed. Even the climate was affected in some areas. Such changes resulted from the new ways land was being used, ways which represented that shift from land as collectively owned to land as property; and a similar shift in perspective from the way

forests and animals were seen: they were ideologically changed from *resources* to be used as *needed*, to *commodities* to be used to satisfy both *needs* and *wants*.

*Changes in the Land* explores these and other ecologic and economic changes with a thoughtful analysis that is sympathetic to both Indians and colonists. The last chapter defends the new reality, to some extent, as a necessary change, given European expansion; but Cronon states that the Indians might have been *integrated* into that new economic and cultural reality rather than dominated by and *excluded* from it. At the same time, however, Cronon notes that the new reality combines "ecological abundance and economic prodigality" (p. 170). The text is supplemented by extensive footnotes and a good "bibliographical essay."

The implications of Cronon's study, of course, goes beyond New England and colonial America. *Changes in the Land* is a stimulus for reflection on ecological change, agricultural practices and justice for Indian people. As such, it is beneficial reading for people throughout the United States, as we look at the land and ourselves and seek to find a sense of harmony with the earth and with each other as children of God and of the earth.

JOHN HART

Dr. John Hart was director of the midwest Catholic bishops' twelve-state Heartland Project, and principal author of

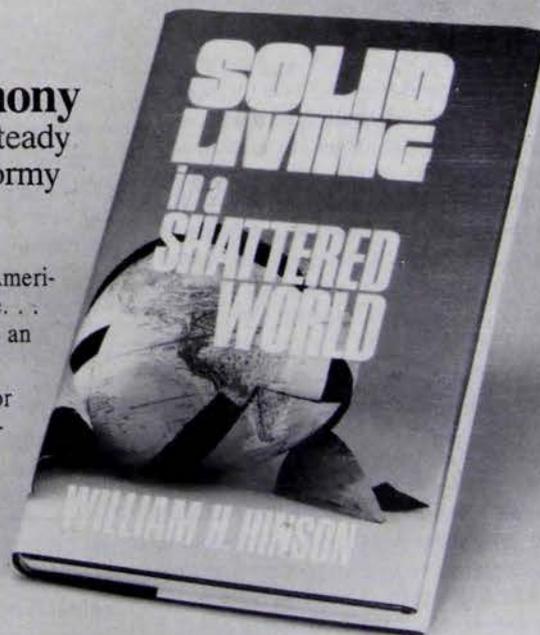
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their land statement, "Strangers and Guests." He is associate professor of religious studies at the College of Great Falls, Montana, and author of *The Spirit of the Earth—A Theology of the Land* (Paulist Press, 1984).

## TROUBLED SKIES, TROUBLED WATERS

by Jon R. Luoma.

The Viking Press, 1984. 155 pp., \$12.95.

Ohio at war with New York? England at war with Sweden? The U.S. at war with Canada? Humans at war with fish and frogs and trees and buildings and one another all over the industrialized world? Yes, this is happening, according to John Luoma. The ammunition is sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions; the weapon is acid precipitation. Political boundaries are irrelevant and the results are those of any war—devastation and death. The problem has accelerated since 1972, when Sweden, at the Stockholm UN Conference on the Environment, called acid rain "an undeclared act of war" between political entities (p. 117).

If you think that's overstating the case, read this book. Interweaving deep love for nature with comprehensible scientific explanation, laced with pithy quotations and the author's clear-eyed outrage, *Troubled Skies, Troubled Waters* is required reading for anyone concerned about human failure to exercise responsible stewardship for God's creation.

The book begins and ends in the "canoe country" of northern Minnesota, hundreds of miles from any source of pollution, where the loon and the owl rule the night, the lakes are full of fish and frogs and salamanders and the trees stand tall and dignified. By the end, after visits to Wisconsin, New York's Adirondacks, the Canadian Lakes of Muskoka, Cheshire, Ohio and Sudbury, Ontario, we understand the anguish with which Mr. Luoma must have written his closing words: "a rain monitor . . . along the shore of Lake Superior had recorded the storm's pH at 4.4" (p. 168).

Early on in the book, we learn that "normal" rain has a pH factor of about 5.6 and that "pH factor" is a measurement of acidity and alkalinity. Seven is a neutral pH; the lower the number, the more acid the substance. Like the Richter earthquake scale, it is logarithmic: each whole number represents a 10-fold increase; a pH of 5 is ten times as acidic as pH6; pH4 is 100 times more acidic than pH6. Tomato juice has a pH of 4.3, vinegar 2.8. Colorado has recorded precipitation of pH3.6; New York's White Face Mountain records pH2.8 at least once a year. In 1978 Wheeling, West Virginia, had rain lower than pH six to eight times more acidic than vinegar and 5,000 times more acidic than normal rain (pp. 29-31, 68).

We also learn that millions of acres of forest in northern Europe are dead or dying; that thousands of North American

lakes and streams have lost their fish and frogs and are losing their loons, blue heron, warblers, their mink and river otter as acid-rain-leached mercury and aluminum work their way up the food chain; that up to 15 percent of Minnesota's multi-million dollar soybean crop is being destroyed; that buildings and monuments everywhere are literally being dissolved; and that sulfur pollution of the air played a role in the premature deaths of as many as 51,000 people in 1980.

By the end of the book, this reader at least has been convinced that the major causes of acid rain are human-made pollutants, sulfur dioxides and nitrogen oxides, which could be controlled but aren't because of powerful economic interests. Luoma leads us skillfully through pollution-emitting power plants and refineries, scientific laboratories and field-testing stations to inexorable agreement with a 1981 National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report stating, "we find the circumstantial evidence for their role overwhelming. . . . There is little probability that some factor other than emissions of sulfur and nitrogen oxides is responsible for acid rain." NAS called for halving sulfur and sharply cutting nitrogen oxide emissions, insisting that continuing the current level "in the face of clear evidence of serious hazard to human health and to the biosphere will be extremely risky from a long-term economic standpoint as well as from the standpoint of biosphere protection (p. 28).

Three years have passed since that action was urged in legislative argument and regulatory delay. The administration calls for yet more research. Acid rain continues its devastation.

A major stumbling block to national clean-up legislation, the fear of loss of jobs, is given only a page or so, which is the one serious failure in this otherwise admirable book. Those claiming that opponents of acid rain care more about fish and trees than they do about coalminers could find support for their case in such imbalance. Detailed analysis of employment effects has been done well by others, notably the National Clean Air Coalition, but Luoma's case would have been even more unassailable if he had given it more attention.

Nevertheless, I came away with hope that this book might help history repeat itself. Just as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* galvanized us into banning DDT and controlling pesticides, so might Luoma's, as he quotes a 71-year-old Muskoka woman being the catalyst for control of acid rain: "Frogs aren't singing to each other down in the bay anymore, and I can't find salamanders."

CHRIS COWAP

Chris Cowap is Director for Economic and Social Justice with the Division of Church and Society, National Council of Churches of Christ. Eco-justice issues have high priority with her, both professionally and personally.



## Letters

### Victim of 'Bad Press'?

Greetings in the name of our Lord. Recently, I attended the Mission Vocation Event held at Nashville by the General Board of Global Ministries' Mission Personnel Resources Program Department. The issue of what GBGM is doing around the world arose. Dr. Charles Germany [of the board's World Division] informed the group that something on the order of 70 percent of all resources available to the board was being used either in direct evangelism ministries or in church leadership development with about 50 percent of all missionary personnel appointed to such assignments.

I personally have felt, for many years, that GBGM was indeed involved in many things that were very acceptable to the evangelical wing of the church. I have also felt that the ministry in areas of justice concerns, advocacy concerns, etc., were also something we should be proud of. However, I have been very concerned about the balance of those issues. The information encouraged me and affirmed my suspicion that the "people in the pews" have not really received the "facts" about our mission involvement.

Further conversations brought out the question of why does not *New World Outlook* reflect the situation as it really is? I realize that other areas of the board are involved in congregational awareness programs. However, I am writing to ask why the chief publication of the mission board does not reflect this balance in its publication.

I took the liberty of doing a little "homework" on the question and reviewed all the issues of the past year. I found: three special issues; one annual report; and of the 47 featured articles written during the last year, I could find only three articles written on the subjects of direct evangelism ministries and/or church leadership development. Neither of these three articles were exclusively written on the subject however, nor was that concern the real thrust of the article.

Given the fact that I had to "stretch it a bit" to get some of those three articles to fit the category, and granting the possible oversight on my part of other more relevant ones, the most optimistic report one could make is that somewhere around 10 percent of the featured articles in *New World Outlook* concerned the work of GBGM which is supposedly receiving the lion's

share of resources and personnel. My question is simply, "Why?"

Charles said that GBGM is the victim of "bad press." Well, if that is so, then why not put out "good press"? Why not "tell it like it really is," if that is how it really is? I do not mean to imply that *New World Outlook* should only print articles on evangelism nor that the special issues-oriented months should be discontinued. However, as you well know, there is a fine line between being prophetic to the church and losing the trust and confidence of the constituency. I sense in my church and in many others around here, that GBGM is losing, or has already lost, the confidence of a lot of the constituency. Maybe that is why the new mission society is so attractive.

I hope that you will look into this matter. I apologize for the length of this letter, but I hope something useful will come out of my inquiry.

May the Lord's richest blessings be upon you as you seek to serve Him.

(Rev.) John L. Verburg

Tarrant First United Methodist Church  
Tarrant, Alabama

### Drug Education

I am an avid reader of *New World Outlook*, and keep a file of some 300 subjects, for my church, into which most of that information in it is stored.

Referring to your editorial on *Religion and Politics, One More Time*, (October, 1984), I quote:

"Methodists, let us not forget, felt as passionately about prohibition as right-to-lifers feel about abortion and managed to convince the electorate as well with disastrous results in respect for the law."

For 40 years I have taught drug education in schools. A repeated question from students is, "If alcohol is so bad for you, why do they allow it to be sold?" A complete answer involves some reference to the real reason why we did not retain prohibition.

Prohibition was violated by some people, particularly foreign born who did not know what we were trying to do. But we do not repeal laws against stealing and other crimes because they are violated. Actually most people did obey the prohibition law. As wife of a District Attorney and a Court Reporter I saw few violations.

Fletcher Dobyns, a Chicago lawyer, who had worked for the Justice Department, was not an ardent advocate of prohibition but he was intrigued to learn why it was repealed when it seemed to be a good thing for the country. He spent over five years of uninterrupted research, and ten years of investigation, as to why we did not keep it. His book "The Amazing Story of Repeal," or "An Expose of the Power of Propaganda" is a rampart of fact and sworn testimony.

Mr. Dobyns reveals that sellers of alcoholic beverages and a few millionaires who paid heavy income taxes, when the

average American paid none, banded together to form the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment. When the government finally got around to investigating this Association, they seized their files. Printed on their own stationery was the admission that the real reason they wanted to get rid of prohibition was to

relieve themselves of income taxes and place a tax on the workingman's beer. One of these millionaires said that one of his companies would save \$10,000,000 in corporation tax if we should have a tax on beer. To discredit prohibition and deceive the public, this Association hired, initially, sixty paid writers under Irvin Cobb, the

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most famous humorist of his day, to make fun of prohibition and circulate the idea that it was a failure. Later 578 artists and writers were engaged in this deceit.

While the government did release the letter they seized it was not widely circulated because most newspapers that had made much profit from liquor ads, wouldn't use it. So the damage was done before people realized what was happening. And many still do not know and continue to echo that prohibition was a failure.

But it did work in the short time we had it. All but two of the 98 "Keeley Cures" for alcoholics closed for lack of patrons. During prohibition crime and poverty decreased. Some jails emptied. There was improved mental health and other benefits.

Dr. Henry L. Smith, once President of Washington and Lee University, observed: "Prohibition is the most effective step forward in the uplift of the human race ever taken by any civilized nation."

Another book which echoes Dr. Dobyns findings is "The Wrecking of the 18th Amendment," by Ernest Gordon. The real ones who disrespected the law were those of the Association who plotted to overthrow it.

(Mrs.) Jean B. Rothe  
Chico, California

## Georgia Workshop

I call your attention to page 17 in the article (April, 1985) "A University Without Walls," under the column "Political Skills Workshop."

This Georgia Workshop was a joint venture of North and South Georgia Conference and you left North Georgia Conference out completely. (I am enclosing some items from my file to show you what I am talking about.) We don't do these things to get credit, but North Georgia United Methodist Women worked very hard, spending many hours to make this a success, and it's annoying to be left out. It makes me wonder what else is not right in the report.

Response previously wrote up a North Georgia Legislative Training Event and gave South Georgia credit for it. If I hadn't grown up in South Georgia I would be even more upset.

There is not anything you can do now to change this, but I feel better getting it off my chest.

Lavinia B. Morgan  
West Point, GA

## Women of Courage

The January (1985) issue of *New World Outlook* contained one article, with illustrations worth the whole year's subscription cost: *Two Women of Courage* by Jon Qwelane.

Mrs. I. W. Hazard  
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# Q&A

## About Missions

### Christians in China

Last month Ruth and Carlisle Phillips, United Methodist missionaries in China, now serving in the "Methodist China Program," answered pertinent questions about the church in China. Here are some more.

You have probably heard news about the Christian Church in China and perhaps you have wondered how it has been faring recently.

**QUESTION:** *How many Christians are there in China today?*

**ANSWER:** There are still about 3 million Roman Catholics in China, but the number of Protestants has increased greatly since 1949. It has been estimated that there are three or four million Protestants. Of course, the total population of China has increased enormously, too. The combined

number of Protestants and Catholics is probably less than one per cent of the total population. In a China under the Communist Party rule, a decline of Christianity was predicted. Thirty-six years later, however, we are witnessing quite a different situation.

**QUESTION:** *How many Protestant Christians were in China before the founding of the People's Republic in 1949?*

**ANSWER:** There were only about 400,000 Protestants.

**QUESTION:** *Are you saying, then, that Communism and Christianity are mutually compatible?*

**ANSWER:** No, but by mutual consent of both Christian leaders and Communist leaders, under conditions which respect the integrity of both, there is the possibility

for peaceful co-existence and even mutual assistance for common goals.

**QUESTION:** *What really happened to the Protestant churches after 1949?*

**ANSWER:** When the radical changes began, there were many different Protestant denominations in China. Structural changes in society affected all aspects of church life: foreign funds stopped; missionaries left; some churches remained open for only a short while. Other churches stayed open until the Cultural Revolution began a persecution of all religions that closed all churches and temples. During the Cultural Revolution church buildings were used for factories, schools, warehouses, even theaters.

Since 1979, churches have been re-opening. Today there are more than 2000 churches being used again for worship services.

**QUESTION:** *How could the church grow with all the missionaries gone, the foreign funds stopped, and all the institutional social work taken away?*

**ANSWER:** The life of the Church does not depend on missionaries, money, or buildings. Chinese church leaders of all denominations have worked together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to build a strong post-denominational church.

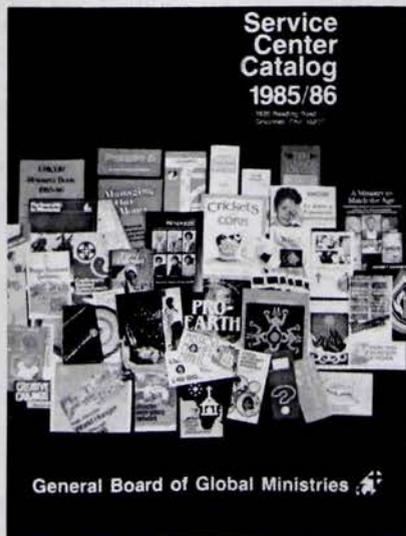
**QUESTION:** *What can we do to help the churches in China?*

**ANSWER:** Thus far, the two major requests that have come from their church leaders have been 1) for our understanding, and 2) for our prayers as they continue to work out the needs that their churches and Christians have at the present time. By responding to these two requests we can be in mission with the churches of China today.

For further information about Christian work in China, contact the United Methodist China Program, Room, 1538, 475 Riverside Drive, N.Y., NY 10115.

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## NEXT MONTH

**IN SERVING WITH A BIBLE INSTEAD OF A SWORD**, FREELANCE WRITER **JAYNE J. FERRER** TELLS US ABOUT SOME 400 UNITED METHODIST MINISTERS WHO ARE SERVING AS CHAPLAINS IN U.S. MILITARY FORCES AROUND THE WORLD. SHE NOTES THAT CHAPLAINS HAVE BEEN SERVING IN THIS VITAL FIELD OF MISSIONS SINCE 1775 WHEN THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS MANDATED THAT "THE COMMANDERS OF THE SHIPS OF THE 13 UNITED COLONIES ARE TO TAKE CARE THAT DEVINE SERVICES BE PERFORMED TWICE A DAY ON BOARD, AND A SERMON PREACHED ON SUNDAYS, UNLESS BAD WEATHER OR OTHER EXTRAORDINARY ACCIDENTS PREVENT."

NATIONAL PROGRAM DIVISION STAFFER **JOHN JORDAN** RECENTLY SPENT A WEEK IN EACH OF TWO COUNTRIES—THE **REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES** AND THE **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA**, TWO ASIAN COUNTRIES THAT ARE DISTINCT IN MUCH OF THEIR HISTORY AND CULTURE BUT SHARE SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE THEM VOLATILE AND AREAS OF TREMENDOUS CONCERN. **SHARING HIS REFLECTIONS** WITH NEW WORLD OUTLOOK READERS, MR. JORDAN SAYS WE CAN LEARN MUCH FROM THE PEOPLE IN THESE SOCIETIES, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE U.S. IS SO DEEPLY IMPLICATED IN EXISTING CONDITIONS WITHIN THESE NATIONS.

AN INDEPTH PROFILE OF **BALDWIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** IN PONTIAC, MICHIGAN, INITIATES OUR CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION SERIES. BALDWIN, PASTORED BY THE REV. DR. **PATRICIA MEYERS**, HAS AN 82-MEMBER CONGREGATION. FROM FEEDING PROGRAMS TO NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH ACTIVITIES TO TEMPORARY SHELTER TO SPONSORING AN HISPANIC MINISTRY, THIS CHURCH IS IN MISSION 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. AN ARTICLE BY **BARBARA F. WILKINSON**.

**FAITH IN ACTION**, AN ARTICLE BY **LISA GRAVES**, HIGHLIGHTS THE LESSIE BATES DAVIS NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, A CHRISTIAN MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTER IN EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS. SUPPORTED THROUGH PRAYERS, GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM, AMONG OTHERS, THE GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES, THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, UNITED METHODIST WOMEN AND UNITED WAY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS, THE CENTER HAS BECOME A VIABLE FORCE IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH ITS COMMITMENT TO **HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED**.

CONTINUING HIS SERIES ON OVERSEAS EPISCOPAL LEADERS, BISHOP **RALPH E. DODGE** (RETIRED) PROFILES BISHOP **OLE BORGEN**, OF STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN. BISHOP BORGEN, WHO ADMINISTERS THE UMC'S NORTHERN EUROPEAN CENTRAL CONFERENCE, HAS BECOME **THE FIRST BISHOP** OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES TO HEAD THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S COUNCIL OF BISHOPS.

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—Dorothy Plater, BMMF Int'l (India)

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Dorothy Plater

## SEPTEMBER 17-20

**Growth and Change in Evangelical Missions: Personal Reflections.** Dr. J. Herbert Kane, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

## \*SEPTEMBER 23-27

**Megatrends in Mission: Agenda for Missionary Faithfulness.** Dr. Marcella Hoesl, M.M., Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, U.K. Co-sponsored by Maryknoll Mission Institute.

## \*SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 4

**African Christianity: Assessing the Problems and Opportunities.** Dr. Adrian Hastings, University of Zimbabwe, and University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

## \*OCTOBER 7-11

**Christian Response to Folk Religion: A Missionary Challenge.** Dr. Paul Hiebert, Fuller Theological Seminary.

## \*OCTOBER 14-18

**The Gospel Prepared for All Peoples; All Peoples Prepared for the Gospel.** Rev. Don Richardson, Regions Beyond Missionary Union, author of *Peace Child*, *Lords of the Earth*, and *Eternity in Their Hearts*. Co-sponsored by Africa Evangelical Fellowship, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Liebenzell Mission, and SIM Int'l.

## OCTOBER 22-25

**Effective Communication with the Folks Back Home: A Writing Workshop for Missionaries.** Robert T. Coote, OMSC staff.

## OCTOBER 29-NOVEMBER 1

**History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission.** Dr. Tracey K. Jones, Jr., Drew University Theological School.

## \*NOVEMBER 4-8

**Understanding Yourself as Person, Partner and Parent.** Dr. John Powell, Michigan State University.

## NOVEMBER 12-15

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