

**EARTH HEALING:  
A Resurrection-Centered Approach**

Robert T. Sears, S.J.  
Albert J. Fritsch, S.J.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction:** The Latch is Out (A. Fritsch)  
Expanding Healing to Include the Earth (R. Sears)
- Ch. 1. Call of the Earth** (A. Fritsch)  
Not Facing our Suffering Face Grounding hi  
Three Ecological Principles The Trinitarian  
Ground of our Call The Roots of our Call
- Ch. 2. Resurrection in the World** (R. Sears)  
The Dynamics of Resurrection Spirituality  
Response to Teilhard de Chardin Implications  
for an Ecological Spirituality
- Ch. 3. The Poor as Healers of the Earth** (A. Fritsch)  
An Instance of Co-suffering  
The Earth Needs Healing  
Types of Impoverishment as Springboards to Resurrection  
The Poor as Healers  
Stages of Eco-Spiritual Growth Towards Identity with the Poor  
Activating the Poor
- Ch. 4. Discernment: Growing into a Resurrection-Centered Spirituality** (R. Sears)  
Stages of Spiritual Growth and Jesus  
Comparison with the Creation-centered Spirituality of Matthew Fox  
Evaluation and Comparison/Contrast Discernment: Listening to God's  
Call for the Earth's Here & Now
- Ch. 5. Deep Power: The Creator at Work** (A. Fritsch)  
A Phenomenology of Power  
Spiritual Empowerment  
Earth Healing and Appropriate Technology
- Ch. 6. The Resurrection and Male-Female Earth** (R. Sears)  
Male-female Relationships in History  
Can Male-Female Relationships be Healed?  
A Resurrection Approach to Male-Female Relationships  
Resurrected Relationships and Care for the Earth

**Ch. 7. Empowerment: Gifts of the Spirit** (A. Fritsch)

The Need for Respecting Diversity

The Types of Models

Further Reflections

**Ch. 8. Prayer for Healing the Earth** (R. Sears)

God's Vision and Ours: Paradise Re-created

Steps in Prayer for Healing the Earth

Finding God in all the Earth

Joseph's Story

**Conclusion: Eden Revisited**

## **INTRODUCTION: THE LATCH IS OUT**

by Al Fritsch and Bob Sears

Healing the wounded Earth<sup>1</sup> is one of the greatest challenges facing us today. The two of us authors make no pretensions to be master Earth healers; we are only learning the healing art and so present this as a justification for its emerging importance. We want to initiate discussion by drawing from our personal experience and the discernment process so identified with our common membership in the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

In some ways the two of us are vastly different: one is rural in background and residence and the other urban; one a public interest activist and the other an academic teacher and research person; one is a physical scientist and other a psychologist and theologian; one is more collective and the other individual and interpersonal, one traditional and the other charismatic. We live 500 miles apart but feel compelled to collaborate on this venture because we do sense the urgent need for saying what follows.

Surprisingly we are asking the same questions and finding answers which tend to complement each other. Do we have the power to heal the wounded Earth? How do we become spiritually energized for the task? Who are to become involved as Earth healers? Are there natural differences and polarities which must be identified? Must we consider the various charisma and gifts in healing? Must our prime elements of faith become the center of the healing process? Is our healing call ever deeper and more involved? How does prayer enter into the healing process?

Even as beginning healers we need to reveal our credentials. There are no degree programs in Earth healing -- and they may not be necessary. However, it is wise to acquaint the reader with why we find this art necessary and what process may be used to acquire it. Hence our autobiographical introduction. We admit it is a novel manner of proceeding, but there is reason in our madness. We are stressing how much we honor diversity and these upcoming sketches show difference as much as similarity. Further, we are convinced that healthy Earth renewable practice will not only preserve that diversity but welcome and even celebrate it. Presenting two different approaches within the same book, not melted into one or the other approach but still fruitfully interacting, is to model what we expect and propose as good Earth healing practice. Thus we do not hide differences but recognize them as part of the current situation. The author of each chapter is indicated, and we both have contributed to our introduction and conclusion.

### **Al Fritsch: "The Latch is Out"**

"The Latch is Out" is a Kentuckian expression of hospitality. It doesn't mean it is out of commission but rather that on pioneer homes the latch string would be through the hole and available for outsiders to pull and to release the lock allowing them to enter. "The latch of my own experiences is out" for I invite you to enter and discover my journey to the moment of Earth healing.

Actually my ecological career started on our small farm near Washington, Kentucky where my folks raised virtually all the food we consumed —meat, vegetables, fruit, eggs, milk. While we still had horses we were at least fifty percent self-sustaining in fuel as well. We caught our own water in cisterns and we used locally sawed wood from the nearby Appalachian foothills.

Self-sustainability gave us the energy to look further into our resources. What we found near us were some run down farms where over a century of intensive agriculture and over pasturing had eroded the land to the point where it was hurt. It was a challenge to my Dad to acquire the run down farm and nurse it back to health, healing and bandaging the major wounds, covering the hills with grass, and returning it to proper cultivation or pasture.

In practical matters we were healers and considered this a challenge. Healing arts ran in the family with seven first cousins as doctors (2) or nurses (5) and most of the other 40 some plus siblings healing in a variety of ways in their extended ministries. It was second nature to constantly search for ways of applying subjects learned during a long educational process to the healing of social, economic or physical wounds rendered to the Earth communities and individual inhabitants.

My formal ecological career began on a Peace march in Austin, Texas in 1969 when I was a chemistry post-doctorate research associate working with Michael Dewar at the University of Texas. While marching along the busiest street in town I became acquainted with the next marcher, Joe Tom Easley, and he mentioned he was returning the following (Thanksgiving) weekend to Washington, DC where he was working with Ralph Nader at the Center for the Study of Responsive Law. I asked whether Ralph needed a chemist. After conversations with others including superiors my public interest career began the following June as a raider.

Those first public interest days included use of applied chemistry: mercury in fish, lead in gasoline, several hazardous pesticides and asbestos. Three of us fledgling scientific public interest advocates decided that in heavily legal D.C. we'd better band together and do our own thing, and so Jim Sullivan, Mike Jacobson and I formed the Center for Science in the Public Interest in early 1971, which continues to this day as a nutrition advocacy and research group. Tony Mazocchi of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Union gave us work space in his office, and a grant from Jay Rockefeller, a member of the West Virginia Governor's cabinet, launched our career.

Early on, my focus was on chemicals in the environment (especially additives in gasoline) and Appalachian strip-mining issues (1970-2), aerosol sprays (1973), energy calculations and simple living (1974), energy and resource conservation alternatives (1975-77), the first solid wastes nationwide conferences and the right-to-know policies (1977-8), ethics as applied to chemicals and energy generation/use (1977-80) and applications of self-sustaining lifestyle techniques (1977-present, in Kentucky).

Healing the Earth seemed easy in the heady early 70s with a newly formed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and comparable state agencies and academic programs springing up everywhere. Environmental solutions would surely come if we only expose

improper practices to public scrutiny and furnish the barest outlines of what to do. The next six years in DC were filled with writing, speaking, and research projects along with serving on numerous governmental committees and panels. The pace was vintage hectic DC — that could burn the most hardened out in a short while. Washington is where people tell others how to live but hardly practice what is preached. Around the core city are the wealthiest and most powerful counties and towns in the nation — and much of that is based on big government.

During the 70s my ole Kentucky home had edged to number one in coal production and it was being hurt by the ravages of the exploiters' bulldozer and chain saw. Kentucky was calling — and when a member of one's family is sick you pack up and go to the bedside. My Jesuit Provincial, Dan Flaherty, encouraged this move as well and appointed me part-time Province social ministry coordinator. Jerry McMahon and Denis Darcey, two DC-based Jesuit Volunteers who were working on strip-mining issues, helped found a tax-exempt group, Appalachia—Science in the Public Interest (ASPI), with which I am still associated.

The initial insight was to heal the Earth by coupling somewhat negative advocacy work with an environmental research and demonstration center (positive environmentalism). But the positive took much time and traditional social change Appalachian groups were suspicious of our technology - as though we were watering down the pure environmental message. Many public interest groups accepted uncritically the prevailing governmental solutions of water and waste problems through mega projects costing millions of dollars. They shared the bureaucrats' suspicion over lack of control of ecologically compatible decentralized methods such as cisterns and compost toilets.

Surprisingly, for being a Jesuit steeped in the Spiritual Exercises, an eco-spirituality grounding a healing ministry did not come early. Theological justification was always an interest as shown in my first major non-scientific venture, *Theology of the Earth* (1972) and its sequel, *Renew the Face of the Earth* (1981). However, not until after the latter book was published did I realize that "Earth healing" with the New Age flavor was overpowering the traditional theological arena to which I belong. Christianity was being blamed through its association with Western Culture for the malady of economic exploitation, and the call for Eastern and Earth-spirit religions was being frequently heard and found in the ecological literature. We simply woke up one day and found the whole world (at least in this hemisphere) toying with the New Age tenets.

I had been a speaker at a conference with Tom Berry in 1984 and heard a talk by Matt Fox at Garrett Seminary in 1986. I knew my instinct for Earth healing was very different from either of these, even though we shared a common priesthood in the Catholic Church. My concerns are primarily with the poor - poor Earth and poor people, those desiring a new creation and a redeeming and loving hand. Furthermore I am convinced that the poor are key players (and healers) in a new social order. I work for and with and among the poor and hope I identify with poor folks. If my theology doesn't touch them, it needs revision. The poor are my judge and jury.

That is not a recent finding. This thinking is consistent with what I held in my youth. I became angry when the school bus we lily whites were riding would pass up our friends and

neighbors, the Smiths, who were black. They had to go to a one room school when others went to the larger public ones. My anger was always for the poor and I pray often that it will not subside nor burn me up. So much for differences which wind their way into my siding for a more social ecology.

My entire priestly ministry has been associated with secular organizations, not religious ones. I noted through extensive travels and workshops (over 1,700 talks in my public interest years to date) that various components of the Earth concerned movement, "The Movement," thought theirs to be the ONLY environmental approach. Lawyers regarded all environmental concerns as legal; teachers saw all issues as pedagogical; research persons, as research problems. But wasn't there more to environmental action than any one specialty? Doesn't the balance of diverging approaches make for better ecology, not one monolithic way of thinking? It was over a decade since LBJ squatted on the front porch near Inez, Kentucky and launched the War on Poverty — the precursor to the ecological battles of the next decade. That war mobilized diverse forces, and so should we.

Financial reality joined hands with reflection by the early 1980's. We saw the end of Federal public interest funding when a Reagan Transition Team operative called me up and asked from what Federal agencies our Center received grants. All such funding groups ceased in late January, 1981. I give credit to the National Science Foundation which quickly shifted our ASPI funding from its "Science for Citizens" program (a Ted Kennedy pet) — to another where we had a previous grant. It gave us three years of breathing space to switch from nearly total government funding to total private sources — and we, unlike many, were able to survive.

Part of the survival focused on running resource audits for different non-profit groups either in or beyond Appalachia. By applying tested procedures to outside groups we offer what is good in Appalachia to others. By doing the service and launching these groups on their own environmental programs we were replicating the demonstration work done here and at Long Branch Environmental Education center at Leicester, North Carolina and later Earth Connections in Cincinnati, Ohio. The program began in 1984 and later termed the "Earth Healing" programs of the Resource Auditing Service Project. Healing took on an outward dimension and involved environmental design along with ten year programs for the participating groups whether they be retreat houses, religious motherhouses, colleges, or youth camps.

In the spring of 1987 Dan Berrigan taught at nearby Berea College and visited ASPI. I mentioned to him how powerless I had felt upon returning to Kentucky and saw social structure change hopes dashed in the Mountain entanglements that weigh down a "Third World in a First World." Dan gently reminded me that I was only discovering our fundamental powerlessness before the Almighty. For the next six years I have thought about the interaction of power and powerlessness.

That sense of ineffective action was heightened by another concurrent incident. The Catholic Committee of Appalachia, a social justice group, was developing a position paper at the instigation of community organizers to show gradations in ministry in Appalachia - and guess who came out on top -- organizing. The visiting team came to ASPI and let slip that the report was just about completed - before a sizeable portion of the data was collected. My later lengthy

critique of the draft document was ignored as were protests at the subsequent autumn CCA meeting. Different types of ministry were never accepted on an equal par and so the final document was fraught with chauvinism of the community organizers' persuasion.

Amid the disappointment, it was becoming clear that ministry does have levels or depths, but not based so much on type of work but on each type's deepening level of awareness. My basic thesis was that there were many gifts but the same Spirit, affirming our "Catholicity" through mission gifts that require the encouragement of all. Variation only adds to the luster of the Church, the Community of Believers, provided all work in harmony and all deepen their individual and collective consciousness through work with and among the poor. By 1986 my talks shifted to the poor holding the key role in healing the Earth, an older insight reenforced by Third World visits: Mexico (1975), Peru (1983), India (1988), Haiti and Dominican Republic (1990) -- and also to Israel in 1992.

Traditional church response to ministry has offered a privileged place for stewardship, which was the translating of financial giving to caring for Creation gifts. At a rather plush conference setting in Daytona Beach, Florida in December, 1987, sponsored by the National Council of Churches Stewardship Committee, I was asked to substitute for a presenter and furnish an activist response to some theological position papers. The intensity of the meeting allowed me to verbalize my thoughts. In the spring of 1989 I was asked to give a keynote on stewardship at a gathering of directors of mainline church national hunger programs in Chicago. I developed the topic that stewardship was only one of several approaches to environmental ministry — and it along with the others has a shadow side.

At a talk in St. Louis the same year I developed an application of St. Ignatius Loyola's three degrees of humility as found in the Spiritual Exercises. This progression from one level to another is the normal manner in which one reaches deeper levels of spirituality -- and healing. And this can apply to those in environmental work as well as others all of whom need to help share the pie of activism. What was becoming painfully apparent was that so-called environmentalists with noble causes do not necessarily act differently than others in our human society. Purity of cause does not ensure purity of method.

Both models of ministry and the deepening levels of awareness were further refined in 1990 -1991 talks and eventually became the structure of my book, *Down To Earth Spirituality*. Be humble as Christian people not triumphal; be one with the people, especially the poor, not elitist; see Earth as poor and in need of care, not a Gaia figure; come closer and closer to Earth as a means of being in tune with its Creator; know the bioregion (the **HERE**) and the seasons (the **NOW**); consider the work ahead as a participative process of a **WE**, not an **I**.

The Mountain spirit was impregnating my bones and even my way of praying. A littered landscape, which was so distracting when first returning to the Appalachian Mountains, had now become the Calvary of poor land, fractured communities and people drained of self-respect. Now litter is not mere distraction. I can pick up four or five pieces each day, and still pray while walking.



As a practical person and one with roots in the wounded Earth I saw the need for redemptive action, that goes beyond Creation-centered spirituality. During 1987-89 there was a struggle over control of the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology of which I was deeply involved as a founder. At the 1987 North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology (which I helped organize but after the event was forced to disassociate from) I was particularly attracted to Bob Sears' Resurrection approach as truly promising.

Some wise personal advice in 1990 by Wendell Berry made me realize that direct battle on this subject was distracting my regular ecological work. I persuaded fellow Jesuit Joe Bracken, a theologian who teaches at Xavier University in Cincinnati to hold an eco-spirituality conference in September, 1991 and we asked Bob Sears to help focus the discussion. In part this book is a continuation of that and the dialogs that I've had since then with Bob, who serves on my Province environmental oversight committee.

While this brief odyssey hardly does justice to the many influences on the thought presented here: scientific training, farm background, a strong work ethic, Jesuit training, the Mountain people, I realize that any Earth healing needs to be mindful of the past and hopeful of the future.

### **Bob Sears: Expanding Healing to Include the Earth**

My way to healing the Earth has come through psychotherapy and theology. As I was beginning my study of Theology in Frankfurt/Main, I became aware of a personal depression that blocked my feelings and made me anxious about life. I began to study psychoanalysis to find the root of the depression, but the more I learned, the more depressed I became. Knowledge, I learned, did not heal. It simply made me more aware of the problem. I was not yet certain what the solution was. An article by a fellow Jesuit referred me to Isaiah 43:18ff "Remember not the events of the past..., see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers...for my chosen people to drink." It touched me very deeply and seemed to lift the roots of the depression. Our creator is now at work, in the very heart of the Earth. Healing depends not on what went before (my analysis of beginnings) but on God who makes all things new. I began to think that my inner dying was actually part of a process grounded in God, a dying that was to open to new life. I thought of this then in terms of God as creator, not in light of the resurrection, but the impact was the same. It was not by understanding causes that I would be healed, but by surrendering my whole depression into the hands of God. God's creativity is infinite and eternal, and God creates out of nothing. I need only surrender, and God can make all things new. I still had moments of depression and fear, but somehow there was a deep peace. They were part of the process of transformation.

That insight led further. If God creates new now, then we ought to be able to verify our theology by what concrete effects it produces. In a seminar on Teilhard de Chardin, I looked into the history of theology to see if I could discover the link between science and theology. I needed a theological norm of growth and therapy, and it seemed the way to find that was to see how theology related to science. What became clear was that theology changed with the introduction of new ways of thinking. The wisdom theology of the early church was rooted in a

neo-platonic world view. The theology of Charlemagne's court was rooted in the grammatical categories of Aristotle then introduced into the West. Later, the dialectical works of Aristotle changed theological interpretations, and then his philosophical works helped Thomas Aquinas articulate the faith. The shifts in recent times through the philosophy of Schelling, Hegel, Heidegger, etc. are easy enough to document. What we didn't have was a theology rooted in psychological/social categories which was the thought-frame of our day. I was led to Psychodrama as the therapy of most interest at that time in Europe. It dealt with groups and thus could connect with a theology centered in the Mystical Body. As it turned out, Moreno, the founder of Psychodrama, had himself had a God-experience and designed his methods in light of how God would create and bring healing to groups. It is by releasing human creativity through freeing our interaction with one another that we are healed. We then become like God in action. I had found a second piece to my puzzle. Now I had a way to see God's creativity in human interaction and what Moreno called "global psychotherapy."

Yet I still did not have the right theological link. The theology I knew (Rahner, Lonergan, Aquinas) was focused on consciousness. But therapy worked in the unconscious. What was needed was interpersonal interaction (as in psychodrama), but what theologian would provide a bridge to that. I researched various bridges between theology and psychology in my doctoral studies at Fordham—the Christian Doctrine of Love, the Spanish mystics, Heidegger, Eastern religions, Paul Tillich—but could not find the key. It was only while working on the question of the charismatic community in Paul Tillich and the German Catholic theologian Heribert Mühlen that I found the link. Tillich correlated with Carl Jung, but I was dissatisfied with his non-orthodox method. Muehlen correlated with Tillich and used a very careful theological method. Muehlen had worked most of his scholarly life on the theology of the Holy Spirit as We in God—the bond of unity between the first and second persons of the Trinity. Since the Spirit works in the depths of our persons (our "a priori I" as he put it), the Spirit is the ground of our unconscious as well as our consciousness, and works interpersonally. I had found the third ingredient of my search. My dissertation was on the relation of the Holy Spirit to Psychotherapy, using Freud, Jung and Moreno as representatives of psychotherapy.

Yet this was not just a theoretical pursuit. As I was studying therapy and theology, I was doing counseling and praying for healing. I was concerned to see "what difference" God made in healing, and I found by experience that God made a great difference. One client who came to see me in those days was both schizophrenic and plagued by "legions" of demons. He had therapy and shock treatment, and even deliverance prayer separate from therapy, but found little relief. I knew nothing of this sort of person at the time, and asked Fr. Rick Thomas, a Jesuit who worked with the poor in Mexico and was experienced in the deliverance ministry, what to do. What he said freed me from any illusion that it was "my prayer" that would accomplish anything. He told me, since I was unskilled in this area, just bless holy water and give it to him to drink! They had found in Juarez, Mexico that the demons would be so disturbed that gradually they would leave! Needless to say I was nonplussed. I hadn't blessed holy water in years, and I had never heard of drinking it. But I decided since he had the experience I would do what he suggested. Each week Ed (not his real name) would bring a five gallon can of water that I would bless and he would drink. After two weeks he had a significant release and could go about his ordinary life while still having the schizophrenia to deal with. Blessing of water and objects is an extension of the Sacraments, I learned, of Baptism and Eucharist. What would

happen, I think now, if the Earth were thus blessed to become a sacrament of Christ's presence? I had found that God was a powerful help when through analysis we knew what to ask for, and even sometimes when we don't.<sup>2</sup> The aspect of healing prayer had been added to my point of view.

It was while teaching theology in Chicago that a further dimension came to me, the healing of family systems. I was led to the work of Murray Bowen and family systems therapy by Dr. David Augsburger of Bethany School of Theology. During his time at Menninger's Bowen found that patients would act very differently in the presence of their parents and family from when they were alone. He initiated the then unheard of practice of inviting the whole family to Menninger's and working with the family together. He began to see the client's mental illness as an effort to assuage a dysfunctional relation between the parents. If he worked only with the parents, the client would often be cured. I was intrigued. I had found an area in therapy that could give me controlled data to correlate with my interpersonal view of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> I began to pray not only for the individual, but for his or her family—and gradually for his or her ancestors. It was the whole extended human family that needed healing, reaching all the way back to Adam.

This extended view led me to the importance of the resurrection of Jesus, and ultimately to praying for healing the Earth. How can we pray for those who are past unless God's power to heal reaches into the past as well as the future? In working on Mary's Assumption in light of Jesus' resurrection, I came to see that Scripture presents the resurrection as a new kind of "Lordship" of Jesus. He sits at the right hand of God and shares God's rule. Since God's rule transcends our notion of past and future in an eternal NOW, the resurrection must be bringing Jesus in his humanity into the eternal NOW of God! That is why Scripture could call Jesus the "new Adam" and speak of his preaching to the souls who were dead (see 1 Pt 3:19-22; 4:6) and their being saved. He could heal even the dead by the power of God to raise Christ from the dead. I experienced families getting free as we prayed for their wounded ancestors in the power of Jesus' resurrection.

It was this prayer for ancestors in the power of Jesus' resurrection, finally, that brought me to praying for the Earth and to seeing the power of the resurrection to bring healing to the Earth. In the late 70s Agnes Sanford began to be moved to pray for the Earth. Agnes actually moved to California as she felt called to pray for the San Andreas fault.<sup>4</sup> Soon afterwards, another person experienced in healing prayer, Barbara Shlemon experienced the same call when she was looking for a suitable place in Clearwater, Florida for a healing center. Nothing opened up till she looked into the history of a site she was especially interested in. She found that it was the site of a massacre of Seminole Indians and their burial ground, and she felt she needed to ask forgiveness for the way the whites had usurped their land. The day after she held this ceremony, the plot was opened for sale and she purchased it. This and several other experiences indicated that the land was affected by the traumatic events that occurred on it, and was released through prayer for forgiveness and reconciliation. As Genesis says, the land is closed up because of our sin, but it can be released through the power of prayer in the resurrection of Jesus.

It was the talk on praying for the Earth in 1987 that brought me in contact with Al. After hearing my talk, he invited me and a co-worker down to Kentucky to pray for their region. My

friend experienced a great sadness on entering the area, without even knowing we were there. Al explained that this area was on the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" and was also caught in between in the Civil War. We prayed for reconciliation with the Cherokees and for reconciliation in families, and then for forgiveness in an area wasted by strip mining. Al noticed a more peaceful atmosphere, and recently experts have noticed how the strip-mined area is coming back in a remarkable way. We felt that our two approaches to the same problem, as different as they are, could illustrate how God uses our different gifts for healing. This book is an effort to clarify the implications of this amazing truth, that the resurrection can help us heal our devastated Earth, and can help us understand our call to being true stewards of the land.

### **A Quick Overview of Several Other Approaches**

In a little book on *Eco-Spirituality*. Charles Cummings points out the importance of coming back to a reverent view of creation and accepting our place in the interconnectedness of all beings. The scientific mentality has given us the impression that the world is an object for our use. We understand the world and think that we know how to use it, but we do not have to concern ourselves with how the Earth responds to our usage. Some have even made a case that this is the effect of Christianity, since it freed our view of the world from being the dwelling of gods and goddesses, in order to focus on our use of creation. This accusation is questionable since the objectifying of nature grew more from Greek Aristotelianism and Roman domination, though Christianity did little to oppose it. The inner Mystery of the Earth was overlooked in a too otherworldly spirituality. The fact that it is our "home", that as we treat the Earth, we treat ourselves was not taken into consideration.

The fascination with the "unlimited" possibilities of science and technology has gone unchallenged till recently. With the destruction of the rain forests, the depletion of the ozone layer, the pollution of our water and the heedless exploitation of energy resources that cannot be recovered, we are hopefully growing in awareness that what we do to the Earth we are really doing to ourselves. We are hopefully beginning to see that the Earth is not private property, but every human's concern—that how one person treats (or mistreats) the Earth will be felt by every human being. We live in a post-Chernobyl and a post-Saddham Hussein age, when nuclear accidents and oil fires have polluted the world's atmosphere, with effects that extend beyond the environment of a single country. Science itself is making us aware of this interdependence on the Earth of all people.

This awareness might be called the emerging human consciousness. In the recent past we have had to factor psychology into our theological and spiritual point of view. Then we were caught up by Marxist Communism and the need to take into account the social implications of our view of God in Liberation Theology. That made us more aware of the neglected role of women and minorities and their search for justice. We could not have an up-to-date theology that did not take these concerns into consideration. Yet those were only the beginning of the extent of our present concerns. Now we have to look at the Earth itself and its oppression. We have to be aware that if we oppress the Earth, we oppress ourselves, and that this must become the concern of everyone. If ever there was an issue that would force us to be universally aware, it is concern for the Earth itself. It forces us to a cosmic perspective, and this cosmic perspective must also affect our theology and spirituality.

Actually, these different awarenesses—of psychology, social justice, feminist concerns, economic restructuring—are not individual issues independent of each other. The awareness of each colors the others, and this is especially true of ecological concerns. Our exploitation of the Earth has very much to do with psychological and spiritual growth, social justice, concern for women and minorities and economic justice. Irresponsibility in any of those areas would set the conditions for irresponsibility with regard to the Earth. It was the seeming inequality of Kuwait's wealth and Hussein's search for power and "getting even" that led him to set fire to Kuwaiti oil. It was the exploitation of Jews in Germany and the fear of its being repeated that has led to the unending standoff between Israel and the Palestinians in our time, which in turn contributes to an instability that could lead to further devastation of the Earth. We no longer have the luxury of compartmentalizing concerns. Everything seems to affect everything else. We must have a way to incorporate concern for the Earth that will also take into consideration all these other issues.

Different points of view have been proposed. A first approach is more ethical and strategic. It is a question of justice for the human race that we care for the Earth. It can also be a question of political activism to oppose groups that misuse the Earth. This focus is more ethical than theological, and it is aimed towards immediate effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

Then we have Thomas Berry's focus on God speaking through the billions of years of evolution. He has been influenced by Teilhard de Chardin and a reflection on the history of science and modern culture. We humans are evolution come to self-reflection, and our very projects may actually be at odds with the innate tendencies of evolution to continue to evolve. We need, in Berry's view, to look to the Gospel of creation in order to find out how best to cooperate with its dynamics. We honor God by honoring creation. This sort of approach akin to what has been termed "Deep Ecology", which sees the whole Earth as united in a Gaia principle which is God's immanent call for us. We need to listen to the Earth speaking to us and directing us.

A second creation approach has come from Matthew Fox's revisioning of spirituality in light of seeing creation as a "blessing" rather than a temptation. His approach began with opening to sensuality and ecstatic experiences. It deepened when he began to incorporate the insights of Meister Eckhart and what Fox terms "the four-fold path" of affirmation, negation, creation and compassionate transformation. That moved Fox into the area of social justice, and most recently into the area of the "cosmic Christ." Again, Fox focuses on creation and a spirituality embracing creation, and is quite critical of what he terms "fall-redemption" spirituality, with what seems to be a God transcending creation. What critics of Fox have found most disconcerting is his tendency to force his sources into his categories with the effect of discounting the fall and the need for the cross and redemption as focus of spirituality, and also his tendency to be so open to "new age" approaches that the centrality of the person of Jesus gets slighted. However, he offers many helpful insights that need to be included in any full treatment of the problem.

A more biblical approach is presented by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, in *A Worldly Spirituality*, in which he critiques a certain fundamentalist tendency to objectify creation and

treat it as entirely under our stewardship. The world is created for us to care for, he argues, but we are God's representatives in that process, not our own. Creation is to be cared for according to its needs as given by God, not according to our self-interest. We are covenanted to God, and when we are in right relation to God, creation itself is blessed and blesses us. When we break that covenant with God, creation itself turns away from us and becomes a counterforce that we then have to dominate. Relations will be righted only when we turn back to God.

Then, finally, there is a renewal of Franciscan spirituality in our time. Roger Sorell updated this approach in his *Saint Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes toward the Environment* (N.Y.: Oxford, 1988). Sorell sees Francis' approach as more dialogical. Creatures are brothers and sisters with our common Creator God. Creatures speak to us of God, but do not themselves embody God. Francis is deeply focused on the person of Jesus (his stigmata is a clear sign of this) and it was in his deepest sharing of Jesus' suffering that he felt the deepest kinship with creation (and wrote his Ode to creation). This is clearly a kind of Earth mysticism like the more creation-centered approaches, but it is centered on God and Jesus Christ, with the result that he feels a kind of family relationship with all creatures.

While this book's approach respects certain aspects of all these different views, our approach is essentially different. We are introducing and developing the healing aspect of Jesus' resurrection. We are not simply called to care for the Earth, we also need to help heal the wounds we as a human race have inflicted by cooperating with the resurrection Spirit of Jesus.

### **Toward a Pluralistic Unity**

A final word about our approach. It could seem that because we are taking a specifically Christian approach, we have little to say to those of other religious traditions—the Buddhists, Hindus, Native Americans, and agnostics that are very concerned about the Earth. We hope this is not the case. Our conviction is that unity is attained, not by watering down our differences, but by getting more profoundly in touch with our deepest truth. When we are most true to our individuality, we are most universal. True dialogue will actually increase the recognition of our differences (the human verification of Teilhard's principle that "unity differentiates"). It is respect for those deep differences that gives rise to a new kind of unity—a unity in love. This moves the issue beyond explanation or world view to facts. We are convinced that our position is about real processes, and that these realities have a way of revealing themselves whether or not we have yet named them adequately. Others may not agree that the resurrection of Jesus is a reality. They may want to step back from that conviction to see the structure of dying and rising as a universal structure. They may not agree that God has forgiven us in Jesus, and continues to do so if we turn and ask. But it is getting ever more clear (from family systems, and from seemingly unending conflicts of regions entrenched in disputes of the past like northern Ireland and the Near East) that only forgiveness actually changes systems. If we despair of that possibility, we despair of real transformation. We are open to evidence to the contrary of what we have presented. We are also open to others grounding the same conclusions in other basic presuppositions, and letting the basic facts be revealed in their own time. What we need now is a commitment to finding the truth for ourselves and the Earth, and taking the actions that follow from it.

Something of this dynamic of pluralism is embodied in this very study. The two authors come from very different experiences. Al has been a social activist for environmental issues, Bob a professor of theology and psychotherapy. Al has an eye for action, Bob for reflective foundation as the basis for action. Yet both have a common conviction that Jesus truly is resurrected, that his resurrection has regrounded our whole evolving universe, and that this will show itself in facts, not just theories. Both of us think empirically. We look for the practical implications of the positions we take. It is the complementarity of those implications and of our basic faith in Jesus that has enabled us to dialogue with each other's positions. How well they integrate, the reader can judge. The book could have been written by a Buddhist and Christian, but then the differing basic presuppositions would have had to be articulated, as well as the common conclusions. Enough for now to be clear about our Christian approach.

Nevertheless, our own dialogue can indicate what we believe is now needed. All humans need to reach into their deepest convictions to find a universal world view that moves them to sacrifice. Our conviction is that only God, a personal God, can motivate us to such sacrifice. Our further Christian conviction is that only God can actually do such a sacrifice and empower us to do it. We cannot save ourselves, and mere knowledge is no assurance that we will act on it. We also believe, however, that God has done it in Jesus, and does empower us with the Holy Spirit. The seed of healing the Earth is already at work whether or not we know its source or can name it. What is needed is the commitment to truly work with God in that loving, healing transformation.

The method of this book attempts to illustrate a process that is needed, not gimmicks or simple exercises for resource conservation. Our process utilizes different approaches but still follows similar or analogous patterns which are developed in each chapter. Our emphasis is that Earth healing is a holistic endeavor, incorporating the talents and gifts of a large number of people. The key is encouragement and mutual enrichment, not suppression or competition of one method over another. In fact, the authors do not fully agree with certain details of the other's analysis, but the thrusts are the same -- and that is highly significant.

Our approach has emerged only gradually, but has evidenced a great power and a great hope. In this approach everyone has a gift to contribute, so we wanted to lay bare the life experiences that led each of us to our particular concern for this issue. Besides helping to interpret our positions, hopefully this will serve as an invitation to our readers to examine the roots of their own interest and to find their gift for healing the Earth and learn to be enriched by dialogue with others with similar concerns.

We begin our healing venture by observing the situation: attending to our call to heal the land (Chapter 1), and the healing resource of the dynamics of resurrection in the world (Chapter 2). We then move to diagnosis and strategy: seeing the poor as the privileged entrance into resurrection (Ch. 3) and reflecting on our need to grow into a resurrection spirituality and become discerning (Ch. 4), and seeing our "deep power" for change more closely in light of resurrection (Ch. 5). Finally, we look at our various gifts for action: the basic polarity and interdependence of male-female approaches for creative change (Ch. 6), the many gifts given for

Earth healing and how they assist one another (Ch. 7), and the need for prayer and union with God's creativity to ground all action for healing the Earth (Ch. 8).



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this book we consider Earth a proper name, much as our other planets like Pluto, Mercury, etc., and hence we will capitalize it. Only in cases where earth refers to the common soil or dirt will we not capitalize it. To give Earth a proper name is to befriend it, to make it a dialogue partner and learn to consider things from Earth's point of view. We hope our usage will encourage such partnership.

<sup>2</sup> A study by W.R.Parker and E. St. Johns Dare, *Prayer Can Change Your Life* (Prentice Hall Inc., 1957) confirmed my findings. They worked with three self-chosen groups for a school year (therapy alone, prayer alone, and prayer with the diagnosis of therapy) and found that prayer alone was least helpful, therapy was somewhat helpful, but prayer and therapy was significantly more helpful, even to healing a chronic depression by the end of the year. They concluded that most prayer is badly directed or ungrounded in a deep faith in God's healing power, but with the guidance of therapy it was a powerful help. My work confirms this view.

<sup>3</sup> See my article on healing and family systems: "Healing and Family Spiritual/ Emotional Systems" *Journal of Christian Healing*, 1983. I coupled the insights of healing family systems with praying for ancestors in a way similar to Dr. Kenneth Me All's *Healing the Family Tree* (London: Sheldon Press, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> See Agnes Sanford, *Creation Waits* (Logos: Plainfield, N.J., 1978) where she explains her call to pray for the Earth.

<sup>5</sup> See Drew Christiansen, "Notes on Moral Theology," *Theological Studies*, vol 51, no 1 (1990), 64-81.

## **CHAPTER I: CALL OF THE EARTH**

by Al Fritsch

Resurrection, like springtime, blooms eternal on the face of this suffering Earth. As Christian resurrection people we express our belief by working with God to renew the Earth, and by doing so in quite unique ways. The immediate response of the Good Samaritan in St. Luke's Gospel is very appealing; upon seeing a victim, the traveler does not walk past nor hold a seminar, but drops all and initiates the process of healing. This true neighbor is a non-professional, is willing to enlist the assistance of others, and takes enough responsibility to follow-through in the healing process. An alertness to emergency is combined with a willingness to complete the task.

Our Earth calls each of us to such urgent action, not by its beauty, rich resources, or whimsical nature, but because it is a victim of the hurt done by us and our fellow human beings. As Shakespeare said "Pardon me thou bleeding piece of Earth, that I am meek and gentle with these butchers."<sup>1</sup> Earth calls through its suffering — as responsible and compassionate listeners we are moved to do something.

Our Earth is in trouble now. We each are well aware of this and could narrate a thousand sorry stories of silted-in creeks in which we used to swim, pristine landscape now trashed, fresh air now polluted, wild flowers now no longer found, idyllic woodland now in development projects, and fresh water springs now too polluted to drink. I know of individual cases related to each of these conditions. You most likely do also. Need we say more?

The suffering and wounded Earth is an environmental fact that has been noticed and noted at the turn of this century by conservationists such as John Muir and Aldo Leopold with reference to local, regional, or national resources. A jump to vast global dimensions occurred in the 1960s after Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and culminated in the first Earth Day in the Spring of 1970 and the United Nations Conference on the Environment in 1972. Suddenly a host of local, national and international organizations arose and took up different portions of the crusade to save Mother Earth. That early euphoria withered away with an awareness that answers to the suffering were more complex than earlier imagined. In due time outright opposition to environmental activities for so-called economic and political reasons began to develop. Indeed by the Second Earth Day in 1990 the climate had changed. Some polluters gave lip service but were beginning to also manipulate the terms of any meaningful action. This became all the more evident in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit when international cooperative efforts were blocked by powerful interests, especially led by the United States Government.

At this point we could narrate a host of ills from deteriorating oceans, air quality, cumulating solid and hazardous wastes, and depletion of natural resources. For brevity's sake such a discussion, even though hair-raising, will be omitted and we refer instead to the host of ample literature now available on the subject, including some by this author. Most of the readership has access to such information. Within the last quarter century we have had two

shocks: the rapid deterioration of our Earth's ecosystem, and the difficulty and lack of will to initiate actions to profoundly improve the environment. In part this is due to a failure to understand the nature of our human mission and to perceive the Earth's call as ongoing and open to deeper stages of development.<sup>2</sup>

Suffering Earth reveals that not only is it hurt, but that the healers need to be strengthened and more experienced in order to bring about meaningful action. Knee-jerk responses can only increase the pain and delay solutions. Activists have a delicate balancing act; we must take time to reflect and yet act with some haste; we need to improve healing methods while healing ourselves in the process. The irony is that those with first-hand knowledge of suffering Earth are those living in communities devastated by improper resource extraction practices, fouled air, unhealthy water, and congestion. Their support communities have been harmed because human and ecological communities suffer together.

### **Not Facing our Suffering Face**

By the time of the second major Earth Day celebration in 1990 those concerned about the environment were becoming increasingly aware that something was awry. Superficial consciousness-raising devices and techniques were and are not sufficient. Earth healers were now hearing something more — doctor heal yourself. The nobility of the call does not mean that we can act properly. So often we still retain many of the imperfections that led to the Earth's suffering in the first place. Allowing these to continue can only exacerbate the problem.

A major premise of this book is that the call to heal is a universal one coming to all human beings of good will. However, our manner of responding may differ and we may be tempted to do one of three things: to deny that the harm actually exists and close our eyes and ears to the destructive practices that we and our fellow human beings are doing; to excuse ourselves as being too busy, sick, ignorant, old, young, or inexperienced; and to escape from this very direct call through drugs, television, alcohol, or the allurements of the consumer culture and lifestyle.

Those who deny the damage prefer to balance jobs with environment and say that some perceived damage is the price of economic progress. The domestic comforts of air conditioning and space heating may exact a toll on resources, but why not as long as we benefit? The current environmental picture is depressing and those who deny would ask whether the feeling of such desolation is really healthy. Why bring it up? A perversity prevails that condemns the bearers of bad news, whether correct or not. It even belittles those who attempt to balance negative environmental messages with positive alternative practices, saying that such alternatives are not economically sound or significant, or take too much effort to implement. The Sage Brush Revolutionists in the Rocky Mountain regions, who want to de-emphasize big government, and the ultra-conservative Wise Use folks, who contest any governmental regulation on industry, participate in this sort of denial.

Excusers manifest a false humility, saying that others can do a better job. This is the silent majority who comprise a sizeable portion of the 70% of the population favorably disposed to environmental concerns and the movement. They may find it too embarrassing to garden, too expensive to install solar energy, too formidable to remodel or build their own home, and too time-consuming to change wasteful community practices. They are the overly institutionalized who are paralyzed to openly act for fear of criticism, self-revelation or failure in the eyes of peers. It is this category of people who hope that professional Earth healers come on the scene and do their duty, and regard sideline cheering and Monday morning quarterbacking a fulfilling pastime.

Escapees may be aware of environmental concerns but do not have the heart, backbone or tough skin to enter the fray either. They know they could make a difference but prefer to dodge issues through temporary distractions which may turn into long-term mind-numbing habits, e.g., drugs, mall-shopping, television, alcohol, excessive travel to overcome boredom by seeing distant and exotic places. They may delve into eco-spiritualities which give good feelings without directly encountering the suffering of the Earth as such. Together with the excusers they may engage in recycling — an activity now accepted as part of peer pressure and local regulation. But the deeper issues are frightening, depressing, overpowering. For them - and in some cases it may be healthy - an escape is the better approach.

For the most part we will ignore the first category because the denying type will have to overcome their mental block before they will read this or similar literature. The second and third groups are more receptive and offer greater hope. Excusers beg for encouragement. The good news is that they are capable of becoming good Earth healers, provided they accept encouragement, are comfortable in being themselves, and are willing to complement the talents of others. We need to realize the uniqueness of our own niche. Escapees are a more difficult type because if they have reached addictive levels of escape agents, mere reasoning and rational forms of persuasion will not suffice.

Most of us are afflicted by these various obstacles to involvement to some degree. These are the static which hinder the voice of the Earth, the unnecessary distractions, the detours and false allurements, the busyness and clutter that fill our days and drain our energy. Are we being drawn to green marketing as an excuse to continue in our consumer habits -and addictions? Isn't it perversely pleasing to hear how some rather domineering advocate for the Earth has been shaved down to size? Don't we make our recycling record into an excuse for not doing more or confronting our wasteful consumer habits? We are tempted to gloss over a profound social, political and economic malaise that paralyzes us. It is painful to admit the Earth call is often drowned out, and that the 1990 Earth Day-20 celebration was co-opted by consumer products manufacturers fearful of market position loss. We are tempted to become cynical and burnt out.

A new perception is emerging: Earth healing and individual and community healing go hand-in-hand, but which comes first. Expecting Earth healing to come after individual healing resembles mechanistic physics. Healing ourselves first hi time while the Earth is

devastated ignores the social responsibility that is part of our own healing process, though it is quite alluring for we are never perfectly healed, and we all too easily ignore the disasters all around. What is needed is to work on both fronts (self and Earth) at the same time. Modern scientific thought speaks of complementarity of wave and particle, such that both characteristics can exist simultaneously. Similarly, the call of God at particular times (events of quanta) is always interacting with the constant ongoing call (waves as it were). An emerging spirituality that accepts the Earth call is also confronted with this apparent constant co-existence of two elements. We need to heal self and Earth; we are healed in healing Earth, and Earth is healed in healing self. In reality Earth heals us when we turn and touch it with a merciful hand. We need to have faith that we will be healed and worthy of the calling to which we as human beings have been commissioned. Far from the misunderstood Biblical cosmology of the conquest of Earth, what is needed is the far more profound Scriptural calling to be humble enough to accept our noble calling to care for the Earth.<sup>3</sup>

The task before us is not easy, but does call for balance, cool-headedness, celebration, and joy. This is not a superficial quick-fix; we expect no miracles but there need to be a sense that victory is possible and —with God's help— certain. Healing will require more universal participation than ever before achieved in human history and that is why what we advocate will not come easily. It needs male and female, those of varying talents, the religious and secular, rich and poor, young and old. The emerging process is filled with cosmic and Biblical imagery for it has the marking of the Trinity itself, and of the redemptive process. Change in all wounded CREATION (including us) is a sort of dying to self or REDEMPTION and finding new life or creativity or RESURRECTION.

We seek to ground this vocational call in solid and proven ecological principles and environmentally benign change processes. If we are to heal the Earth and we are part of the environment being healed, then our own self-healing is an integral part of the process and is patterned after the natural manner in which Earth heals its minor wounds. For the believer, one finds a connection and states with equal certitude that our healing is patterned after the manner in which this Earth is created and recreated after being hurt through sinful activity. Suffering resulting from this activity is the very beginning of healing as we will see in the next chapter. The momentum to enhance the healing process will build when we as a People of God recognize that we have some mysterious and grace given power to become healing agents, but that we have not yet actualized it.

Our forebears recognized that they could hurt a portion of the Earth (such as cause deforestation or erode land) or even bring some new life into it through their labors (grow crops or reforest areas). They were familiar with the liturgical prayers calling for the Earth to be renewed. But they were neither aware that they were harming the planet Earth through misdeeds, nor did they understand that through their collective environmental action they could heal or renew Earth. Our age is in a position to do so - by the Grace of God. They could not have conceived that human beings would create a chloro-fluorocarbon that would threaten the ozone protective layer of the upper atmosphere and threaten life on this planet. We do know that this is the case. We realize both the fragile nature of the Earth and the destructive power of certain human actions. We are fast becoming aware that it is even sinful

to continue known destructive practices. Equally we are becoming conscious of our power as groups to bring about profound reform in economic and political systems that allow the harm to occur. We can be agents of change for the good.

Healers are called to be the prune believers in the Earth. If we think there is no use trying, then "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow the Earth dies." If we have faith that the Earth can be saved and made into a better place, then what follows is of great importance. What I learned on the rocky hill farm of my youth is that we can become agents of change, if we but work at it - with God's help. Granted we must believe that we can do something meaningful or we would not act. What we learned by reflecting on our faith experience is that even that hidden power to act is itself a gift from God (more about this in Chapter 5). A believing atmosphere is filled with thanksgiving, the oxygen of change, without which our activities are of little enduring value.

We begin by coming close to and touching the Earth. All good healers touch the sick gently and lovingly, an elementary part of the healing art. Through the senses healers become experienced. Visions, sounds, smells, tastes and feeling are gathered as the first part of entering into the healing process. Native Americans speak of our "spirit creature" (the creature we are most attracted to). As we identify it, it becomes our creature-teacher. We glory hi sunsets, lie in the meadows, smell the fresh air and taste spring water. We establish our kinship as a wolf establishes territory. We become sensitized to the Earth, a new infancy as it were. Nurturing is a gentle process, more often associated with the feminine side of creation. This is a quality of healing that gives wholeness, accepts the interplay of scientific and artistic activity, and proclaims a theology of deed which is far deeper than that of word.

With time, with attention to our calling, and with humility we rediscover our roots, our kinship to the Earth, the directional bearing that allows us to enjoy the creatures entering our life on every side. Only gradually do we understand the harm that desensitization and forgetfulness can render. Only by obedience to the soft call of the Earth do we reestablish our relationship that was never fully lost, and understand the magnitude of our harmful ways— something that a torrent of statistics and a flood of disaster images will not enhance— and somehow find the gentle power to heal. Only in the utter pain and uncertainty of our own manufactured perils can we find the faintest glimmer of promise. It was no accident that Calvary was an abandoned quarry, for our deepest Earthly sins are connected with "wastes." We put them in quotation marks for our ever so fault whisper tells us that they are truly resources, not wastes. For we, the undecided, the choice to harm or to heal comes simultaneously. Will we chose to waste or to restore?

As a struggling believer I am only gradually coming to understand that following Jesus entails service both to people and the Earth, and that service includes my becoming a servant to the plants and animals and Earth itself. My homily listeners often frown on that one, not out of disbelief so much as that it is a world turned upside down. Are we to go from super-beings to slaves, from exploiters to washing the feet of sea gulls and coyotes. Truly the Incarnation and Redemption mysteries extend not only to unfathomed reaches of space and the Earth, but to the cows and sheep in the stable as well?

Activists in service do not learn their trade or art in an instant. The call is to something definite—"heal the Earth." But just as the practice of medicine entails years of study and internship, so we gradually learn our limitations, accept a portion of the blame, and still keep control of our anger that such things could and still do happen. The call is to have mercy and anger, all in one, a delicate ecological balance within our own being. To become ecological healers demands this balance, this acquired experience. It's not instinct. We will stumble before we become experienced. We even need ample space to stumble.

The acquisition of this eco-psychic balance involves a spiritual activity for it demands personal responsibility. Others may seek a detached stance and ask, "Why have distant, foreign or non-neighborly polluters hurt the Earth?", and place the blame elsewhere as, for instance, the white race, other ethnic groups, adherents of Christianity or some group to which they do not belong. Creating distance from the problem does not solve it; it only shifts blame. Accepting the burden of wrongdoing in the name of our human family is the beginning of forgiveness and healing. Certainly we will curtail the polluter when possible, only now we accept blame for their past and current indulgences. We need but consider the harm done through our silence and neglect of harmful activity. When we allow ourselves to remain immobile we deserve part of the blame.

Narrowing the distance between wounded and healer is part of the call. Are we willing to withstand the attraction to be overly professional, or the natural tendency to run from an impending disaster, or the temptation to discard older healing practices? Isn't Earth Healing a call to the unexpected new cures and methods (creativity), the rediscovery of the good of the past (redemption), and a call to all people to be healers according to their varied gifts and talents (resurrection and Pentecost)?

In what follows, I first look at three ecological principles, then at their link to Trinitarian process, and finally treat in greater detail the first principle of Interdependence -the context of our present call.

### **Grounding in Three Ecological Principles**

Those of us who are physical scientists need to ground our Earth-related activities in a scientific set of principles. Earth gives us clues expressed in these sciences. Within a current understanding of Ecology we discover or rediscover three truths:

#### **1. All earthly creatures are interdependent.**

This truth is not an ecologist's discovery, for many primitive peoples intuited this affinity and expressed it in cultural and religious practice. Brother lion and sister bear and all other related creatures are held in kinship by those who depend on them for food or hides or warmth. More complex societies may distance themselves from creatures, but suffer by doing so. In some ways ecologists have helped us rediscover our roots, and graphically shown us the web of life and how much we are dependent on other creatures for our life. If we ignore our kinship and treat fellow creatures in a shabby fashion, we will have to pay a price. If we

offend them or destroy them, then our life and welfare is also threatened. If we damage the food chain, we will starve in a relatively short time. Ecological wrongdoing is THE social sin, and stifles our creativity.

## **2. Natural processes obey the Law of Conservation of Resources.**

Normally one takes a path that will use the least resources possible. Nature does not waste but finds ways to recycle discarded or unused portions so that the total environment benefits. The noun "waste" is not a word in the natural world; it is part of human sinfulness. The Earth's intolerance for human waste is its rejection of our wrongdoing.<sup>4</sup> Conserving resources is more than part of the natural processes; it is part of the human redemptive act, the grand recycling operation.<sup>5</sup>

## **3. Variation and richness of diversity add to the health and harmony of the total eco-system.**

This principle is evident to gardeners who convert their land from a monoculture (all potatoes) to a great variety of vegetables, herbs and other plants and intermingle these with flowers. Soon the need for chemical pesticides and fertilizers ceases as the system begins to regain health and nitrogen-fixing plants improve the soil for the others. A diverse forest is more healthy, stable and interactive than a plantation of white pines. Farmers who rotate crops rebuild depleted soils. What gardeners, foresters and farmers discover is that diversity is better and healthier for the areas under their charge.

These commonly accepted scientific principles serve as a grounding for the Earth healing process. If one seeks to heal human beings, one must consider nutrition, community health, home care and recovery, tolerance for certain medicines, and general human physiology. Similarly, the awareness of interdependence, resource conservation, and increased diversity and variation grounds Earth-healing and the spirituality of Earth healers. If people do not believe in interdependence, they will pillage and exploit the Earth for they feel removed from the effects of the damage. If they mistakenly think that is enough to serve their own greed, then why conserve? If they believe that one or two cultivars is all they need to harvest, then they will have no regard for variety and the health of the system as a whole.

## **The Trinitarian Ground of Our Call**

Our call to heal the Earth is concrete; it embraces a particular moment of decision in time: the NOW, a particular place and bioregion in which we live: the HERE, and the interaction of our participating community: the WE, who are not a small elite or a single guru. This is implied in our principle of interdependence, and it also immerses us in the activity of our Creating God who calls forth our co-creative potential. God, as it were, casts us as free agents in the creative process by a more profound act of divine interdependence which we will touch on shortly.



The other two principles (conservation and variety) will be further discussed later. In Chapter 3 we will discuss conservation in the context of those who suffer and are deprived of the necessities of life. Through our limited action we confront both the suffering of the Earth and of the poor. To paraphrase Luke 24:26 - "was it not ordained that the Earth should suffer and so enter into its glory?" Are we not called to enter into the suffering and the lives of the poor and to accept a role in the cooperative sacrifice of our Redeeming God? What kind of tools are available to answer some of the problems arising in healing activities (Chapter 4)? Is this not a struggle against powerlessness and towards a deeper empowerment? (Chapter 5).

In Chapter 6, 7, and 8 we will consider the variety of gifts that are given to each person through our Enlivening God. Do our feminine and masculine qualities uniquely color our healing powers? Do our psychological dispositions allow us to contribute different talents which are complementary to the healing of the Earth? Isn't the manner in which we pray somewhat individual and unique and shows the richness of the Giver of all gifts.

For the believing Christian, ecological principles that ground our environmental activity are Trinitarian in nature and operation. If Augustine and Aquinas could find that Mystery at work in the individual rational psychological process, how much more can we find it at work in our collective action of healing our Earth? The Father (Mother) creates, the Son redeems, and the Spirit empowers a variety of gifts.

"O God, how great your name throughout the Earth!" (Psalm 8:1) (creator)

"Father, in restoring human nature you have given us a greater dignity than we had in the beginning." (Opening Prayer of Thursday, Fourth Week of Easter), (redeemer)

"There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:4) (giver of gifts)

Christian believers are convinced that the Trinity is at work in our world and that spirituality that is authentically grounded has a Trinitarian character. Any healing must counteract the malady, improve and give new life, and be rooted in Earth and the one who sprung from the Earth.

"Send victory (righteousness) like a dew, you heaven,  
and let the clouds rain it down.

Let the Earth open  
for salvation to spring up.  
Let deliverance, too, bud forth  
which I, Yahweh, shall create."  
(Isaiah 45:8)

Doesn't our spiritual tradition as applied to the Earth require grounding in the Earth and its principles and yet offer an opportunity for the unfolding of the mystery of the Trinity?

If the answer is no, then we who are Christian believers must hunt elsewhere for a spirituality. If the answer is yes, then our eco-spirituality must be rooted in the goodness of all creation, the healing touch of the Savior, and the multiplicity of gifts as shown by the Spirit. The eco-call is a Trinitarian call.

But what about non-Christian approaches? Apart from the Judeo-Christian flavor of our Earth-healing activity, we ought to ask what energizes any form of Earth healing, whether that of a Christian or a secular believer in saving the Earth. Eco-spiritualities whether Christian or not may differ in backgrounds, interests and temperament, but still be complementary with other eco-spiritualities provided they —

- a) encourage creativity and growth (the work of creation);
- b) conserve the past as good (the work of redemption);
- c) and accept diversity of spiritualities (life or spirit-giving).

To deny the first is to be atrophied. One turns spirituality into a certain specific event or conversion experience that is once and for all, and denies the experiential and creative aspects of spiritual growth. An eco-spirituality cannot be fundamentalistic and ignore the processes of development.

To deny conservation of resources is to implicitly enter into the fads of the modern age and to be so shallow that one cannot distinguish and critique the throwaway culture that is so profoundly anti-ecological. Conserving spiritual experience from the past is akin to conserving paper or metal resources; we can't waste our spiritual traditions.

To deny diversity is to think that what one holds to is the only way, with no other human gift given equal importance. Acceptance of other ways deflates my way — which is obviously the best. This denies the breadth and depth that all of us must seek in listening to other cultures and expressions of eco-concern ~ the richness of the Spirit. It also ultimately denies the shadow sides of all human activities, gifts limited through over-use or false focus.

All eco-spiritualities need to follow ecological principles. What becomes evident in any study of existing spiritualities is that some called Christian do not obey these three conditions and some non-Christian ones do. What we affirm is that spirituality has a trans-cultural and religious character and that the authenticity of that spiritual calling is more important than its cultural expression and characteristics. Furthermore, as Christians we are convinced that authentic spiritualities will have a Trinitarian nature — even though not publicly acknowledged or affirmed by their adherents.

### **The Roots of Our Present Call**

Modern critics fault the Judeo-Christian Tradition for causing the environmental crisis through a mandate to subdue and control the Earth and its resources. "Be fruitful, multiply,

fill the Earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and animals on the Earth" (Genesis 1:28). As one commentator says that for centuries we imagined that God was a Superior Landlord who resided off the planet, separate from and superior to nature. We thought of ourselves as separate from and superior to nature because we were created in the image of God. Nature, in our view, was corrupt, due to "the fall" of Adam and Eve.<sup>6</sup> In place of this view a "new story" based on scientific cosmological theory and data has been proposed with its theology of a non-transcendent God or "Life" and human beings as not superior to other creatures but as along with and on equal par with other components of nature. To these "New Story" people the call is one of setting Genesis on the shelf for 20 years and studying scientific cosmology for a fuller understanding of the human place in the world. Extreme forms of deep ecology would even call for drastic reductions in human populations (one who is also a friend of this author and editor of "Wild Earth" even proposes a 99.9% reduction down to five million people) to allow for a return to more primitive and wild environments.

Far more numerous than New Story people are the Christian Right or fundamental "creationists" who attest to the creation of this Earth in seven days as though Genesis were an elementary geological or biological record book. For them the Bible is inerrant and if it says seven it means seven days. Evolutionary theory (or fact) is anathema and impossible to hold from their Scriptural perspective. These creationists may also cling to the corruption of nature, but that this is covered over or is made right in the blood of the Redeemer. In other words these Christian fundamentalists do hold some things in common with the New Story people. Both aspire to vivid cosmic stories to found their position; both adhere to a similar redemption theology. In the first case it is technology that is corrupted; in the second it is nature.

A middle ground is never popular but it needs attention. The primary theological message of Genesis as attested by serious Scriptural scholarship and scientific exegesis is still valid, namely that all that God creates is good. The drumbeat of each day of Creation was neither giving geological history nor preparing us for becoming exploiters; it was a statement about the goodness of creation. Even amid this goodness evil enters the picture, but that neither corrupts the tools (technology) nor nature; we human beings were wounded, not corrupted; we are able with God's redemptive grace to still perform noble deeds, provided we humbly see our proper and highly favored responsibilities. Shed of the atmosphere of respect and awe Genesis does sound like a license to control; seen in the totality of the Bible where serve, love and respect abound this is not the case.

There were not good gods and bad gods or some created good and others evil as contemporaries of the Genesis account held. There is but one Creator who makes all creation good. The seven days give the extent of known creation and declare all good, the work of an all good and personal God. Yes, we are made to God's image as are all other creatures; our unique gifts are critical to the continuation of life on this planet as we know it. But being free beings we can choose evil and damage good things. Our modern culture creates hazardous and toxic waste products as though a necessity. Isn't this a denial through deed of the goodness of creation? A fortiori, to treat each end product of our human activity with the

deepest respect as a "resource" and not a waste is to affirm that goodness of all creation. To use or control the use of resources is within the human range of activities. The same power for exploitation is the power that could be used to save and heal our Earth. We do need to subdue and control and the place to start is our own appetites. Creation is God's and we have no right to exploit it in any fashion. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil exists in the modern forms of nuclear technologies which we do not seem to have the expertise and capability to control.

Merely proclaiming God's goodness is no guarantee that free human agents will act in a goodly manner. That was evident from the verses of Genesis that follow immediately after the creation story. The same propensity for evil continues down through the course of human history to where we now understand that we can hurt other creatures — human and non-human -- through greed and insensitivity. Evil, even ecological devastation as a wrongdoing, exists. Creations' innate goodness stands in contrast to our sorry record of imperfection.

Today Earth advocates speak over and over of the interrelatedness of all creatures. If some are hurt, all suffer. This sense of interrelatedness or oneness in mutual support and common destiny does not guarantee some union or automatic cooperation. Even though all are created good, people can do evil; even though all are interrelated and one, divisions can still be perpetuated. Better understanding does not guarantee better practice. Just as wrongdoing results through free use of our wills, so disunity results as well.

The Genesis story continues to hold relevance. Greed still manifests itself in social as well as individual practice. Some try to control and not share precious resources. Divisiveness becomes a modern wrongdoing just as at the time of the towers builders at Babel. Optimists throughout the ages think better understanding is all it takes. It is simply not so. We all suffer from the Fall and that is still operative today. But we are also a redeemed people through the saving blood of Christ. What falls can and does rise.

We affirm our interrelatedness to all creatures on this Earth. It is in a mantle of deep respect and love that we wrap our concerns about our Earthly family. In the deepest sensitivity we come to the stark realization that our Mother Earth is HERE and NOW in trouble and WE can and must do something about it. We do not shrink back and show our corruption and blank out our past as though it never happened. Our history includes our fall and we are part of it either through commission or omission. It is not THEY (Creating agents in a distant space and time) nor THEN nor THERE but what is truly down-to-Earth, in a known place and time— the HERE, NOW and WE. Mere appeal to global problems like distant rain forest depletion or high ozone depleted atmosphere is not sufficient either, nor the serious or soothing tones of enlightened philosophers or technical experts. Erudition, professional analysis, and narratives by experts are needed at specific times and places but they tend to generate the very distances that allow for a wasteful generation to continue to function according to the status quo. HERE!, NOW!, and WE!

Healing the Earth involves our hearing the God who calls us through the Earth — this place, this time, this community:

1. It involves being aware of where we are—of our local bioregion, the geology, pre-and current history, ethnicity, land formations, watersheds, plants and animals native to our area. Here I find the wounded victim of aggression and I will not passively observe but act to bring about healing in the manner of the Good Samaritan. Our neighbor needs help but, if we are without our bearings, we cannot be effective healers. Ecology's "eco" means home, and neighborliness includes a concept of home and supporting community.

2. Being aware of the critical time in which we live is also necessary. All-night lighting and even-temperature buildings can make us insensitive to our temporal surroundings. Those on journeys do not have time to daydream or live in a glorious future or reminiscent past — as did the two who passed up the wounded victim the Samaritan helped. Our NOW involves knowing the hour of day, the season, prevailing wind patterns, critical times hi which we live, the liturgical seasons and the canonical hours. The NOW allows us to harmonize our work and rest, our serious concentration and leisure, our prayer and action, our living and dying. There's a time for everything under heaven. Yet our limited attention span accentuates the urgency. We're never indispensable and yet sometimes what we are doing is. If that is so we should let another do it, and put our energies where they are most needed. We can save the Earth, if we act now.

3. We grow as cooperating persons in basic familial, economic or spiritual community. I cannot renew the Earth alone. WE can do it together. The task is just too big for one person, the relationships too many for one person to perceive. If I think I'm God, then burn-out will come quickly and the lack of harmony will be quite evident.

Community is our correcting force, provided we become community- formers. Within the dynamic community our social concepts are purified and deepened through reflection and social analysis. The call to be Earth-aware leads to being Earth-concerned, then to the dark awareness of being Earth-harmers, from which we can humbly seek help to become Earth-healers, and finally to an identity in process through resurrection.<sup>7</sup>

The gentle call of the Earth is to be a new and discerning person, for our old self is not sufficient to handle the enhanced mission before us. Is not this re-creation part of the vocation of a resurrection people -provided we have the hope that in faithful activity we become renewed? Are we called to an eco-spirituality where the resurrection has central position? Let us now delve more deeply into this central Mystery of faith and our Earth call.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, "Julius Caesar," Act III, Scene 1.

<sup>2</sup> Deeper and deeper calls are found throughout the individual person's life as is exemplified many places in Scripture. Peter was called in the Gospels and even more profoundly in the Acts of the Apostles. He left his nets; he accepted the keys; he received forgiveness for abandoning Jesus at the Trial and was called back (John 21). In his leadership role he was called to affirm inclusion of the Gentiles in the church's mission. Over and above successive events in our lives is the ever-deepening call we each experience. That is a major component of this book.

<sup>3</sup> The paper by Lynn White, Jr. in *Science*, 1967 called Christianity the cause of the environmental crisis. Though refuted scores of times the ideas still persist in quite recent writings. We hold that a proper understanding of the human role in salvation history is a humbling but ennobling one and does not either diminish our illustrious calling nor allow for wanton control and exploitation of the Earth's resources.

<sup>4</sup> A dilemma occurs when communities see the utter shortcomings of the choice of incinerators or landfills. Both are bad and ultimately have pollution associated with their use. Earth teaches us through such unsolved problems that we should not create "waste products" in the first place, that we use as little as possible, reuse what we use, or recycle in our backyards what we can no longer use in its current form. In place of incinerators and landfills we must begin to think naturally about byproducts, namely think natural recycling and composting.

<sup>5</sup> We do not regard either creation-centered or redemption-centered approaches as fully authentic eco-spiritualities, but that both have qualities that need be retained in what we term resurrection spiritual approaches. We regard each of these approaches as complementary, not polarities (see Chapter 4). As we will see in subsequent chapters resurrection negates polarities but conserves the good of both; it introduces us into a three-dimensional imagery that considers a spiral movement with its circles (creation) and linearity in direction (redemption).

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Dowd, *The Big Picture: The Larger Context for All Human Activities*, p.2, (Publ. by The Living Earth Institute, 307 South Main Street, Woodsfield, OH 43793).

<sup>7</sup> This follows the progressive levels of activity, faith and empowerment discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

## **CHAPTER II: RESURRECTION IN THE WORLD**

by Bob Sears

As healers, we need to learn to be sensitive, to the beauty of the Earth, but also to its wounds. We get a sense of our community with the whole Earth, how our health depends on the Earth's health, and how the Earth's health depends on our holistic way of life. It is mutual. We also have come to realize our interdependency with the past, that we are called to gratefully preserve the best of the past even as we work to heal what was wounding. And when we are healthy and grateful, we will also be creative of many new approaches and will learn to value the prodigal diversity in creation and among humans. This is a growth in sensitivity that will help us be ever more respectful of the Earth we are called to care for and heal. But there is a further dimension of reality we need to become especially sensitive to, and that is inner ground of divine creativity at work in the heart of all creation. When I was caught up in the problem of my depression, I remained depressed. But when I was gifted to open to God as NOW creating "all new," I found hope. Healing ultimately rests, I discovered, not so much in the one being healed as in God as ground of healing. This chapter looks more closely at this ground, which we Christians see as rooted in the resurrection of Jesus.

Why focus on the resurrection? Isn't it enough to look at the divine pervading creation itself, a sort of Gaia principle? A widely held perspective, what has been called deep ecology, has challenged us to let the needs of the Earth guide our choices. From that view humans are the flaw which prevents evolution from unfolding in its natural way. From our perspective humanity as such is not the problem, nor is technology. Evolution has unfolded to the emergence of humanity and the human capability of knowledge about the Earth and reflective choice about how to channel its life and energy. By their very awareness, humans have been entrusted with responsibility for the Earth. The problem is not that power, but the direction of its use. The principles guiding humans in their choices cannot simply come from creation. Plants and animals cannot tell humans how they are to be used. What they do, by their very being, is show how they must be treated if they are going to live fully, so that any human decision must take those limits and possibilities into consideration. But besides animal needs, humans have needs (for knowledge, beauty, just distribution, creativity, etc.) which can only come from understanding human nature, and ultimately, only God can reveal the meaning of our need for God. So, correct treatment of nature implies a give and take, a recognition of both the needs of Earth, plants and animals and humans, and the impact of God's own life. Each gives something to the other so that a creative integration of human spiritual needs and the needs of other life forms can be achieved. What is called for as norm is more than mere creation. Our norm must guide and/or correct the human impact on creation while still being operative in creation, and ultimately it must open all to God.

In Chapter 1 we treated the first step in healing the Earth-to become sensitive to its hurts and our call to care for it. But healing means to "make whole," and wholeness always implies some goal. An arm "heals" when it grows back to what an arm is intended to be. Humans and the Earth "heals" when they become what they are meant to be. But what are they meant to be? If humans and creation are ultimately made in the image of God, the other part of our healing sensitivity has to be an awareness of God's presence in ourselves and our world. It is the awareness of God's love that reveals our unlove, of God's freedom that reveals our exploitation

and control, of God's creativity that reveals our sterility and death. But the paradox is, that despite that very unlove and exploitation and death, new life can come through the power of God's on-going creativity. I have come to see that this divine creativity culminates in God's raising Jesus, and in seed all creation, from the dead.

Since the authors both come from a Christian tradition, we have come to name our approach "resurrection spirituality," even though what we understand by resurrection and its dynamics calls for explanation. As I mentioned in the introduction, this view has developed gradually out of my experience. Only gradually did I see that God's on-going creativity is released now through the power of the resurrection of Jesus active in our world. It is this view of resurrection that we need to look at anew. Then, we can compare it to a widely held view that takes its guidance from evolution itself, and finally draw forth the basic principles guiding our approach.

### **The Dynamics of Resurrection Spirituality**

There are many ways of viewing the resurrection, and many are not of much help for the Earth. If resurrection means we forget about this life and look only to the future, then it will actually be an obstacle to healing the Earth. Or if it means that the body is not important because it will pass away, while the spirit remains forever, then the Earth will be seen as passing and not important. Our view is very different. The resurrection of Jesus is the beginning transformation of this world, in this world and in us. HERE, NOW, WE are empowered by the "life-giving Spirit" that Jesus has now become (Rom 15:45). What warrants our view?

A recent study points out that the word resurrection itself is not the invention of Christians.<sup>1</sup> This is important, for it shows that resurrection was originally a hope for this world, not simply beyond it. It is rooted in Israel's faith in God's absolute mastery over life and death (1 Sam 2:6; Dt 32:39). Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, she is confident God will restore her (see Ez 36-37). In Ez 37:1-14 we have the famous passage of the "dry bones" being raised by Ezekiel's prophesying over them. "These bones are the whole house of Israel," that is, they would be raised up in this world! This conviction became a major theme of Pharisaic spirituality though it was rejected by the Sadducee establishment (see Acts 23:6ff). As van Beeck puts it: "[R]esurrection came to convey the confident hope that final justice, for Israel as well as for the world, was indeed to be expected, though from God alone (cf. Ps 67; Dan 12:2-3). A final, conclusive paroxysm of natural and human lawlessness, violence, and disintegration would lay bare the fundamental unreliability of all the powers that be. This would be the prelude to the Lord's own Day."<sup>2</sup> Resurrection is God's design for the universe and includes the themes of sin, judgment and mercy--a justice beyond all injustice. The revelation of Jesus' vindication through being "raised" fulfilled for the early Christians this promise of God and established "an imminent eschatological future that would draw the whole world into the presence of God."<sup>3</sup> God at length had begun to establish the eschatological kingdom of definitive justice: "God has fixed a day on which he will do justice to the whole world by one he has appointed, and he has guaranteed this to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Jesus Christ alive reveals the present world as being in process of all-pervasive renewal (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Jm 1:18). It is "groaning in travail" in assured, if still painful, expectation of the full revelation of God's children (Rom 8:19-23).



This new, eschatological perspective decisively rearranged the past as well as the future. Firstly, it put Jesus' life into a new perspective. God was not only within his healing (Acts 2:22 etc.) but also in what He "had to" suffer (Lk 24:26). The one condemned by Jewish authorities and the Romans is revealed as the "holy and just one" (Acts 3:14), the key to all creation (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2-3; Jn 1:3.10), the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:7-8).<sup>4</sup> Jesus' death/resurrection was not just a personal tragedy, but the beginning of a dying and rising of all creation, and of a transformation into reunion with God.

Further, as eschatological it rearranged the distant past as well, both of Israel and the world. Believers saw Christ risen as the definitive reinterpretation of Israel's history of faith and faithlessness. This is most clear in Matthew, but equally in Luke where Jesus "opens" the Scriptures (Lk 24:27-32) and John where Scriptures are "remembered" (Jn 2:17; 12:16), "fulfilled" (15:25 etc.), and "accomplished" (Jn 19:28) in him. This reinterpretation, finally, is seen to reinterpret the whole world from beginning on. Luke's genealogy interprets Jesus as "Son of Adam, Son of God" (Lk 3:23-38), 1 Peter has Jesus evangelizing the "spirits of the ancestors" (1 Pt 3:18-20) and in John Jesus is the Word "through whom the world was made" (Jn 1:1-5). Nature itself is caught up in this beginning new creation (Rom 8:22-23).

That means that Christ risen is not an entirely new in breaking of the God of love distinct from the God of the OT.<sup>5</sup> Rather, God took the history of human choices seriously. The crucifixion of God's Son Jesus brings the history of sin and exploitation into clear expression, but also reveals a new birth in the midst of that devastation. Jesus is the beginning fulfillment of the history of Israel and the world, the history both of its sin (through rejecting God and love) and of its hope in God. "Faced with this challenge, the Christian tradition opted for a difficult redemptive task, rather than a sectarian and self-righteous one. It resigned itself to asking and answering the many hard questions about the true meaning of the Jewish Scriptures and the religions of the world and refused to turn itself into a completely novel creation with no real responsibilities to the world of time and place."<sup>6</sup>

In sum, as we saw in the roots of our call, Adam and Eve were called to work with God in caring for all creation, and their disobedience lost this power, not only for themselves but for all humanity. Cut off from God, humans strove to control and save themselves and nature by their own efforts. What resulted was enslavement and destruction. God restored the power to rule nature to Christ, not on the basis of the old creation, but by the "new creation" through his acceptance of death and resurrection. This beginning restoration to God's favor is not by a return to the past (creation), but by an eschatological breakthrough of God's justice in our sinful, enslaved world—the resurrection. Jesus accepts solidarity with human sin through his dying (2 Cor 5:21) and opens to God's healing, reconciling love through his resurrection. To summarize and focus:

Firstly, the resurrection is an event in this world as well as beyond this world. It is not a dualistic separation from this world. Peter's sermon in Acts points to the gift of the Holy Spirit as the sign that Jesus has been made "Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:36). He is the one God appointed to establish definitive justice over the whole Earth. As Paul put it: "God...put all enemies under his feet" so that he in turn can subject all to God "that God may be all in all"

(1 Cor 15:28). This is expressed in the earliest Creed: "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:11). Far from separating Jesus from the world, the resurrection unites him to the world in a new sovereign way to bring everything to its intended goal of the Reign of God. Jesus is given responsibility for the whole Earth and all creation. His total trust in God's justice is to be the principle for the world's return to God.

Secondly, the resurrection is eschatological—a now event that encompasses past, present and future. It is not simply a personal reward for Jesus that is now past. In raising Jesus, God has begun to open creation to union with God. Since God's Time is an eternal NOW, the resurrection, by which Jesus shares God's Lordship, is also an eternal now. That means it touches all time—past, present and future—and all space. The Gospel is preached to the spirits "who had disobeyed as long ago as Noah's day" (1 Pt 3:18-20), that is, what happened in Jesus in a particular historical point in time heals what went before the beginning, from Adam and all that will happen in the future, which is now seen as unfolding into union with Christ and God. Thus, it affects the heart of every creature with a hope grounded in an actual beginning of justice. In it, hope springs from the midst of pain and death, and shows that suffering can be the birth pangs of transformation.

Thirdly, it is not merely spiritual but also bodily. Israel's hope was very concrete—a promised land, a space for free worship of God, a renewed Earth where "lion and lamb would lie down together" (Is 65:25), a "New Heaven and New Earth" (Is 65:17). For believers, the resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of this transformation of bodiliness. This beginning in Jesus risen is shown in spiritual gifts for the building of a community of justice (see Acts 4: "they shared all in common") and for the ordering of nature itself as seen in Jesus' nature miracles. As Teilhard put it, the resurrection inaugurated a new phylum in our world, the basis for building all believers into a new BODY, a new family that is based not on blood ties or cultural ties, but on faith in Jesus as Lord and on the power of God's Spirit. Since it is a bodily event, it also penetrates the depths of bodiliness and so of the Earth. As Colossians says, "It has pleased God to make absolute fullness reside in him, and by means of him to reconcile everything in his person, both on Earth and in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross." (1:19-20). Nothing is left out. Everything, including our bodies and the Earth, is being reconciled. We Christians believe that the Eucharist expresses that on-going bodily presence of Christ with us, and that we are bodily transformed into Christ's body through the Spirit. The Earth itself "awaits" its share in this transformation and shares it since all bodiliness is interconnected.

Fourthly, therefore, in Jesus' resurrection the whole of creation has a new beginning, a new creation. This is the ultimate ground for spiritual healing and forgiveness. Spiritual healing is not simply a repairing of wounds, like re-parenting because of wounds from one's parents. Naturally speaking one cannot change the past or undo what has been done. Our decisions have historical repercussions that are handed down from generation to generation. Sin alienates us from God, one another and the Earth and cumulates in a history of devastation. In the resurrection that very devastation is suffered through and the ground of God's eternal creativity is reopened. Even our sin is "recycled," so to speak. The suffering and hurt is transformed into a deeper compassion. It is actually being "created anew," as Isaiah 43:19 said. Healing, whether individual, societal or of the Earth, comes from looking at God's ever present creativity,

not at the problems. Jesus' resurrection restores our link to the creativity of God. He is the "new Adam" (1 Cor 15:22), the ground of our new family in God. He is given "all power in heaven and on Earth" (Mt 28:18) and "all things are put in subjection under him" (1 Cor 15:27). Through sharing in his resurrection we regain the dominion over creation given the first humans (Gn 1:26), and the power to bring God's justice even to the Earth.

But to open to this new creation we must acknowledge our sinful misuse of others and creation and seek forgiveness. Jesus' death and resurrection reveals both our sinfulness and our restoration. Jesus' trust in God and spiritual power threatened the political and religious powers of his day, as God's prophetic intervention threatened every human power before his day. Sinful human selfishness and pride and control was forced out into the open through Jesus' ministry of love for the poor (as human exploitation and pride is revealed through our suffering Earth today!). Since Adam and Eve's time we humans have tried to be our own savior, our own God. In turning away from God we have distorted creation in the process. That is why Jesus' first call to Israel was: "repent and believe the good news." (Mk 1:15). If we are to open to God's offer of new creation we have to believe that God is presently acting. God commissioned Adam and Eve with responsibility for the Earth. God never takes back a call, and so healing cannot take place unless we choose to accept God's redemptive action in Jesus. If we do accept, by acknowledging our sinful misuse and dying to our destructive ways, we will be empowered by the very Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. God does not want ultimate death, but restored life if we so choose.

Fifthly, then, it is through sharing in the resurrected life of Jesus that we share Jesus' Lordship and power to heal and transform. The miracles of Jesus (showing his power over the material world) are expressions of the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, and we are to do "even greater works" (Jn 14:12). Jesus' power over the storm at sea (Mt 14:22-33) and over the fig tree (Mt 21:18-22) are not presented as unique to him. He complains about his disciples' "little faith" and says if they had faith as a mustard seed they could say to the mountain "go into the sea," and it would obey (Mk 11:22-25). As Paul says in Romans 5:17: "If death began its reign through one man because of his offense, much more shall those who receive the overflowing grace and gift of justice [grace from Jesus' resurrection] reign through the one man, Jesus Christ." (see also: 2 Tim 2:11-12). The disciples are to share Jesus' rule which extends not only to believers but to the whole world (the whole universe). Jesus has become "life-giving Spirit" and the disciples share this spiritual power through their many gifts "for the common good" (1 Cor 12:6).

Finally, we share this rule not by our own power, but because through our suffering and rising in union with Jesus, we become channels of the Spirit—the resurrected power of Jesus, "for without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The mystery remains, that as Jesus gave life to us out of his death (or rather God did through Jesus' death), so we give life to the extent that we also die with Jesus in order to reign with him. Paul expressed this mystery frequently in his writings. "We who live," he writes, "are constantly being given up to death for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you." (2 Cor 4:11-12). Thus, when we live in the power of the resurrection, we will also experience the dying of Jesus in ourselves and in the world, but out of that dying will come God's new life.

Thus, in the Scriptural view, the gifts that were meant for humans from the beginning of creation—union with God, rule over the Earth that would respond fruitfully, partnership between men and women and the power to bless their offspring—were lost through Adam and Eve's sin but restored through sharing in the death/resurrection of Jesus. The principles of Earth healing that we mentioned in Chapter one are restored through sharing in the death/resurrection of Jesus. It unites all creation in the unity of one Spirit of Christ. It preserves and transforms even the "waste" of sin by turning it into compassion and forgiveness. And it releases the fertility of spiritual gifts for the healing and blossoming of creation. We are to live now in the power of the resurrection or new creation, not just by union with world creativity.

### **Comparison with Teilhard de Chardin**

This theological perspective takes on a different look when seen in light of recent discoveries into the evolving of creation. Theology has always been rethought in light of new world views. The underlying faith is not changed if its grounding is secure, but the way the faith is understood and systematized changes considerably. The early Christian theologians developed a spiritual theology in light of neo-Platonism. In the thirteenth century Aquinas re-systematized theology in a "scientific", that is, "systematic" way inspired by Aristotle. More recently theology has been influenced by Kant (Schleiermacher), Heidegger (Karl Rahner) and Marx (Liberation Theology). The faith is not necessarily changed in these different ways of understanding (that would have to be considered in itself), but the worldview that guides and inspires the faith is. A scientist, philosopher, theologian in our day who has given us a resynthesis in light of new understandings of the universe and of anthropology and paleontology is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit anthropologist who was one of the first to see the need to integrate Christian spirituality with a deep appreciation for the Earth. From his earliest years he sought to integrate "two loves" — the love of God and the love of the Earth and humanity.<sup>7</sup> These two loves he came to see integrated in the "cosmic Christ," a mystical vision of the whole universe as the "Body of Christ." In a beautiful reflection on his youth he reveals God's almost magnetic attraction in the physical universe:

I was certainly not more than six or seven when I began to feel myself drawn by Matter—or, more correctly, by something which 'shone' at the heart of Matter....! withdrew into the contemplation...of my 'Iron God.' Iron, mark you. I can still see, with remarkable sharpness, the succession of my 'idols'.... I cannot help smiling, today, when these childish fancies come back to my mind; and yet I cannot but recognize that this instinctive act which made me worship, in a real sense of the word, a fragment of metal contained and concentrated an intensity of resonance and a whole stream of demands of which my entire spiritual life has been no more than the development....Why Iron? and why, in particular, one special piece of iron? (It had to be as thick and massive as possible.) It can only have been because, so far as my childish experience went, nothing in the world was harder, heavier, tougher, more durable than this marvelous substance—Consistence: that has undoubtedly been for me the fundamental attribute of Being.<sup>8</sup>

Imagine Teilhard's disillusionment at the discovery that iron rusts! He then looked for things that would take its place: a blue hearth flame, quartz or amethyst crystals, a fragment of chalcedony in the countryside, but nothing would satisfy unless it was universal. His search continued after he became a Jesuit. He became fascinated by zoology and paleontology and sought for new species. "For the solid and Incorruptible," he wrote, "I substituted the New and the Rare."<sup>9</sup> In Cairo (1906-8) he taught pre-relativity elementary physics and found renewed security in the world of primary elements (electrons, nuclei, waves). Then came a massive shift when his static cosmos began to come alive. Tinder for this flame was Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, but the major shift was the joining of what had before been split—matter and spirit. He began to see that the ultimate consistency was not in the simplicity of primary particles, but in the infinite complexity of Spirit that like a gravitational field was irresistibly drawing the cosmos to its fulfillment. "I no longer doubted but that the supreme happiness I had formerly looked for in 'Iron' was to be found only in Spirit."<sup>10</sup> The solidity Teilhard now looked for in spirit led him beyond biogenesis (the emergence of plant life) to noogenesis (the field of human reflection and mind growing ever more universal and intense). We have only to look around us to see how thought now embraces the whole planet and grows ever more complex. This irreversible process of totalization now appears as a single irresistible movement toward a single focus or center "which I can love."

At this point Teilhard saw the limits of human reflection, reaching out for a center to love. "However strongly convinced we may be of the existence of this Omega Pole, we can never in the end reach it except by extrapolation: it remains by nature conjectural, it remains a postulate."<sup>11</sup> Here Teilhard sees the importance of Christian revelation, that God in Christ has actually entered this evolving universe to make concrete and specific that focus of Love that is needed to bring the universe to its ultimate completion. If the universe were static, Christ's primacy could only be juridical and extrinsic, but in a universe dynamically converging on itself, Christ becomes a physical center, a Lord of all (*Pantocrator*) drawing the whole of creation into a transforming unity (see 1 Cor 15:25-28). The anxious contingency of matter led Teilhard to seek what is permanent, to look for an "exit" (French: *issue*) from the finite universe, an ultimate ground for commitment. This he found in a new view of Christ at the heart of the universe. He went through many personal crises before he came to this mystical insight. It was not easy for him to reconcile the detachment he was taught spiritually with the attachment he felt for the universe. It was his spiritual father, Pere Paul Troussard, who "told him that the crucified Lord was awaiting the natural expansion of his being, no less than its sanctification."<sup>12</sup> As he came to see:

There is something deeper in Christianity than an admiration for the Stylites, or the anti-intellectualism of the Imitation—and that is its faith in the resurrection of the Earth and the expectation of a consummation of the Universe in Christ Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

This conviction gained scientific precision through his work in paleontology. He accumulated evidence that the evolutionary process extended over billions of years. The centrality of the "cosmic Christ" was seen now as not just a stable truth, but an unfolding, dynamic center guiding and integrating an ever evolving universe. Only through that cosmic context could he fully understand the magnificent power of Christ.

Teilhard thinks literally of Christ, who entered physically in the world's history, who died, but who was resurrected bodily in a universal, Lordly way. Thus, all reality has become, in a way, "the Body of Christ," and since reality is forever unfolding, Christ is forever coming to be:

Since Christ was born, ceased to grow and died, everything has continued in motion because Christ has not yet achieved the fullness of his form. He has not gathered about him the last folds of the garment of flesh and love woven for him by his faithful. The Mystical Christ has not attained his full growth—nor therefore has the Cosmic Christ. Of both we may say that they are becoming.<sup>14</sup>

So concrete did he realize this union was that in 1916 he saw, as it were, the universe as a consecrated Host—a cosmic Eucharist. His vision was attacked as pure mythology, but when we consider the universal presence of Christ's resurrected body, we can see it as solidly grounded in Christian theology. In a later essay, "Le Prêtre" ("The Priest") Teilhard sees the very consecration of the Mass as consecrating the whole universe as Christ's Body. All things are inserted into Christ, but Christ crucified! "The Universe assumes the form of Christ—but O mystery! He whom we discover is Jesus crucified."<sup>15</sup> The whole universe, not just humans, was seen as drawn into the dying and rising Christ. It was as if Teilhard had the Pauline vision of the whole universe "made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom 8:20-21) Teilhard not only affirms a Christic shape to the universe, but affirms a cosmic influence of Christ in the collective cosmic consciousness.<sup>16</sup> Matter, then, is blessed and liberated by Christ and can be for us a vessel of grace.

It was because of this mutual presence of Christ and the universe that Teilhard developed an ontology of "uniting" rather than the classical ontology of "being."<sup>17</sup> For Teilhard, God is supreme centered intelligence, who through each level of evolution is bringing the scattered fragments of creation into an ever deeper and more extensive and conscious unity. God is ever uniting through a cosmic extension of the Trinity's own eternal act of self-unification. God the Father is unoriginated (unborn), yet is also forever the fertile source of all that becomes. So also, the Trinity is fully self-integrated, yet through the Spirit is the fertile source of the coming to be and progressive unification of the whole universe. This is Bonaventure's thesis,<sup>18</sup> but it is also Teilhard's, and Teilhard insists more strongly that the universe of multiplicity in a sense completes the self-expression of God. Creation itself is the expression in time of the gradual unification, stage by stage, of the cosmic multiplicity of the original "big bang" act of creation.

Further, there is a hierarchy of such unification. Each succeeding integration unifies all that went before in a new synthesis, at the same time respecting and even further perfecting the previous unity in its own right. Thus, the animal level integrates vegetative life and even further differentiates it, even as plant life integrates the underlying organic life forms, and the human life of the mind (the *noosphere* reflects on all that went before and reaches out to inquire into the unfolding of the whole universe. Thus, each level embodies both a type of integration as well as the potency for higher integration because of its continuing multiplicity. This is also true of the human. Its natural multiplicity is intensified by human sin, and is only unified by the

Incarnation of the Son of God/Son of humanity--Jesus Christ. Since the human integrates the whole underlying universe, Jesus Christ is the ultimate integration of the whole cosmos.

Each higher union also differentiates what went before, as Teilhard repeatedly affirmed in his phrase "union differentiates," and Christ as foundation and apex of the total unification is also the ultimate point of differentiation. This new emergence of the unifying principle is not present from the beginning, even though all things were created in light of this final integration, and have been attracted toward it.<sup>19</sup> By nature, and especially by original sin, the world culminating in the human world is a divided havoc:

Of its nature, and as a result of original sin, it is true that matter represents a perpetual impulse towards failure. But by nature too, and as a result of the Incarnation, it contains the spur or the allurements to be our accomplice towards heightened being, and this counter-balances and even dominates the *fomes peccati*.<sup>20</sup>

Thus we see in Teilhard<sup>1</sup>'s view of the evolving universe three principles that resemble the principles of ecology: an ever increasing unification of multiplicity (the interrelation of all), an increasing differentiation (variety), and growing consciousness (conservation on a higher level of all that went before). These principles are ultimately fulfilled only "supernaturally," that is, by being incorporated into the very life of the triune God in Christ, who unifies, differentiates and conserves everything in the new creation. The universe itself is created (ie., unified) for Christ, in Christ and towards Christ through the impact of the Incarnation.

We note, finally, that whereas in Paul the "Body of Christ" is always linked to Christ's redemptive death and resurrection, and only implicitly in the Incarnation, Teilhard uses the term as almost synonymous with the Incarnation, very similar to the Greek Fathers.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, it is the resurrected Christ he has in mind, since that is the only way of viewing Christ that is large enough to encompass the immensity of the universe. God redeems by "recreating," ie. reuniting, everything in Christ resurrected. Teilhard sees the cosmic significance of the Cross as the "royal road" to this reunification.<sup>22</sup> Through the resurrection, Christ is bringing all things to their fulfillment.

### **Responses to Teilhard**

Thomas Berry has been inspired by this vision of Teilhard of the gradual coming to consciousness of evolution in human reflection and choice. He critiques Teilhard for overvaluing our modern one-sided reliance on technological control of nature, and missing the environmental devastation it has caused. He calls us to a "New Story" in which humanity is just one of Earth's many biosystems.<sup>23</sup> We have to realize that if all Earth's systems are interrelated, our devastation of the Earth will ultimately undermine all life including human life. Berry appeals to all religions (his own expertise is in oriental religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese religions) to begin humbly to learn from what various ecosystems reveal, since they are guided by a wisdom of the Earth that has developed and diversified over millions of years, and human vitality depends on the vitality of all these Earth systems. This Earth wisdom is variously named by different religious traditions:

the ancient sense of Logos in the Greek world, of rita in Hinduism, or dharma in Buddhism, of tao, ch'eng, and jen in the Chinese world. These are the ancient perceptions of the ordering, or the balancing, principles of the universe, the principles governing the interaction of all those basic forces constituting the Earth process. To recognize and act according to these principles was the ultimate form of human wisdom.<sup>24</sup>

In Berry's view, this Earth wisdom must take precedence over any particular cultural interpretation of revelation. He writes in "Christian Spirituality and American Experience":

By definition any "tradition" is a process, not some established, contained, unchanging mode of believing, thinking, or acting. There is no definitive Christianity or Hinduism or Buddhism, but only an identifiable Christian process, Hindu process, or Buddhist process.<sup>25</sup>

The universe itself, but especially the planet Earth, needs to be experienced as the primary mode of divine presence, just as it is the primary educator, primary healer, primary commercial establishment, and primary lawgiver for all that exists within this life community.<sup>26</sup>

This is the new context that Teilhard also said must become the global context for our present day interpretation of Christianity. In a controverted text Teilhard said something that sounds remarkably similar:

If, as a result of some interior revolution, I were to lose in succession my faith in Christ, my faith in a personal God, and my faith in Spirit, I feel that I should continue to believe invincibly in the world. The World (its value, its infallibility and its goodness)—that, when all is said and done, is the first, the last, and the only thing in which I believe. It is by this faith that I live. And it is to this faith, I feel, that at the moment of death, rising above all doubts, I shall surrender myself.<sup>27</sup>

For Teilhard, however, the universe is much larger than what is commonly believed. It is the very "Body of Christ," guided by and grounded in the resurrection Spirit of Christ. For Teilhard, the universe will lead all to its inner unity and ground—Christ. For whatever reason, Berry does not express a belief in the unique centrality of Christ. For him, judging from his writings, every religion is a culturally limited effort to express the wisdom of the universe, which itself creates diversity. Only our growing knowledge of this total context and respect for it will gradually help humans continue a constructive evolutionary path rather than devastate the Earth.<sup>28</sup> In this process there is no particular focus on Christ (as we find in Teilhard), nor on the necessity of a "new creation" or a "new Christosphere" to bring about redemption from our sinful fragmentation and divisions. The dying we find is what humans are doing to the Earth systems, and the conversion needed is to cease our misuse of technology to control nature and begin to learn from it. Both Berry and Teilhard look at the world, but Teilhard looks at the world through his faith in the person of Christ and the Christian theological tradition, Berry through a general experience of the sacred at the root of the evolutionary process. For Teilhard we know the end, even as we continue to discover in the unfolding universe (which is the



unfolding body of Christ) its present implications. For Berry we must only rely on the ongoing process for our guidance, and our good will (it would seem) for corrective measures.

Our position is in line with Teilhard's Christocentric approach, only we focus more clearly on the dynamics of Jesus' death/resurrection as the final key to unlocking the direction of the universe and every single life-process within it. Perhaps Berry would come to similar conclusions from examining the universe alone (for the resurrection Spirit is, we hold, at the heart of all Earth processes), but nature does not explain itself, and the final unity in any case is not in an explanation but in a personal union with our Triune God and God's Incarnate Son. With Teilhard, we hold that all is grounded in the Body of Christ, and the fulfillment of all life-processes is in dying and rising in the form of Christ.

But another critique of Teilhard and the Christian attitude toward the environment needs to be mentioned. Paul Santmire has studied the history of Christianity's attitude toward nature and found it ambivalent—one "ecological motif" that looks for the transformation of nature and its fruitfulness (seen in Irenaeus, Augustine and Francis of Assisi), the other more dominant "ascent motif that sees salvation as an ascent of the human spirit God that uses nature as a stepping stone that is ultimately transcended."<sup>29</sup> This latter attitude is developed in Aquinas, Bonaventure, Dante, Karl Barth and is seen in much of Teilhard's writing. In his Chapter on Barth and Teilhard, Santmire points out how for Teilhard the universe has but one goal—the "cosmic Christ." He quotes a letter of Teilhard's: "Nothing in the world is really of value except what happens in the end."<sup>30</sup> And the end, for Teilhard, is the gradual spiritualization of matter, and release from matter into the cosmic Christ. Matter is essential for this, but the goal is a gradual freeing from matter. Matter is more a means than an end.<sup>31</sup>

Santmire's observation and critique seems quite accurate, and his suggestion that we perhaps can see the Earth itself as sharing the final resurrection is very insightful. This needs further development. The Christian theological tradition has seen the human soul (which through reflectivity is free from dependence on matter) as alone capable of eternal life. Yet does this necessarily follow from Christ's centrality, and from the revealed transformation of everything in Christ? Teilhard himself sees each new stage as including the preceding, but he says little about representatives of the preceding stages remaining, and what they serve for human wholeness. He needs the balance of a St. Francis who delighted in talking to the animals, and surely would want them "resurrected" also. And one could argue that love (and therefore God) never "uses" any creature simply for another. Each is loved for its own sake, and since God is eternal, each must have some eternal value. So it seems to us too that we need to speak of the Earth too as sharing the resurrection. For our purposes, St. Francis' view seems more "down to Earth," but need not contradict Teilhard's principles. It is in loving and reverencing all life and all creation as God's that we love and reverence all aspects of ourselves and come to wholeness. The resurrection does not bypass and transcend. It restores all of God's creation to what it is intended to be.

### **Implications for an Ecological Spirituality**

We have argued that the Earth is and will be renewed through the power of the resurrection, redemptive new creation, not simply through creation. Further, resurrection is a

transforming power in this world, not simply a hoped for future. What guidelines would this perspective give us for becoming sensitive to God's presence in our ecological crisis today?

1. Trust God Amidst Our Poverty. Resurrection presupposed the indescribable self-emptying of Jesus on the cross. It involved a total trust in God's compassionate love and justice together with total awareness of weakness, sin and inability. It is the rebirth of hope based on God's loving re-creation in spite of human exploitation and abuse. To become aware of resurrection power we need to be aware of our own poverty and the Earth's poverty, yet at the same time trust God's faithful love and total power to restore all things which has actually begun to be operative through God's servant Jesus. We catch a glimpse of this "eternal newness" as we have courage to face the pain of our sin and hurts and the hurts of our Earth. There we can hear God saying forever anew: "Behold I make all things new."

2. Open to the Dying of the Earth in Hope of New Life. When resurrected Jesus was able to console those who were desolate because of his death (as we see he did for the disciples on the way to Emmaus). Our own experience of faith in God's new creation can open us humbly to see and listen to the cry of the poor Earth and poor humanity. Those that trust God beyond death can be present to what is dying. We become aware of the God of Jesus through compassion. Experts in management development say that the first step in renewal is to become aware that one's community is dying. Only then can we touch what we value most in it and don't want to die. The Earth is dying and something deep in us is dying with it. It is dying (as did Jesus) because instead of humble reverence and gratitude for the gift it is to us, we exploit it for our own "self-justified" aims. If we face its dying, however, we grow in appreciation and love, and the motivation to work with God to bring it back to life.

3. Be Empowered by God's Dream of New Creation. Jesus could freely face death because he had God's dream ever before him (see Heb 12:2, "for the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross"). With a similar confidence we need to gain the courage to dream God's dream. We will not find God if we look only to the problem and our inability to solve it. "Nothing is impossible to God." There are many ways to symbolize the dream of resurrection-restoring the Kingdom of God, bringing us back to what God intended in paradise, creating a "New Heaven" and a "New Earth," etc. However we envision the restoration, we need to hold fast to the grounded belief that God is actually bringing it about, if we are going to be motivated to action. And our vision must extend to the entire planet, not just a chosen few. The whole cosmos is Christ's. This calls for repentance "to believe the good news." We need a new way of seeing not just the problem, but God at work to restore. In the Genesis paradise story, God's vision is one of intimacy (with God and humans), mutual respect (between man and woman, Earth and humans) and mutual giving (procreation of humans and fruitfulness of the Earth). In the prophets it is the restoration of love between animals (lion and lamb) and humans (no more injustice) and also the Earth. St. Francis experienced it as a family in God (brother sun, sister moon, etc.)<sup>32</sup>, St. Ignatius envisioned it as a mediation of the beautiful self-gift of God's all-pervading love. We need the conviction that this justice is already at work in the world--"the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15).<sup>33</sup> Our suffering is not the death of our dream, but the way to its fulfillment in God.

4. Live Christ's Way and Bring Empowering Hope to Others. Through his death and resurrection Jesus was able to empower others to see as he saw. Before his death they lost faith. After he rose, and the disciples could move beyond their suffering; they experienced his community building Spirit. In dying, Jesus gave life, not just to individuals but to whole communities. Those living his power may also experience setbacks, but they will "bear fruit" to the extent they stay rooted in God and respond to the grace to die to self-interest for the good of the whole. They will find ways to live out this new vision, to form communities of like believers that make established powers take seriously what they are saying and doing, just as Jesus founded a community of disciples and taught them to live his vision of God's love. In living the vision, we learn what is involved and what will really help renew the Earth. If we don't live the vision ourselves, who will believe it is possible? Like Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, we need to see that limited technology works, that relative equality and justice is realizable. Resurrection is not a theory but a power. It is discovered in communities that live Jesus' Spirit of self-giving love. If it is not lived, who will believe in it? We need examples of simple life-style, local farming, renewed small technology, etc.. Only by living the vision will we learn what is realizable in fact.

5. Understand What the Earth Needs for Healing. Through the resurrection Christ received authority for renewing the Earth (Mt 28:18). We also share that authority, and we need to learn to exercise it both as individuals and in communities. The more we experience the power to heal, the deeper will be our conviction about the resurrection at work. But only as we learn about the Earth can we rightly heal it. We need to learn about the Earth, and unmask the injustice or false systems that exploit and destroy it. For healing prayer one must be informed.<sup>34</sup> We need to know what health would be. But that very knowledge will help reveal what blocks it. Living with a sense of beauty and justice sensitizes one to desecration and injustice and helps one unmask specious rationalizations. Jesus defended his vision in face of opposing ideologies (of the Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots, Sadducees, etc.) He spoke of what would happen if they refused to live forgiving love and open to bring God to "all the nations," and what he predicted did in fact occur. We need informed critique to further what helps the Earth and bring to light what injures it, and we need to act with God on our understandings.

6. Discern God's Action and Work with It. The disciples were guided by the resurrected Christ in their plan of action. We can do God's work only if we are discerning. Jesus' was not a lone venture. He always did what he saw the Father doing (Jn 5:19), and the early church prayed for a similar guidance from God's Spirit. We would do well to examine how Jesus acted, but our challenges are different from his. To live by his guidance means to learn to discern the directions of God's Spirit. Our freedom needs to be tuned to God, and courageously followed. We will consider this question of discerning God's Spirit more carefully in Chapter 4.

7. Stand Firm Despite Opposition With Willingness to Forgive. Jesus trusted God and acted, even though he experienced his own human powerlessness in face of the religious and political powers of his time. It cost him his life, and on the cross he forgave. He did not respond in kind, but only out of God's infinite compassionate love. Whatever is done in that love will never be lost. And only those who endure to the end are promised victory. "No one can be non-violent," Ghandi said, "who fears death." A resurrection spirituality calls for the

same sort of ultimate commitment that we see in Jesus, together with his willingness to dialogue and be reconciled. The established powers will often fight to the death (because change involves the death of their way and their power). They cannot be expected to yield to any lesser commitment. Injustice wounds; exploitation desecrates and destroys the image of God's love in creation. The seed of God's forgiving love is deep in the heart of every human and of creation through the resurrection. The Earth "groans for the liberation of God's children" (Rom 8:19ff). Yet it seems clear that only total commitment in response to God's grace, and total willingness to forgive and heal will release that renewed life.

These are some guidelines that spring from a resurrection-centered approach to healing the Earth. Paradoxically, the key focus is not only the positive energies of the Earth but also and even more its poverty and limits, for it is through that poverty and suffering that God's power can act. It is through the cooperation of the regenerative nature of creation and the renewing Spirit of God that healing occurs. In the next chapter we look more closely at the poverty of the Earth in relation to its healing, and the power of healing resident in the poor, in order to begin to see the direction this approach would lead us.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Frans Jozef van Beeck, *God Encountered: A Contemporary Catholic Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989) pp. 186-198.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.187.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 188.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 190-191.
- <sup>5</sup> This was the view of Marcion in the early church. He viewed the God of the OT as harsh and cruel, and the NT God as kind and forgiving. His dualistic view of Scripture was condemned by the church, but we will see there is a new stage in Jesus that restructures what went before.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 195.
- <sup>7</sup> See Robert Hale, O.S.B., *Teilhard de Chardin and the Cosmos* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), pp. 12f.
- <sup>8</sup> See Teilhard de Chardin, *The Heart of Matter*, trans. Rene Hague (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1978), pp. 17-18.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 22.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 28.
- <sup>11</sup> See Teilhard, *The Christic in The Heart of Matter*, p. 9 1
- <sup>12</sup> See Robert Speaight, *The Life of Teilhard de Chardin* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 59. Quoted in Hale, p. 21.
- <sup>13</sup> See *Teilhard de Chardin, Science and Christ* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 107.
- <sup>14</sup> See his "La Vie Cosmique," in *Writings in Time of War* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 59. Quoted in Hale, p. 21.
- <sup>15</sup> See his "Le Prêtre," in *Writings in Time of War*, p. 208; quoted in Harle, 27-28.
- <sup>16</sup> See his "L'élément universel," (1919) in *Writings in Time of War*, 289-312.
- <sup>17</sup> See the analysis of Carol Jean Vale, "Teilhard de Chardin: Ontogenesis vs. Ontology," in *Theological Studies*, 53 (1992), 313o-337. She makes a helpful comparison of Teilhard's

ontology with that of Aquinas, Bonaventure and Meister Eckhart, showing how he both parallels and furthers the classical metaphysical tradition.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 327-9.

<sup>19</sup> Teilhard was excited about the view of John Duns Scotus that Christ would have been the predestined goal of the universe even if humans had not sinned. Thus, the final integration is beckoning the universe forward from the very beginning, but is not actually unified in Christ till the Incarnation.

<sup>20</sup> See *The Divine Milieu*, trans. Bernard Wall (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 107-8.

<sup>21</sup> See Hale, p. 83.

<sup>22</sup> See *The Divine Milieu*, pp. 102-104.

<sup>23</sup> See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*. (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), pp. xii-xv.

<sup>24</sup> See his "Human Presence," in *The Dream of the Earth*, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 116-117.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>27</sup> See "Comment je crois," opening lines, in *Christianity and Evolution* (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), pp. 96-132. Cited in Hale, p. 61. Hale also briefly addresses the controversy and responds (with Teilhard's own defense) by affirming how expansive the Universe is for Teilhard, open to the very mystery of God, and how central Christ's transforming action is for the Universe. To "believe in" the Universe is for him implicitly to believe in Christ.

<sup>28</sup> A section from *Dream of the Earth: Our Way into the Future*, can serve as illustration. Berry writes: "Saint John tells us that in the beginning all things took on their shape through the word. The word was seen as psychic and personal. This was the numinous reality through which all things were made and without which was made nothing that has been made. The word, the self-spoken word, by its own spontaneities brought forth the universe and established itself as the ultimate norm of reality and of value. This is in accord with Lao Tzu, the Chinese sage, who tells us that the human models itself on the Earth, Earth models itself on heaven, heaven models itself on Tao, Tao models itself on its own spontaneity." (from *The Dream of the Earth*, p. 196). The Word, here, is understood not as Jesus in person (John's meaning), but as a cosmic principle that is articulated in different places and times differently. As he says in another work: "I am not saying that the Christian story is the only story. The story of the universe, in terms of personhood, involves what is known as "cosmic person." Many traditions have the sense that the universe is best understood in terms of a person." (from *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, by Thomas Berry with Thomas Clark, S.J. (Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991), p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> See H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: the Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press: 1985).

<sup>30</sup> See Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters from a Traveller*, trans. B. Wall, R. Hague, V. Hammersley, and N. Linday (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 296; cited in Santmire, 158-9.

<sup>31</sup> In an extended footnote, Santmire cites many quotes of Teilhard that show this transcendence of matter in spirit in the end (see his fn. 64, pp. 255-256). For example, at the end of the *Phenomenon of Man* (Collins, Fontana Bks, p. 316) Teilhard writes: "The end of the world: the overthrow of equilibrium, detaching the mind, fulfilled at last, from its material matrix, so that it will henceforth rest with all its weight in God-Omega." Teilhard cites Colossians for this view, but what happens to nature in the process. The focus on ascent seems to reduce nature, as important as it is, to a means for human spiritualization.

<sup>32</sup> See Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes toward the Environment* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1988) for a fine discussion of St. Francis' analogical view.

<sup>33</sup> This principle holds in healing prayer. We need to see the healing already at work, then its power will be released for us (see Mk 11:24 "whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have it already and it will be yours"). Those working with affirmations use the same principle. What would it be like if I did live in a justly treated environment? In God I do, and we do.

<sup>34</sup> See Agnes Sanford, *Creation Waits* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos, 1978), for her example of praying for the San Andreas fault, and several other examples.

## **CHAPTER 3: THE POOR AS HEALERS OF THE EARTH**

by Al Fritsch

In the first two chapters we have attempted to ground the Earth healing process in both ecological principles and in the resurrection Mystery. We discussed in Chapter 1 the interdependence of all the creatures on this planet and in Chapter 2 how all participate in the resurrection event. In our healing process, we move from awareness to diagnosis. How shall we specify the illness, and discover the specific resources for healing? This brings us to focus on the second ecological principle which deals with conservation of resources. The first resources that come to mind are the talents, headaches, suffering, hopes, and good will of all people as potential agents of change (Chapter 3), the tools required to be effective and discerning Earth healers (Chapter 4), and a concrete instance of discernment with a focus on empowering the agent of change (Chapter 5). Nothing is lost, forgotten, or eliminated; all can be turned to gain, all redeemed, all become meaningful history. In healing a wholeness is reestablished which translates "wastes" into resources of value.

We begin this chapter by looking at a concrete instance of Earth being wounded and try to find opportunities and lessons here that can be applied to the larger community and the entire planet. Through our elementary diagnosis we discover a shared sense of powerlessness from which springs a solidarity with the poor. With openness and time, that can be expanded to an ever-widening perspective — which is what discernment is all about. We deepen the diagnostic investigation by examining typical types of impoverishment and briefly consider the condition of poverty which is brought on both by individual and social misfortunes and by accident. We are then brought face-to-face with those who are the victims of a wounded Earth, those who we are startled to find have a special and mysterious role in the healing plan. And what about the affluent, who may be some of our readers? In the next section we address them in our reflection on deepening stages of awareness, a truly down-to-Earth spirituality. Finally we briefly touch on how all members of our society can work together to act as healers while not harming others in the dynamic process.

### **An Instance of Co-suffering**

Isn't it the one who descends into hell who is ultimately raised up in the resurrection? He goes down as one of the poor and ascends as one empowered. Christ's descending before ascending is a process or pattern of redemption ~ "divine recycling" — which believers strive to follow on their road to becoming Easter healers. Are we willing to suffer so that we too may enter into glory?

I got a special insight into what co-suffering with the Earth means one spring day in 1988 when I returned from directing a retreat and the office manager exclaimed "Oh, go look at the garden." It had been a beautiful well cultivated vegetable garden far ahead of its time for May due to our caring use of early planting methods, seasonal extenders and cold frames. It was for us a sight to behold in our scenic but devastated valley and a fitting preparation for the upcoming annual homecoming or River Day Celebration. I hastened to the garden with growing trepidation. Disaster! Someone had slipped in a few days before and uprooted and broke up virtually all the plants — tomatoes, onions, beans, even a small redwood sequoia sapling we were



attempting to grow. All devastated, but for no apparent reason — a puzzle that remains to this day. It struck me as though a very dear friend had been killed before my eyes. I could hear the dying plants crying. At that instant the thought occurred that this is the way the Creator feels because of what we human beings do to our Earth, the product of many billions of years of divine loving and caring evolution. Our wounded garden sobbed in a chorus of woe coming up from the entire planet. And I was part of it.

Such hurt gave way to the feeling of powerlessness I had felt a year before when the flood filled the valley so rapidly that we barely had time to extract tools and benches. The expectation of receiving admiring glances from visitors the following weekend vanished. One could only stand naked before the brokenness of our once beautiful valley, with its stretch of unreclaimed strip mine across the river, the Native American grave desecrated on the hilltop, the damaged and over cut woods all around us, the hanging rock nearby where a lynching had occurred, the Wildcat Mountain Battle site just over the hill. The whole countryside seemed to cry as though remembering both the distant and immediate past. We had taken one small plot of our broken valley and tried to grow good things, basics for life where only litter and trash had been thrown. And then for no apparent reason this too entered into the company of the suffering. My God, my God, why do you abandon our Valley?

Only in this Calvary moment did it become apparent that we were one community in suffering, poor people and poor creatures all around. I had entered the valley a decade before but only then was I really becoming part of the poor river valley. I felt in that instant flash of powerlessness that I could do little. But wait a moment! Couldn't WE replant the garden? To fall comes to each individual at some time; to know we've fallen and then to rise is grace, and that comes in community. The descending reached bottom only when we had cared so much that we loved and then got hurt together. The other co-workers were standing around commiserating. Should we throw in the towel and leave, or was there some ray of hope? What I couldn't do maybe WE could. To admit failure opened new vistas. For in that time we (plants and animals and humans and hills) found ourselves in some sort of solidarity. We were feeling the same thing. The superiority of knowledge receded. Our ranks and titles were of little concern. Now we needed to stand together in an atmosphere of mutual compassion — co-suffering and loving presence. The temptation to hate the invisible culprit would get us no where — and even this thought was grace. I can get in the pits, but WE, with God's grace, can boost each other out.

The damaged garden was both a sacred place and a sacred moment if we could see it. All the adoration of the beauty of South Central Kentucky was a mere tourist dream; all the work done in clearing the broken land, hauling off the trash, double-digging the plots, putting sawdust in the rows, and selecting the proper growing conditions were part of our charitable service, our eco-volunteering (defined later). Only in a moment of powerlessness did I really begin to understand the environmental situation. It is not an academic journey to cosmic depths; it is not some grand New Age that hit me. Rather it was the suffering of our poor wounded Earth. Only then did the whole litany of Earth damage reveal itself in both head and heart. This wretched piece of River bottom needed healing. So did I. So do we. So does the entire Earth. We are together in our wounds; we need to be together in the healing process.

Someone had created a damaged condition. Another was working behind the scenes beckoning us to be faithful. The Earth will never again be destroyed by the flood. I was risking impoverishment, because I had risked loving this particular part of it. My particular experience later opened for me the plight of the whole Earth. When four years later I visited the Holy Land and touched Calvary, the sense of my locality being the entire Earth was to stand out in my awareness. But not as yet. At that time I could only remotely sense the total Earth's suffering; so did the "we" who witnessed the event - plants, animals, river, hills, people. There was nothing artificial, pretentious, or contrived in that simple scene. Spontaneously I felt the presence of others. We reached out for the support of others -- an embrace in time of shock and pain. We had discovered our collective impoverishment, and it became somewhat immaterial who was to blame or at fault. Misfortune in its deepest mystery gave way to opportunity. It was a presence never found before, an invitation to accept our collective condition, a call that it would be more noble to start again even amid the ruin. We dared to be vulnerable and admit that we hurt with and among others.

Perhaps as at no other time did such an insight flash. Just as at the creation of the Earth a pico-second was so full of meaning, so in this flash of human insight. It was a moment of re-creation, of healing. Much suddenly became important. We do not have to go out of our way to suffer in order to create the need for healing. If we love, we will find suffering as an already existing condition, and in accepting it we are empowered to heal. At least that is what transpired in my pico-second of reflection. If one of us — and it was immaterial who — said "let's replant," then that was a gift of God who constantly calls us in our powerlessness. If we had said "let's give up, it isn't worth it." that would have been a temptation from another who is not the good spirit, for replanting gives life, whereas walking away in this case would have been to surrender to death. We did replant; we did hold a River Day; few commented on the garden; no one gave compliments; but the replanters had a solidarity with the creatures of the Valley and that was worth treasuring and writing about now.

This year a dedicated attorney of the Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet of Natural Resources, Pam Clay, asked our public interest group to accept convicted strip mine operators to work with us in lieu of prison, a community service program. These victimizers of the landscape had certainly done wrong by their own admission and had gotten caught. In fact aerial photographs showed vast devastated areas and even mountain ridge tops removed by these men in neighboring Clay County. Truly a justified anger and a stiff sentence were warranted. However, healing is a merciful act without which victims become victimizers and the culprits slip back into old habits. After our experiences with powerlessness (and the above is one of many stories from my experiences in the mountains) one is hesitant to continue the vicious cycle of violence to people and land.

Gradually and with painstaking steps we deepen our spiritual outlook. We begin to see that ecology is both exterior and interior and that the two are often working together. When the land hurts so do the people; when the communities hurt so do the individuals. Interior ecological balance includes just the right dose of anger and of mercy. Ecological experience means knowing precisely when to use either. We don't have to tolerate violence to the Earth, but we must also be quick to forgive - even when we don't dare forget. Part of our faithfulness to Earth is being mirrors of the God who is faithful to us and so quick to forgive. Part of our

conservation of resources is forgiving -- not forgetting but seeing forgiven past as meaningful in current and future decision making.

What is exciting about healing our little bit of devastated landscape in Rockcastle county, Kentucky is that the damaged areas can now be repaired in part by those who were originally victimizers. If we succeed in reclaiming an abandoned strip mine and turn it into a low-cost public park with the help of convicted strip-miners, it would become a concrete example of resurrection. The park is within a mile of Interstate-75, one of the most traveled highways in America. Members of the Forestry Department of the University of Kentucky have committed resources and classes to helping. By extending a hand each group helps restore what has been hurt, and the land that is truly fragile can show its resilience. Life is springing anew and anger is giving way to mercy and forgiveness. It isn't perfect for nothing is. But renewal is a distinct possibility in the very place where devastation occurred. It is no accident that Calvary and the resurrection tomb in the garden are in such close proximity.

### **The Earth Needs Healing**

Being observant and sensitive makes us aware of polluted streams, stripped mountains, trashed landscape, and dying forests. But this awareness needs to extend beyond what we see immediately around us to include the whole suffering and damaged Earth, albeit it is more fragile and harmed in certain places. Let's accept the analysis of others concerning the ailments that afflict this Earth (acid rain, deforestation, ocean pollution, hazardous waste disposal), but let's not forget that the task is even more complex for we need to heal ourselves while healing the Earth. This healing is a making whole of agent and victim and culprit. The great danger is that the patient is so large that we fail to complete the examination. We get lost and fail to focus on the truly global nature of the problem and all its physical, psychological, social, economic, political, and spiritual dimensions. This book draws from various sources to respond to this complex need for healing.

From a theology of redemption we accept certain premises: that Christ is redeemer; that the Earth and its people are already in some sense redeemed; that the pattern of that redemption in Christ is repeated in the lives of each of us as witnessed to in our sacramental life; and that this pattern may in all likelihood be repeated in "extending" redemption through the healing of the Earth. Paraphrasing the Emmaus account in Luke 24:26 we hear "did you not know that the very Earth must suffer and so to enter into its glory?" The going down or descent into suffering and the true dying process must precede a rising or going up into a New Earth. If we are to be like Christ we need to act like Christ, "We" being the people and the Earth itself. But the paradox is that in dying we find new life. We are born anew in our suffering and death. So is the Earth.

"From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth;" (Rom. 8:22)

From sensitively looking at the Earth, we see that it is in trouble and is hurting, whether that hurt is inflicted from outside or is an inner pain leading to rebirth. As an observer of the ecological scene for two decades I have witnessed the devastation inflicted on the Earth, but as a

believer, I also hope for rebirth. Likely the pain of the Earth is both from outside and internal, but in either case the Earth needs healing. This is my intuitive sense, but like all intuitions it involves a leap that assumes a great number of environmental facts and reasons, some of which are verifiable and commonly held.

Earth contains a community of creatures that are interrelated. Earth has a wealth of resources as has been documented by explorers and scientists especially in the last five centuries. Earth deserves respect and care as we learn from our Judeo-Christian theology of stewardship. Earth is currently being damaged and harmed in many ways as we learn from the ever expanding ecological literature and research. Many Earth healers are needed now before it is too late, and their action needs to be full of compassion and forgiveness.

All these facts point to the urgency of the need for healing. Yet at the same time many factors frustrate initiatives for healing. Too often there are trade-offs and some forms of well meant activity are simply of no long-term benefit. Should one clean up a waste dump? What should one do with the cleaned up material? Take it and surrounding debris to a larger waste site? That would only continue the problem. Wastes do not vanish nor do people easily change their habits. There is more to most people's lives than concern about the condition of the Earth. Difficulties abound, and yet even if the healing process is only partly understood and initiated, we still need discernment in order to understand when dramatic action is needed, and what sort of action is needed. There's "a time to be silent and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:8)

Another factor also needs to be considered: a proper ordering of our inner psychological energy. Without pacing we will burnout. There needs to be a willingness to celebrate as well as confront, a measured amount of research and education, a knowing when to act immediately and how to set priorities, and the patience that comes with the exercise of good stewardship. So often in the resource audits attached to the "Earth Healing Program" that ASPI conducts for groups our consulting team finds that some communities have become somewhat environmentally aware, but that this is actually a source of frustration. They have so many good ideas they don't know where to start. They dash from one to another and are disconcerted by the enormous nature of turning their physical facilities into an ideal environmental model for the greater community. Our contribution is to help set up a ten-year plan with the more long-term remedies and developments started early and the less important details held back to later years.

The healing process itself is organic and gradual. We can learn much from the birds and flowers and the Earth itself. From the Earth's natural processes we see examples of change agents or enzymes, leaven, yeast, and chemical catalysts — those pinpoints of just the right stuff to hasten the movement forward. We also see critical masses which are the sufficient quantities needed to make things happen in nuclear reactions. In some forms of natural processes the conditions are crucial, that is, the temperature, the location, the local environment. Without them dough won't become bread. We can forget that Earth-healing is a similar natural process with deep spiritual currents that require wisdom and guidance. It requires sources of light or catalysts (yeast), critical masses of people (dough), and a proper environment and energy (a heated oven).

Besides the inner growth factors, there is a complexity of physical interrelationships that has to be considered. If someone has a trashed home, the healer would pick up the trash, turn the yard into an edible landscape, determine the orientation and proper solar gain, plant tree barriers for wind, noise protection, privacy, and shade, consider a "bag door" test for where air infiltration occurs in the interior, caulk and add insulation, consider a water body (pond or running stream) to enhance the exterior space, rid the buildings of toxic cleaners and pesticides, and on and on. This resource auditing and change is a part of any curing process and like the diseases afflicting parts of the Earth, there is an immense amount of experience and literature on the subject.

And finally, what is even less developed is what is needed for the healing agents themselves. These need to have certain qualities: be affectionate, resourceful, thankful, caring, compassionate, inquisitive, vocal when needing to speak, and whimsical, namely the eight qualities discussed in greater length in Chapter 7. Unfortunately ~ or fortunately from a cooperative standpoint ~ no one has all these qualities. Earth-healing is bigger than a small community of experts; it beckons all concerned persons.

### **Types of Impoverishment as Springboards to Resurrection**

Our case study and our look at the complex factors involved in healing show our need for many people to cooperate in healing the Earth. We are gradually coming to realize that we are all together in this planetary struggle. This is better understood by those who are down and out than by those who regard themselves as "successful" and technically more competent. Paradoxically, we find our solidarity with others more in our poverty than in our competence, and seeing our poverty also turns us to God and motivates us to work with God to correct it. Thus, we consider first various ways people become poor and impoverished, and see this as a condition without passing judgment on the agents bringing them to that condition. We could say that a person became poor through a severe illness and then rail about the expensive health care system. The illness may or may not have been his or her fault. The final economic condition may be due to social injustice, or it may not. However it happened, impoverishment has occurred. We need to insist that "the poor" is not a positive or negative term in itself, nor does it imply any particular moral state; it is a condition of destitution that needs to be alleviated as soon as possible.

We will confine this discussion to the process of ecological impoverishment from a social perspective, excluding the many ways that people can be robbed of the quality of their individual lives through moral turpitude or physical malady or disability. For the sake of completeness we will consider five types of ecological impoverishment: the impoverishing act of desecrating the Earth by those doing unjust and thoughtless deeds; the resulting condition of long-term desecration — that is, suffering people, "the poor," and suffering Earth; the impoverishment when human potential is not actualized and thus the Earth is not being improved or healed; the impoverishment coming from discarding or dismissing traditional ecologically-related spiritualities for something new; and finally the impoverishment resulting from a failure to share the Earth's resources.

## **1. The Act of Desecration**

A host of current environmental literature attempts to document the sorry story of air, water, and land pollution and overuse of the Earth's resources. Most readers are acutely aware of this ongoing social sin of which we all participate to some degree. In Appalachia one may note that where strip mined lands have gone unreclaimed the whole community suffers. When trees are damaged or mowed down by clear-cut harvesting processes for forestry products, the forests are severely damaged and delayed in returning to full health. The understory flora (ground level vegetation) is harmed and the soft forest bed is totally disrupted by heavy machinery. Trees fall, the off-road vehicles rip into the countryside, the landscape is littered with throwaways. A wounded community no longer seems to care. Violence is endemic; hope is lost; families break apart. A careless atmosphere prevails which tests our faith that this Earth can be healed.

The list of atrocities to the Earth seems endless: urban and indoor air pollution, depletion of ozone, plant and animal habitats being destroyed, ocean dumping and pollution, overuse of petroleum resources, nuclear and hazardous waste disposal, acid rain, depletion of the rain forest, soil erosion and poisoning by pesticides, and the disparity of wealth among the world's peoples. Being immersed in this ecological calamity makes us reluctant to focus on negative discussion. We must pass rapidly over the eco-suffering, not because we know so little, but because it depresses us so much. We are collectively impoverished.

## **2. The Resulting Condition and Its Effects**

"This is why the country is in mourning and all who live in it pine away, even the wild animals and the birds of heaven; the fish of the sea themselves are perishing." (Hosea 4:3)

Suffering people and Earth are manifestations of a lack of health and fullness, the condition of impoverishment, the reality of pain. The suffering extends as part of the web of mystery to those who are hurt by the greed and selfishness of fellow human beings and includes the very Earth itself. Yes, creatures become extinct through oil spills, clear cutting and surface mining, crimes against Earth and humanity, and utter irreverence. These are the sources of the modern sufferings endured by this fragile Earth.

This suffering extends to many creatures and even forms a community in some crude way. Co-sufferers tend to congregate. How mysterious. The believer feels a deep compassion or co-suffering in response, a compassion that is held together in the suffering of Christ, and is coextensive with all the suffering of the world: in hospitals, slums, senior citizen homes, jails, sweat shops.

Painting vivid pictures of the ecological catastrophe is found more and more in our general and specialty literature. But people can only take it in stages for they tire easily when too much gloom and doom is betrayed. Mental health requires them to escape. They find it difficult to endure the psychic stress of such bleak surveys and therefore seek out untouched idyllic sites and examples of environmental victories and improvements no matter how small. In some areas of concern such as wildlife management, the cleanup of chemicals in the

environment (lead, mercury or cadmium), individual river cleanups, and other such success stories abound and are widely publicized. However, the overall global environmental picture is often much darker. Furthermore, grant funding sources expect reports of achievements even amid ecological disaster - the environmental "Potemkin Villages," named after Catherine the Great's field marshal who, in order to appease his sponsor, created for her fake village fronts or facades.

### **3. The Impoverishment of Unactualized Potentials**

As we speak of conservation of human resources we need to consider the millions of people who do not fulfill the potential they have. Many things hold them back: alcohol, drug abuse, family troubles, unemployment, and other social maladies. Virtually every day there are reports of large corporations laying off more and more people. In the 1990s some 400 million new job seekers will enter the limited global market. Unfortunately economic and social problems are closely related. A young person with very little chance of getting a secure economic position due to race, environment or lack of training will more than likely become a social problem. And reformers are quick to point out that the cost of prisons is triple the cost of job training.

Wasted human potential is our greatest ecological waste. Instead of seeing reformed victims of alcohol, family abuse, drugs and other disorders as models for helping us all overcome the consumer addictions plaguing so many, we regard them as always weak and in need of care. The 12-step folks are as important to the healing process as are job trainers and social workers. All fortunate enough to overcome their previous impoverishments are important resources that need to be invited to contribute, for they now have the potential to assist others in healing themselves in order to heal the Earth. Solidarity includes seeing the unemployed, the victims of chemical dependency and all who have been or are addicted in any way as part of one community. Healing the Earth involves affording opportunities for those partly healed to assist others.

An economy built on providing massive numbers of jobs in vast factories is fading. We may need to return to a system in which less money is required and instead there is more independent living such as growing one's food, building one's house, and developing one's own small business. Such talk may seem heretical for many, but it forces us to consider how unstable are some of the raw materials producing sectors of the current economy. Part of the impoverishment is due to the inflexible grooves in which we find ourselves. By reducing our demand for a moneyed economy to pay for expensive education and health services we begin to liberate ourselves; we begin to actualize our potentials; we begin to discover just how impoverishing the current economic rat race really is. The fueling of the transition just described may be the conversion of our centralized one trillion dollar global military defense projects to decentralized sustainable development that would benefit the total environment.

A failure to achieve self-sustainability at the local community level permits the erosion of economic wealth from that community to more centralized coffers. This is particularly severe in rural areas and especially in raw material producing regions. When communities do not provide their own basics (food, water, building materials and energy) then they are at the mercy

of others and they lose control over their own community lives. On the fertile plains of western India I encountered acres of tobacco planted right up to the doorsteps of the village with nothing else but this monoculture. Yet this was an ideal model village from the standpoint of our tour guide.

#### **4. Distracting Spiritualities (Impoverishing Opportunities)**

If time is crucial to the Earth healing process, then distractions and false starts will cause one to overlook opportunities and dissipate human resources. Strangely, a certain impoverishment may occur when people consume time and energy exploring new spiritualities. For instance, New Age spiritualities, when they stress novelty and not retrieval of our given resources and institutions, become a concern of the elite and distract those who wish to throw off old religious and spiritual traditions as some outmoded fashion. Such "cut-offs", as in family systems, only push the unresolved issues into the unconscious (like buried waste) for it to do damage unawares. A throwaway consumer culture extends to modern spirituality and especially eco-spirituality as well.

An important facet of a resurrection-centered spirituality is that it regards the past as redeemed and meaningful and sees it all as contributing to a new creation or re-creation. Through the ecological principle of conservation of resources we regard our past spiritual traditions as resources to be renewed and used in times of grave need when a proper grounding and orientation is highly desirable. What is needed in times like these are tried and true resources. Innovation needs to grow out of those deep traditions. An authentic spirituality grounds right action and properly reflected action enriches a spirituality. Reverence for the Earth (which is so lacking today among a wasteful society) extends to reverence for current and past human efforts, especially spiritual ones. A conservationist corollary is that what is of value should be revered and cherished. To disrespect one's past is to become impoverished.

#### **5. Impoverishment of the Affluent (Spiritual Impoverishment)**

When I grew up we spoke about "the poor little rich kids." Most people who minister to wealthier people will describe the concerns about security, personal health, and the cares of life which bother their clientele. What some chaplains of the affluent say is that all people are really impoverished in some way and thus any discussion of the poor as a separate class is virtually meaningless. One rejoinder by social activists is, "if you are confused about poverty, that is YOUR fatal flaw." Most of the world's poor can generally distinguish rich and poor; the affluent will have trouble doing so because their condition is troublesome and they are mindful of their own spiritual impoverishment. Maybe Mother Theresa is right that the wealthier are spiritually destitute.

Addiction to drugs, alcohol, television, or other consumer products is not the monopoly of any economic group or class. Poor folk have the same tendencies to addiction as do affluent ones though the forms may differ. However, there is a prevailing philosophy of individual rights and admiration of the successful rich that reinforces the grasp of the affluent on their position and resources. This social attitude is impoverishing when choice opportunities for sharing resources are passed over. A culture that canonizes an affluent status quo and that builds up a



three trillion dollar debt in a mere dozen years by overspending the wealth of future generations is impoverishing, for it destroys any sense of cooperative endeavor toward planetary healing and renewal. Rather it implicitly affirms that there is no future when the almighty "me" is dead.

We have considered five types of environmental impoverishment. At times it may seem too much like casting blame and arousing guilt. There may be room for blame, but our aim was to define the economic poor. Those who do not share the resources they have may in turn become impoverished and yet their poverty is not the same. What one could say is that the struggle is not so much to bring the wealthy down, but to see that grasping wealth is itself a form of destitution that prevents a full solidarity in working for Earth healing.

### **The Poor as Healers**

Why concentrate upon the poor? Are we establishing a class society and then taking sides? That interpretation would miss our point. If we do no more than affirm that economic, social, psychological and spiritual distinctions exist, we restrict ourselves to forever think in class terms. Nor does stating that classes are real mean that they must be forever permanent as though there was an eternal caste system. Even the words "the poor will always be with you" may mean that as long as there are poor they will require our service. Nor do we question the basic moral fiber of the affluent, no more than we blame the poor for their condition. All are God's children, capable of renewal and resurrection. A greater goal is to lessen the distinctions, that means that we strive to erase the extremes of the super-affluent and the destitute and move people to a more modest lifestyle that can support and mutually enrich all the people, allowing God-given potential to be realized.

At times of rising education costs some are tempted to say that, given our different social and economic strata, it is more opportune to educate the elites as agents of change and hope they initiate some grand trickle-down economic mechanism for eliminating poverty and sharing the Earth's abundance of resources? Trickle-down theories have proven to be unreal. They attempt to justify the existing status quo, and pacify the poor. In reality the poor get poorer, and the rich get richer. Such theories raise false hopes in a world of proven limited resources, and encourage a sort of global lotto. Someone gets rich and the masses are further impoverished. However, many of the lower income people realize that trying to replace the ruling rich is also deceptive. They know well the crumbling of the Communist Empire in Eastern Europe which ironically was an attempt to do just that.

The Earth cannot be healed through bad dreams. If the poor are to be an integral part in Earth healing, their participation should be founded on good reasons.

#### **Reason One — The Poor are More Ecologically Abused**

Most devastation in industrial pollution is nearer the dwellings of the poor. These must bear the brunt of unsafe drinking water, foul air, littered landscape, and proximity to hazardous waste dumps. It is the poor who must endure the loss of jobs through destruction of forests and erosion of land. The United Nations Environmental Program summarizes that 4.5 billion hectares or 35% of the Earth's land surface is threatened with desertification. The rural

population (mostly the very poor) affected by serious desertification increased from 57 million in 1977 to 135 million a mere seven years later. That number has grown still more in the ensuing years. These are the climatically, geographically and economically disadvantaged. Lack of these people's participation will doom meaningful environmental action and renewal.<sup>1</sup>

### **Reason Two — Leaving it to the Affluent is Flawed**

Those concerned about environmental issues have sometimes been characterized as the more affluent class -- people with incomes sufficient to make them immune from the rat race for obtaining life's basics, the politically well positioned, the Ivy Leaguers, the upper crust, do-gooders. Only in recent years have vocal environmental groups included Third World groups, as happened at the Rio Environmental Conference in June, 1992. Still a great majority of those holding key positions in major First World environmental organizations are from the privileged groups just mentioned.

While we cannot exclude anyone from the effort to save the environment, the affluent as a group have limitations, for they recognize neither the deep sense of helplessness experienced by the poor, nor their own limited vision. Their (the affluent's) monopoly of leadership roles mars the rich ecological symbol of environmental participation and the call for all to be Earth Healers. If ecological pursuits need to be directed by the people, then they must obviously include those who are most affected by environmental damage, the poor, who live and work nearest to polluted air, bad water, and dangerous waste disposal sites. Making an effort to include everyone checks any tendency to overlook critical situations by those less affected.

Further, affluent people have no monopoly on clear thinking especially if they suffer/engage in addictive and excessive consumerism. They are forever tempted to fill large spaces, residential and otherwise, with appliances, autos, boats, and toys of every sort. The poor may also have the same temptations but less means to fulfill them. In turn, this excessive consumerism, as found in the materialistic West, retards more comprehensive ecological decision-making.

Lastly, the affluent have an increasing burden of justifying their own privileged position in a world that is a majority of have nots and a minority of haves. A growing global consciousness sharpens an awareness of global need, and a call for dramatic change of heart. Many of the affluent are frightened by the demands of such a call, fearing the risk involved, especially of losing positions of privilege.

### **Reason Three — The Poor are the *Anawim* of God**

The poor or *anawim* are the simple ones, the meek and lowly, the apt subject of the beatitudes for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). Jesus identifies himself with the little ones and the wretched (Matt. 25:45). Poverty goes hand in hand with spiritual childhood required to enter the Kingdom (Mark 9:33). In Luke's view, Jesus is calling his disciples to actual poverty when he says "sell your possessions and give alms" (Luke 12:33) unlike Matthew who speaks of the "poor in spirit" which also includes the wealthy. By being overlooked by the

worldly powerful, the poor need Divine favor with greater urgency and recognize their continued dependence on the Almighty.

#### **Reason Four — They are the Multitude**

The poor are the vast majority of the Earth's human population and the gulf is widening each year. While sheer numbers do not seem a reason, for even a remnant could effect a moral change, still it is precisely the aforesaid democratic nature of environmental change that makes the masses necessary. About eighty percent of the world's population today resides in less developed nations (4,165 million in 1991 as compared to 1,219 million in the more developed regions) and this is rising to 85% by the turn of the century barring no catastrophe such as an immense death toll from the AIDS epidemic or a nuclear holocaust. The poorer nations are increasing at a growth rate of 2.1% per year and the more developed at 0.5% <sup>2</sup>

#### **Reason Five — The Poor Are Freer To Criticize Themselves**

While freedom from destitution may be necessary to draw the attention of poor people to more complex environmental pursuits, still a history of scarcity and the possibility it will continue and even increase sharpens the attention of the poor to the need for action and change. The hungry are acutely aware of the need for such basics as food, clothing and decent shelter. These may not fully comprehend the basic nature of environmental protection, but they are not prone to mere theorizing about needs.

The poor are constantly focused on essentials. They are without the trappings of affluence and so their focus is on their necessities, not scattered over a broad range of properties and sources of goods — even distant raw materials sources. This focusing gains precious time and energy required to take stock of faults, omissions and past mistakes when dealing with securing basic resources. It is the bluntness so characteristic of Gandhi whose answer to India's bondage was accepted by the poor — "The English have not taken India, we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength but because we kept them."

This attention to the poor does not negate the responsibility of affluent people, but delivers a sizeable portion of responsibility for healing social ills precisely to the untried and politically inexperienced poor, who have not yet taken matters into their own hands. With responsibility there can be action, and the poor have less patience with excuses. However, this is certainly not always the case, for greedy poor can aspire to be greedy rich who cling ever so tightly to their fleeting possessions.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Stages of Eco-Spiritual Growth Towards Identity with the Poor**

Authentic spirituality encourages human growth and development that is patterned after natural growth patterns, that is, through stages or levels going from elementary to advanced ones, each more outwardly and community-centered. This spirituality needs be ecological or an eco-spirituality. Humus means earth from which is derived human and humility, a manner of treating Earth gently and with respect. The cultivated virtue of humility is at the heart of an authentic eco-spirituality that directs people to greater planetary cooperation. The affluent

cannot continue to stand above the poor as elite or leaders but must truly create change at a level where all people are most comfortable. While the previous section dealt with the poor in their condition, this one deals with the affluent person's journey to becoming identified with the poor, for in so traveling we come closer to Divine Love. The stages mentioned here were analyzed independently of those in the succeeding chapter but have strong resemblances to them as will be noted.

Five stages of eco-spirituality can be distinguished. These invite the spiritual traveller to deeper levels of maturity -that is, levels closer to the Earth and to the Earth's poor people and creatures. The five are: eco-tourism (come and see); eco-volunteerism (come and do something for others); eco-pioneering (come and participate among); eco-companionship (come and be with); and eco-identification (come and be). All are alluded to in the first section of this chapter. Furthermore, an analysis of an Earth-related activism includes five stages of involvement — for ourselves (to save our own earthly environment), for others (to help them live better lives), for our deeper involvement in the processes of the Earth; for fellow creature-companions (so that they may thrive on the Earth), and for creating one community of beings (a movement to true community).

We want also to show how the resurrection is an interconnecting ingredient that is incorporated in our spirituality in each of these five levels as: a basic and necessary element in our Faith act; a power which helps us encourage and assist others in coming to faith (an apologetic doctrine); a tool to weather the storm; a loving mystery which allows us to be a companion with the Risen Lord (a forthcoming event in our future); and an identifying movement which underlies the Risen Lord's presence on this Earth (resurrection as Earth Healing).

### **1. Elementary Stage: The Pilgrim/Tourist**

a) Description: A starting purgative stage of eco-spirituality concerns matters of basic salvation.<sup>4</sup> We must first know the poor lest we miss our call to heal for failing to see. "Did you see me when I was hungry?" Jesus will ask. ECO-TOURISTS desire to see the poor from a distance. However, these viewers are not yet interested in getting too involved in changing the world. A dissatisfaction with the imperfection of this level ordinarily becomes apparent and moves the pilgrim to further depths (by the Good Spirit). One begins to realize that simply looking on from a non-involved distance is demeaning both to the poor and to the on-looker.

b) Environmental Activities: What results as actions at this stage are those dealing with the basic environmental concern - the saving of our Earth and our sweet hide as well. FEAR is predominant for, unless we act, all will be lost ~ our air, water, landscape, the Earth itself. One is more motivated by fear than by acts of love or sharing — though some degree of love is present.

c) Resurrection as Credal Belief: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," for if I do not believe I am spiritually dead. For believers at this more elementary level the resurrection is a credal element which is necessary for basic Christian adherence - a matter of faith and salvation.

## **2. Exploratory Stage: The Volunteer**

a) Description: A second stage of spiritual awareness goes beyond merely observing the poor and involves doing something charitable for them as ECO-VOLUNTEERS — good-hearted but generally inexperienced folks wanting to help in some manner. An authentic growth has occurred beyond being mere observers, for involvement and help is given. However, this stage of altruism is not perfect, for there is still distance between "they" the poor and "we" the volunteers. The service giver possesses something the needy lacks, and an act of giving is not an act of mutual sharing. The process and motives need purifying because giving can be a power trip.

b) Environmental activities: Imperfect Earth healing of this type goes beyond maintaining essential needs as in the first stage. It aims to curb mass destruction. Here environmental services are given for others such as monitoring, auditing, repairing and rebuilding - what an "expert" can do for the inexperienced. The dichotomy is strongly between those with environmental skills and those needing them.

c) Resurrection: This fundamental truth is now perceived as a tool to evangelize others and bring them through the force of the resurrection event to be more like the believer. The mystery is expressed in terms of proof texts, connections between the various gospel accounts, and involved reasoning with the intention of moving another to a decision. The believer as volunteer delivers a package to one lacking in truth, and seeks to lead that person to submission and acceptance by becoming a believer. Easter is a truth of traditional faith.

## **3. Intermediate Stage: The Pioneer**

a) Description: This stage goes beyond the volunteer. One wishes to homestead or settle among the others, not merely have excursions from time to time to visit and help. Here is a further commitment to some degree of involvement with the poor but still with a certain degree of distance. Since this is a departure from routine, much time is consumed in finding where one fits in, how to do the activities required and what lifestyle modifications are necessary. In some ways this is an individuating phase in the journey and gives much attention to the self as authentic participant in the struggle. If ultimately seen as a learning period or transitory stage then it is not selfish. The word "Pioneer" is ambiguous for one brings baggage to a new culture while looking about, unsure whether to be a humble learner or teacher. The pioneer stands between cultures, reluctant to fully immerse oneself and yet at the door looking in anxiously.

b) Environmental activities: This is the research, study, dialogue, and the other exercises needed to effect change and healing. It is the moment when one feels powerless before the vast accumulation of experience and knowledge. This resembles the activities of homesteaders trying new things and finding those most suited for the individual. It is a period of maturation, insight, change of lifestyle, a turning around.

c) Resurrection: As a significant happening, resurrection now becomes a tool for guidance, a dream that keeps the believers moving forward even when not completely

comprehending the full impact of the event in their lives. It is the faith of Job turning to a future time, an event worth exploring, even while for now other practical considerations are what seem to matter most. Through the darkness of the present moment a sign of future deliverance appears and gives one hope of ultimate victory.

#### **4. Deeper Stage: The Companion**

a) Description: An authentic desire to grow makes one soon perceive the insufficiency of volunteerism. Through a push and pull from past imperfection to future movement toward perfection the pilgrim-turned-volunteer becomes a companion to and with the poor. Distance between companion and the poor (people and Earth) narrows; people become neighbors and Earth becomes home. In this third stage a degree of companionship is attained, where the other becomes a friend and associate, not like a pupil to a teacher or a fearing subject to a fearsome leader. We are co-equal with the poor and all creation and begin to know their suffering on a first hand and enduring basis. A solidarity is developing.

b) Environmental action: At this level we become deeply concerned about the other creatures of the Earth because we recognize our need for their companionship, how they help preserve us in harmony and good health, and also their dependence on us for existence and for a protected habitat. We maintain some distance but conceive of cooperative endeavor with fellow human beings and all the creatures of the Earth.

c) Resurrection: Resurrection is more than an article of faith or an apologetic tool or a hope of future victory even in the darkness. Now we discover it as a saving event through which we more closely enter into companionship with the risen Lord, as we companion the poor he identifies himself with. We share in his glory and as a companion prepare for our own future resurrection and that of a healed Earth.

#### **5. Deepest Stage: The Poor**

a) Description: In seeking deeper levels we become vulnerable through becoming and identifying with the poor and powerless. We commit ourselves to ECO-IDENTIFICATION with the poor. We can truly say "we" and not "they." The condition of vulnerability springs from the circumstances and situations which open themselves to our risk-taking ventures, which may result in loss of independence, position and even in some cases life. We are now willing to experience LOVE through self-sacrifice and we are moved to identify with the ultimate Poor One.

b) Environmental action: Here an eco-activism is the most human, for it is a movement through self-sacrifice to a community of beings in which distance is still further reduced without sacrificing one's self-identification. Establishing this community of beings becomes an ennobling activity which goes beyond merely saving the Earth, as at the first level, or making life better for inhabitants at the second level, or even protecting fellow creatures. The pervasive and inclusive poor, the "we poor," accepts a relationship with all creatures for their own sake, not for utilitarian purposes and considers the working with them as a cooperative venture of gifted beings.

c) Resurrection: Resurrection becomes more than future happening and is a present operative mystery which infuses the entire universe and most particularly this Earth. The very manner in which the Earth is to be renewed is in the pattern and image of the Risen One.

### **Activating the Poor**

The poor hold the key to the rising of the Earth. We realize the revolutionary call that the humble will be lifted up and the high brought low in the Magnificat, the prayer of Mary that becomes the prayer of the Church every evening (Luke 1:53a). The lowly or destitute rise up by God's power working through human processes. They acquire control over the Earth's resources in order to satisfy their basic needs. Theirs is the authentic cry of resurrection from an anguished people and is made prior to, after and more ideally simultaneous with the humbling of the mighty. It is ideal because otherwise the poor would have to force the affluent to give up their privilege or the mighty will have to exercise a unilateral decision to do so and thus dictate the pattern of equalization. The ideal is to maximize the free acts of letting go and taking on, as the free exchange is of mutual benefit to both parties.

Declaring that the mighty are brought low (Luke 1:53b) does not say how this will or does occur. Most likely it is God's power manifested through a human agency. It is part of the process of resurrection. The rise of the lowly and the humbling of the mighty are both aspects of the process of equalization of resource use, or eco-justice being manifested. The curbing of luxurious consumption is one component; the rise of the poor from destitution is another. If this process is not operative, then eco-justice is not being established and a great disorder continues to reign on the Earth. Only through this equalization can the Earth be healed and brought to the community of love it is intended to be.

This twofold process could occur in a variety of ways, some more harsh than others: external coercion in the form of financial depression, terrorism or authoritarian control; voluntary embrace of simplicity in lifestyle by the affluent; or revolution initiated by the poor or by both parties working together to bring about profound change. The more coercive options degrade human beings and produce inordinate suffering on the part of unfortunate victims. Voluntary simplicity by addicted affluent people would be virtually a miracle which we can hope for but not presuppose in such a human undertaking as Earth healing. A more profound and fundamental change in our way of acting (truly revolutionary in the deepest sense) seems to be the only viable option. We need to strive to make this a process that is the least disruptive and the most effective.

Whether this process will occur is beyond the purview of this book. That it must occur if there is to be eco-justice and healing is part of our prophetic witness. If eco-justice be established and preserved these conditions must be maintained:

\* The process must be a cooperative endeavor by both poor and affluent;

- \* It has a desired effect, namely, more equitable distribution of resources and curbing of luxurious waste;
- \* Non-violent means are sought at all times;
- \* The transition minimizes hardship;
- \* This is not a purely individual human endeavor but must depend on the power of believing community encouraging each member and the power of God working in us.
- \* The revolution must be gentle in its manner, respectful of human freedom and firm in its intolerance of injustice.

Resurrection is the ultimate revolution, for the old order of life and death has been replaced by life, death and new life. This is revolutionary in both a profound spiritual and ecological sense, a turning out of the old order and an ushering in of the new. From a secular standpoint the resurrection event would be profoundly new and unexpected if accepted at all, a prime gratuity from God. In retrospect we discover through a deeper understanding of the Earth's processes that there is a pattern moving from life to death to new life that is akin to the natural processes of creative life, giving way to redemptive death, and followed by enlivening recycling and composting processes. A Trinitarian process is at work.

How different is this from the linear modern consumption patterns of our culture. There production gives way to consumption and the cast offs are considered to be "wastes," the ultimate symbolic act of despair by a materialistic culture. Waste materials, whether incinerated or placed in landfills, become an ecological problem fraught with polluting side-effects. They are the wages of ecological sin, destroyers of our ecological balance, symptoms of consumer product addiction (see "Waste Minimization: Widening the Perspectives."<sup>5</sup>) The poor, surrounded by and most affected by this waste, need be the ones who bring about a change.

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In the fall of 1988 I gazed out of the train window on the way to Delhi and saw a youthful goat herder in the great distance. Was he only to be this all his life or could change occur to give more meaning to his life? Would he ever unite with others who could seek a better or more varied life? Should he remain so content? To bring that poor goat herder to a fuller life two forces must be simultaneously at work: the simplification of the affluent and the rise of the destitute.

Resurrection is the power through which this action can occur. Before we consider the questions of power and powerlessness it is necessary to discuss discernment. There is no greater contribution that we believers can make today in the Earth healing process than to introduce discernment into social and political decision-making. It is of critical importance here, for some things called spirituality may be purely distracting and a diversion from the conserving of spiritual resources needed to bring about the ascent of the poor - and the descent of the affluent to a final universal equalization. The elements of this discernment will be treated in Chapter 4.



The resurrection promise is the freedom to start over again. Indeed, we can be forgiven for past mistakes and through genuine repentance we can come to a new spring. The resurrection is the eternal springtime of human possibilities. Just as the rising sun gives us a fresh morning and winter gives way to Easter, so forgiveness ushers in a new beginning. Or are we making some ecological marks that are indelible and cannot be forgiven? Believers exude hope that our ecological sins are forgiven. However, realism makes us aware of how much more arduous is the task and the need to enlist the great mass of the people. Redirecting resources and the attention of people to this task requires a needed discerning spirit.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See *Creation in Crisis* (Shantilal P. Bhagat, Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, 1990), p.92
- <sup>2</sup> See "1991 World Population Data Sheet," Population Reference Bureau, Inc. 1875 Conn. Ave., NW Washington, DC 20009.
- <sup>3</sup> See Hind Swaraj, *M.K. Gandhi*, Navajivan Press, 1939, Ahmedabad, India, Ch. 7, p. 22.
- <sup>4</sup> See Ignatius' three kinds of humility in *The Spiritual Exercises* for an analogous division of different degrees of commitment. This first stage correlates with a decision to avoid serious sin, and to commit oneself in some way to God's work.
- <sup>5</sup> "Waste Minimization: Widening the Perspectives", Section II, Albert Fritsch and Timothy Collins, ASPI Publications, 1993.

## **CHAPTER 4: DISCERNMENT: GROWING INTO A RESURRECTION-CENTERED SPIRITUALITY**

by Bob Sears

We must listen to the poor for guidance, and to our own poverty. It is the "lowly" who "possess the land," as the beatitude says (see also Ps 39). And yet we grow into that awareness only gradually. We have just shown how true that is in our addressing the needs of the poor and the poor Earth. Are we really ready for a resurrection spirituality? Perhaps we need first to be encouraged to savor creation before we can give it over to God. We may need to experience deeply as tourists before we can find our unique call. We may have to struggle to develop our portion of the Earth, before we can learn our ultimate poverty and the Earth's poverty. What we have so far presented may be the ideal, but what is needed for it to be really possible? Are there previous stages of growth that must be achieved before people can really be motivated by that ideal? How can we tell where we are on the journey, and what we are presently called to do? How can we tell an authentic spiritual call from an unauthentic one? Besides growing in awareness of the outer poor, we need to learn to attend to our inner readiness, and cooperate with God's step-by-step pedagogy.

Take, for example, the three vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. Each vow represents a kind of dying to narrow self-interest for the sake of others and of God. Each is a way of living out the resurrected life. In poverty we possess nothing so that everything we dispose of can serve God and others. In celibacy one gives to God the spouse and family one might have to take God as special partner and God's people, especially the poor, as one's family. And in obedience, one gives one's will to God through one's superiors. Similarly, as we have seen, service of the Earth gradually calls us to transcend narrow self-interest to serve God and the needs of the poor and the Earth. However, if we look carefully at each of these commitments, we can see they would actually hinder growth if undertaken prematurely. Anyone who gives up wealth before learning to manage it properly runs the danger of becoming stunted and stingy, and small hearted in using the goods of this world. What is meant to expand our hearts would then constrict them, as I found happening with myself before I came to notice it.

The same is true for celibacy and obedience. We cannot surrender a particular love if we have never learned to love at all. It would only leave us narrow and self-centered and unable to really put the interests of another on a par with of our own. So also, those who have trouble choosing for themselves are poor risks for obedience. They may only remain children all their lives and never question what they are told. We would argue similarly about care for the Earth. We need the broad experience and challenge of the various views being presented (including our own) to see whether and how each applies to us personally. In other words, we need to discern what God is really calling us to do, and where we are in the process. This chapter is meant to help one do such discerning, and to see the different ways the resurrection may be calling us.

We will begin by considering a view of spiritual growth in light of resurrection as a context for discernment. Then we will highlight the specific focus of our developmental view in relation to the creation-centered spirituality of Matthew Fox. We will conclude with observations on discernment in light of care for the Earth.

## Stages of Spiritual Growth and Jesus

As AI discovered stages in concern for ecology, I had already experienced stages of spiritual/emotional development in light of salvation history. Coming from diverse points of view and not knowing each other's work, our stages show a remarkable similarity. They also show a kinship with the many different developmental views that are emerging today. Jean Piaget has carefully analyzed the stages of intellectual and moral growth in children, Kohlberg had analyses moral development in young adults, and Erikson had worked out a pattern of social, psychological development in the human life cycle. More recently Robert Kegan has presented an integrated view of human development.<sup>1</sup> It takes no genius to see the difference between a child stage (of taking in the norms of the culture), a crisis and searching stage (where one reaches an impasse and has to come to personal values and decisions) and an adult, generative stage (where one hands on what one has received), with the possibility of coming up with something new that would challenge the culture, not just hand it on. Stages of development are found in all forms of life.

### 1. Individual development:

If we look closely at each of these types of development, we find certain recurring patterns. First, each life form always repeats what is handed on to it, with some variation to adapt to new circumstances. Life conserves the best of what went before and transforms it in light of new circumstances. That exemplifies the conservation principle of ecology in each level of life.

Secondly, there are successive levels of integration (plant, animal, human) each of which is conserved, and even further developed in its own right, as it is integrated in the more developed form. Human reflection uses data of the senses like animals, and human vision is more nuanced in certain ways than that of animals. So also for vegetative life in animals (as the seed that each produces for propagation), it is more differentiated even than in plants. That is a curious but important phenomenon. The newly evolved level actually perfects the previous level in ways not possible if one were to stay at that level.

Thirdly, the newly emergent level seems to unfold by introjecting or incorporating the underlying level in a new, more flexible way. One lives out the underlying level till one, as it were, develops an inner image of that action (one "reflects" it, or "mirrors" it interiorly) and that inner image becomes the basis of the new level. Piaget's work on intellectual development brought out that phenomenon most clearly. All an infant can initially do is crawl and grope (what Piaget calls the sensori-motor stage). It has no conception of objects remaining when a sheet hides them from view. But gradually (around 1 1/2 or 2) it builds an inner image of its crawling, groping and perceiving and will reach around the sheet to get the object. This "intuitive-projective" stage allows for language development and imagination. At 6 or 7 these images are then incorporated in a higher synthesis that Piaget calls "concrete operations," which permits such concepts as maintenance of volume of clay or water when the form changes, and the constancy of number. Concrete operations are then themselves interiorized into inner formal operations in the adolescent, so he or she can dream about possibilities, not just work on concrete objects or games. What is fascinating about this is the developmental process itself, not

just what it says about children (and all of us!) One lives out a certain stage of development till a "higher synthesis" emerges to reintegrate it, and further perfect it in its own right while raising it to a higher synthesis. Each underlying level remains, as any depth psychologist would know from the child-like intuitive dreams that surface in deep analysis, and the need for new "sensori-motor" experiences to heal early wounds. But also, at some point the underlying level reaches an impasse, a kind of "suffering" that eventually breaks it down while a new level emerges.

Thus, fourthly, the reflecting back that brings about the need for a new synthesis is occasioned by some crisis (either from within the organism or from without) that the previous level is not able to meet. It is a critical, confused time. For example, Piaget found that 6 year olds (or those children in the intuitive-projective stage of development) could not answer whether or not there was the same amount of clay when a ball was flattened or rolled into a cylinder. They couldn't integrate width and height in the same system, so depending on their criterion they said it was either less when flattened (ie. less height) or more (ie. more width), or they shifted between the two. When the next stage (which he called "concrete operations") was developed, they "knew" it was the same! They had reached a new synthesis that made the answer clear. They could do more than "perceive." They could reverse the operation ("I can make it back into a ball") or argue that the substance remained constant despite appearances. They could think "concretely", but these same children would become confused in thinking about the future (ie. possibilities) until they reached adolescence and new stage of "formal operations."

That brings us to a fifth observation. It is not just crises between stages that bring confusion, but also challenges within stages. All growth, especially and more pronouncedly human growth, is cyclical. As Carl Jung noted, when energy cannot progress in an accustomed way, it cycles back to foundations to rework them for further advances. Why do breakdowns occur at certain stages of life? And what happens? People regress to child stages of development, and may stay infantile unless helped to face the crises their present style of life or particular integration could not handle.

## **2. Development within systems:**

All these observations about development apply to social systems as well as individuals within the system. It was Teilhard who called our attention to three basic principles of on-going creation or evolution: differentiation, increasing interiority and deepened community. "Union differentiates," he repeatedly wrote, and each advance brings a deepened, more complex interiority. Every new stage of evolution: molecules to life to sensation to thought shows increased complexity or differentiation, increased self-activity or freedom and all this in a total unity. Increasing differentiation (as in sexual reproduction and increasing biological and cultural variations) is the presupposition of creativity and adaptability, as we indicated with our three ecological principles. One of the banes of our present day extinction of so many different biological species is that this principle of evolution is being degraded and hence the ability of life to adapt and grow is crippled.

As in individual development, the transitions between the stages require a kind of "death" to preceding integrations in order to be resynthesized in the higher level, yet the higher synthesis preserves the laws of the lower level also. Social systems also achieve certain levels of development, then meet crises in those levels that call for revisioning of foundations and perhaps even the emergence of a totally new foundation to handle the situation. Our ecological crisis today is one such impasse. Our unrestricted development of mass production and mass media is revealing how destructive it has become for many individuals within the systems. We must rethink foundations or we will destroy the very life we are trying to serve. How can we better understand such systemic change?

Family systems therapy, especially intergenerational family therapy, illustrates the dynamics of systems and how they develop and change.<sup>2</sup> Therapists like Murray Bowen and Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy discovered that clients act differently in families than when they are separate. In a family interview, the child may act out when the parents begin to fight each other, as though to distract the therapist from their conflict! The illness, they began to realize, was systemic. If the child were "healed", the family system would resist the change or displace the symptom on some other child. The more undifferentiated the family was (the more their lives were "enmeshed" with each other), the more the whole family had to be "treated." Bowen found that when he worked with the parents to help them respect each other's differences, the child would often get better without even being treated! From many similar experiences certain principles were developed.

From a systems perspective, the individual grows only if he or she maintains connection to the system at the same time as differentiating. The enmeshed or immature person either dominates or submits, fights cyclically, or withdraws. Any of these responses actually leaves the system unchanged. To escape a family means you take it with you unconsciously, and repeat the traditional pattern in any new deep relationship. Similarly with ongoing conflict or domination -- no real change is effected. Only if one maintains the relationship while differentiating is there lasting change. Further, as Nagy pointed out, there is an "invisible loyalty" between the individual and the family or system. Our inability to differentiate is not simply because we are afraid of the family's opposition. We also feel a deep disloyalty when we strike out in new ways. Paradoxically, what gives us the freedom to change is to be grateful to the family for what we have positively received (even if it is only that we received life!). Such acknowledgement of gifts received frees one to develop one's uniqueness without incurring disloyalty. It also frees one to forgive the limits of one's parents or community, and to make one's growth a return gift (whether or not it is received as such by the family). The more one really understands what is right for one's family or system, and makes some positive step towards furthering it, the freer one becomes to be different. If one simply "breaks away" to go one's own way, paradoxically, one remains tied to the system in some unconscious way.

The communist revolution is an obvious example. The rebellion was against the dictatorship of Emperor and Church, but the result was an even more destructive dictatorship of the communist leaders. They had remained "loyal" to the structure of dictatorship while professedly trying to distance themselves from it. In Christian terms, there needs to be a grateful and forgiving attitude towards one's system for real differentiation and growth to occur. This is the principle of conservation in action. Not everything is conserved. Only what is grounded in

God's faithful love. It is this interplay of faithfulness and differentiation that brings about true development.

### **3. Christian Spiritual Development:**

Do the same developmental dynamics apply to spiritual growth? My own experience and an examination of Judaeo-Christian history with this question in mind has convinced me that there is a definite developmental pattern. Tradition has always seen stages of spiritual development in Christian life, but has not clearly integrated them with salvation history. For example, the classical stages of purgative, illuminative and unitive ways are more psychological than historical and little attempt has been made to see such stages in Jesus' life, even though Luke says "he grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and men" (Lk 2:52). Let us examine a possible paradigm of this historical development from the data of salvation history.

All stages of development presuppose a goal or end of the process. An acorn becomes an oak tree, and we can only tell its stages of growth if we know what a mature oak tree becomes. I have discovered five stages in salvation history leading to Jesus' death/resurrection as the culmination of the process. If Jesus is God's own Son, then the culminating point of his life must express the most perfect human/divine fulfillment. Even for non-believers in Jesus, death is certainly the limit of what we can understand, and what life is in face of this end must be its fullest development (as Heidegger noted: we are beings unto death). What the resurrection adds is a mysterious fulfillment of our deepest hopes and dreams, without negating our deepest fears. What stages do we find leading to this point? We will look at the stages as ever new challenges—new opportunities for growth or sin according to human response to them.

First, Scripture reveals an initial faith stage (the Yahwist tradition) which stressed trust and obedience to Yahweh and warned against eating from the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil" (Gn 2-3). The Yahwist was open to God working through women and men and the surrounding cultures. Yet humans sinned, that is, disobeyed God and followed their own experience, and that led to the progressive degeneration we find in the Bible. There are certainly other stages in history before this stage (eg. the underlying mother goddess faith that the Yahwist presupposed and reinterpreted as we discuss further in Chapter 6) and may be further divisions within this and succeeding stages. Yet this stage and the following are clearly differentiated in Scripture and, I believe, in our experience so they help us clarify these spiritual dynamics. The Yahwist told the story of Abraham, the wanderer (like the pilgrim/tourist we referred to in Chapter 3?) as the reverse of the Adam and Eve story. Adam and Eve and their offspring were excluded from paradise because of their disobedience, Abraham and his offspring were promised the land if he would leave his homeland and obey Yahweh, even though he didn't know the goal (Gn 12:1-5). We also, as Adam and Eve, may experience a very deep distrust in God, and appeal preferably to our own experience for guidance, but we also can be touched by faith in God's love to risk change and move to a new place promised by God. Sin here is distrust in God's love; grace moves one to obedient trust.

Secondly, a familial faith stage is evidenced in the Elohist/Deuteronomist biblical traditions, composed most likely by the prophets outside Jerusalem who were disillusioned by the Davidic kingship. This view emphasized choosing Yahweh beyond all other gods, and

keeping the law. Death was the punishment if they broke the covenant given their fathers. This view saw sin and blessing as socially transmitted (the sins of the fathers are handed down to four generations, the blessings to a thousand), and it had a definite "either/or" mentality. Either you keep the law (and receive blessing) or you will die (and be punished). It is the reward/punishment mentality we find in every denomination or culture at a certain stage of its development. The tradition has to be handed on, and right or wrong is measured in light of it. In this stage, action according to the cultural norm of good and evil is the guiding principle (not unlike the eco-volunteer in Ch.3). Sin in this stage is thought of as disobeying the law and going against the traditions, grace moves one to serve God in loyalty to God-given traditions.

Thirdly, we find what I have come to call individuating faith emerging during the Exile (see Second Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel as well as Job and later Wisdom Literature). In this stage Yahweh announced that the previous covenant had been broken (see Jer 31:32, etc.), but that he would create a "new covenant" by giving his Spirit into the heart of each individual person. Ez 18 says that the proverb "The fathers have eaten green grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" (referring to the sins of fathers being visited on their children) will no longer be said in Israel. For the children are Yahweh's as much as the parents. What each one chooses, they will receive! And Jeremiah affirms "each will know Yahweh (ie. have personal experience) from the least to the greatest" (Jer 31:34). In this stage the initiative is God's: "I will put my Spirit in your hearts and make you keep my laws" (Ez 36:27). It is a stage of innocent suffering like that of Jeremiah and the story of Job, for in opening to God our previous attitudes must die and give way to the uncertainty of mystery, and acting in obedience to God forever incurs the misunderstanding and rejection of the prevailing culture. It is not unlike the "suffering" stage of ecological involvement (the eco-pioneer) in its uncertainty and hesitancy to commit to what it seems clear God wants. Its goal is to open to God directly, as I experienced in my depression, and to experience a "new creation." But one may not sustain this new immediacy with God. After the Exile Israel failed to maintain this unmediated relation to God's creative Spirit and regressed to the familial stage through increased attention to law. The stages are cyclical, and when one does not progress, one regresses. This is what Israel did, and for five centuries, it seems, they experienced a period of spiritual drought. Will this also happen in the ecological movement? Another deviation here would be to disconnect this stage from the preceding—to adhere only to one's own experience of God in disregard of one's religious culture and tradition. This is the danger of the New Age spiritualities that tend to disassociate people from their religious traditions by focusing on an undifferentiated, global, and purely spiritual Source. This approach denies the very dialectic and developmental nature of the faith process. The true prophets always spoke from within their traditions (and took the consequences!), just as true growth conserves and refocuses the essence of what went before. True individuation is always in relationship--a step to social transformation.

Thus, fourthly, in Jesus we find a new stage that I have called communitarian (or individuated community) faith. It is rooted in the individuating faith of stage three, but goes beyond to build community through suffering love. Now for the first time forgiveness of enemies is made a universal principle, based not on their worthiness but on God's universal love. Isaiah 53 spoke of the suffering of the Servant as life-giving for others, but this truth was first lived out in Jesus. In his time there seemed to be no anticipation of such a suffering servant, so Jesus' way of life was a scandal to his contemporaries. The reason Jesus' ministry was so



misunderstood is that his contemporaries judged him in light of familial faith, whereas he was grounded in an individuated relation to God and reached out in that love to creatively heal and forgive others. We see that clearly in the Good Samaritan story (Lk 11:29-37). The scribe asked Jesus "who is my neighbor?," whereas Jesus turned the question around at the end of the story to read "who showed himself neighbor to the one who fell among thieves?" Jesus was creating community, even at some cost to himself, whereas the scribe was drawing lines to see who belonged to his family of faith and who didn't. And yet Jesus was not creating an entirely new community disconnected from its faith history. He remained subject to Israel's law when interpreted as God's law of love. Furthermore, he was put to death under Israel's authority, which, he said, came from God (Mt 23:1-3). Jesus said that he came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Mt 5:17). A communitarian kind of relationship is not conformed to a written law, but as love it fulfils the law (Rom 13:8) even as it relates to the uniqueness of each individual. It forms a pluralistic community that respects differences. It is the ecological "companion" who (like St. Francis of Assisi) finds a dialogical fellowship with many others and with other creatures. Only after Jesus' death, it seems, did his disciples break through to a similar creative faith through Jesus' resurrection Spirit. They were sent out by Jesus as Jesus was sent "to forgive sins," (Jn 20:22-3). They experienced God's forgiving love in spite of their previously abandoning Jesus, and were reconciled with each other. Inauthenticity in this stage would seek solidarity without differentiation and respect for the uniqueness of each one's background and tradition, or communion without acknowledging one's own sinfulness and need for God's forgiveness. Spiritual pride and cults would result, as one usurped God's power to create and ground community.

This heralds a fifth and final stage that I have called mission faith which is based in the resurrection of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit on the disciples to form a Spirit empowered church. The Spirit not only reconciled believers to one another and opened them to forgive each other, it also empowered the community of believers to go out and live God's compassionate love for all the world. Only as an empowered, individuated community did the disciples have the staying power to live Jesus' message despite the rejection of the world and even martyrdom. The early Christians were noted for taking care even of the pagans' poor (as a concerned letter of Pliny to the emperor Trajan lamented!), and they bore witness to Jesus with their lives. Here we find what we have called "the active poor", those who live in solidarity with all creatures, and who are committed to being part of the healing of the whole Earth no matter what the cost. (See figure 1 for an illustration of these stages.)

These stages are clearly differentiated in Scripture and, I believe, in our own experience. If we examine their interrelationship, we find they exemplify all the laws we found in other forms of development. Firstly, each succeeding stage includes and further develops the preceding; it does not simply replace it. For example, it is trust in Yahweh that opens one to obey the law and tradition in community. Law does not replace trust but deepens it. And again, the breakthrough to God's Spirit does not replace the Law, but gives us a new power to fulfil it (see Mt 5:18; Rom 13:10). And communitarian faith is based on and increases each person's unique relationship to God, which in turn overflows in mission. Thus resurrection/mission which is the culmination of the process includes and differentiates each stage along the way.

Secondly, however, the developmental process is cyclical and not simply a straight line forward. Crises move development forward, but they also can cause regression, as we find in post-exilic Israel and Christianity after the founding period. Since the stages are cumulative, the earlier stages need to be solid to support the breakthrough of succeeding stages. The breakthrough of Spirit will disintegrate community if it is not firmly grounded in communitarian faith, as happened in the early church with the wandering prophets, and seems to be happening today with the many "enlightenment" and New Age movements. Because of these historical "traumas," religions can increase legalism and fundamentalist efforts to prevent disintegration, but this returns them to self-defensive procedures such as we find in fixation in familial faith when it is afraid to trust in God's Spirit.

Thirdly, those that do trust God's power (like Jesus) will meet fearful resistance and efforts to maintain the status quo no matter how carefully they present their positions. This is a recognized dynamic in family systems therapy and in social transformation. Their temptation is to fall back on human means (like armed resistance or breaking away from the community, etc.) but such means merely continue the "familial" attitudes and simply re-locate the problem in a revolutionary system. Jesus' ideological competitors (the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots and Essenes) used such means—domination, fighting or withdrawal—and we see after many years that the conflicts still remain. Jesus trusted God even at the cost of his own life. He lived the forgiving love he preached without using it as an excuse for inaction.

Fourthly, then, each stage has a different view of God as the ultimate guide to action. The familial stage sees God as law-giver, which justifies its "holy wars." Individuating faith breaks down the "black and white" certainty of familial faith (see the Book of Job) and opens up to a universal view of God's mysterious action. Communitarian faith sees God as healing, compassionate love and unites with God in showing such compassion (as Jesus sought out sinners and the sick because of his view of God while the Pharisees avoided them). Communitarian faith also sees Jesus as one with God, and sees other people as God's children. And finally, mission faith sees the Holy Spirit as the ground of "new creation" springing from the joint love of Father and Son. The "oneness" of God (first revealed in the individuating faith stage) is now seen as "Trinitarian community of creative love." Resurrection healing is to restore this community of mutual, self-giving/receiving love with others and all creation. It respects the views of God in the earlier stages, while seeing all in a new light.

With this perspective it becomes clear why timing is so important for any decision. There are small steps one can take in caring for the environment (such as a personal growth in understanding nature and its needs) and there are larger prophetic stances for change that may put one's livelihood at risk. It has been found that such social transformation initiatives need a strong spiritual foundation to remain committed despite many setbacks and risks.<sup>3</sup> In the final stages, the goal is not so much whether immediate change is effected (it was not for Jesus!) as that God's love is expressed. Action grounded clearly in the resurrection is rooted in God, not on its possible immediate effectiveness, though every legitimate means will be taken to make it effective. Our faith tells us that our resurrection-based action will be ultimately fruitful for us and the Earth.

### **Comparison with the Creation-centered Spirituality of Matthew Fox**

In order to fill out and clarify the above position it will be helpful to compare/contrast it to the fourfold path presented by Matthew Fox. Fox developed what he came to call "Creation Spirituality" from his initial work in spirituality, and later expanded it to concern for the Earth through the influence of Meister Eckhart.<sup>4</sup> In his studies of spirituality, Fox became aware of the overly spiritualized approach of traditional spirituality, which seemed to split off the spirit from the body and also from the Earth. That kind of dualism encouraged the view that the body was something to control rather than to experience and learn from, and similarly the Earth is under human control rather than given to human care. He called this perspective Fall/Redemption spirituality and listed a number of people like Augustine, Thomas a Kempis up to Tanqueray as its representatives. He espoused another approach which celebrated the body and sensuality and more recently the Earth—his "creation spirituality." He began to see that much in Meister Eckhart articulated his approach, which he also found in the Old Testament Yahwist and Wisdom writers, in the Eastern tradition of Irenaeus, and in the West from Aquinas to Teilhard de Chardin. In his view Fall/Redemption spirituality neglected science, and so focused on original sin and its effects, that it sought detachment from the world and moral self-control and awaited the end of the world rather than its transformation. Creation-centered spirituality, on the other hand, welcomes creation as a gift from God, and welcomes the discoveries of science as revealing the creator. It focuses on the blessing of creation and our god-given commission to care for it. It encourages a sense of communion with nature and believes in the ultimate goodness and creativity of the cosmos.

Fox presents his position in four paths from the work of Eckhart. He grounds these stages most clearly in "Meister Eckhart on the Fourfold Path of a Creation-Centered Spiritual Journey."<sup>5</sup> My formulation of his four stages is a blend of that view with his reformulation in *Original Blessing*: (1) befriending creation as grace, (2) befriending darkness through letting go and letting be, (3) befriending creativity in spiritual breakthrough and birthing of God, and (4) befriending new creation through compassion.<sup>6</sup>

#### **1. Befriending creation as grace (via affirmativa).**

Focus on the Fall has tended to make Christians suspicious of nature and creation while developing a spirituality of controlling the body. Our senses and bodiliness are not carriers of revelation in this view, but temptations to be combatted. The Earth and our animal nature would share the same fate—given to us not to reverence but to use (some would say exploit) for human goals. Such is the "dualism" Fox laments. Our age, on the other hand, especially in North America, is discovering the goodness of creation and the senses. Fox was understandably excited to find Eckhart saying with Aquinas and Augustine that "God is in all things by essence, by virtue and by power," and that he even goes further than Aquinas in calling this experience of God in creation "the grace of creation."<sup>7</sup> So all creatures are holy, but especially humans who through their knowledge, freedom and love are made in God's own image. Creation is a book revealing God even if we lost all written scripture. Creation is a blessing more basic than the Fall of our first parents, and it needs to be opened with trust, sensual pleasure and ecstasy. It is deep pleasure, rather than a list of oughts, that most deeply changes us. The pursuit of life frees us to dream and critique the inadequacies of Church and Society whereas fear of sin makes us a

slave to structures. The "doctrine" of "Original Sin" is late and primarily a product of Western Christianity after Augustine. It needs to be rethought and put in the more basic tradition of "original blessing." Wholeness will come from a return to the positive energies of creation, the humility of earthiness, cosmic harmony and justice, a sense of creation transparent to God, and our call with Jesus to be rulers with God.

## **2. Befriending darkness through letting go and letting be (via negativa).**

Even though God is in creation, creation is not God. In order to attain God, Eckhart says, we have to recognize that in themselves all creatures are nothing. We do this by detachment (Abgeschiedenheit) which Fox translates as "letting go", and "letting be" (Gelassenheit). Instead of this "surrender to God" a kind of moralistic self-accusation seemed to develop in Western culture.<sup>8</sup> A "moral asceticism", a dualistic separation from pleasure, and a focus on will power have dominated the Western attitude. We fear darkness, lack of control and death, and then become enslaved and addicted to creatures. Creation points beyond itself to mystery, to its creative ground which transcends any limited creature. Since our very images and names for God, and "God" itself, is not God, we must "let go" of images, control, projections, fear of death, even our name for God. Behind the God we name is the godhead or nameless Trinity. To find greater life we must let go of fear of losing our life. We even need to "let go" of methods and techniques for finding God which only limit our openness to find God everywhere. This we see in Jesus, how he "let go" of cultural expectations, success, accepted ways of dealing with women, religious expectations, even the prevalent image of God. Forgiveness itself is a kind of "letting go" of blame and resentment and facing the pain and emptiness we cannot accept and so project. This kind of "letting go" presupposes affirmation, for "How can one let go of what one has not fallen in love with?" As we do let go, we also "let be," by reverencing God in all. Sin, in this view, is a refusal to "let go." By holding on to one's ego interests one creates divisions and domination and alienation from life, for life can only exist if we make ever renewed space for it. It is "falling into creatures and away from God" that Eckhart sees as fallen creation.

## **3. Befriending creativity in spiritual breakthrough and birthing of God in us (via creativa)**

As we see from revelation, the very being of the godhead is to give birth. The Father generates the Son in an eternal act of being. As we are brought by grace beyond ideas, images or acts of will we enter that hidden inner place where this eternal act of generation takes place. In that non-verbal silence not only is the Son engendered, but we are born (our second birth) as God's children in the Son. Eckhart calls this the "breakthrough" (Durchbruch) where our gracious adoption as God's children breaks through into awareness. It is why God became human, that we might be given birth as divine. The "flowing out" towards creation in path one is less noble than this "flowing in" or breakthrough to God for in it I and God become one. Not only are we children of God, but with God we give birth to the Son who is eternally being generated. Thus the negation of path two clears the way for divine creativity.

This new awareness casts a creative glow over all things. Creativity presupposes waiting and expecting the new. To be co-responsible for the new means sharing divinity, actualizing God's image through bearing fruit. Fox acknowledges it is frightening and there is always a price to pay since it confronts established powers whether they be societal, religious institutions or family patterns. This making space for the new, for arts and imagination. It is what Jesus' resurrection is about. He faced the destruction and emptying of his suffering which opened the way to new creation in the Spirit. It is what opening to the motherhood of God (and our mothering) is all about. Women know the pain and exhilaration of bringing new creations into the world. Trinity in Augustine's view was understood in analogy to the psyche and introverted. But Trinity is really the overflowing creativity of God who embraces otherness between the Father (Mother) and Son and bursts forth with the creative power of the Spirit.

The cosmos reveals this creativity (as Teilhard has amply shown) and we are called to become co-creators with the cosmos. Sin in this view is misused creativity: for control, destructiveness, disunity, ugliness (through mechanization) and boredom. The touch of God within (grace) awakens true creativity and fresh hope. Fall-Redemption creates dualisms—either/or--and so is one-sided and controlling. Creation spirituality creates dialectics—both/and--and so is multi-sided and open to the new.

#### **4. Befriending New Creation through Compassion (via transformativa).**

Eckhart's is not an introverted spirituality. The "breakthrough" of God's generativity as well as the paths of affirmation and negation opening to God beyond creation are found within the world, and are meant for others.<sup>9</sup> We need to "labor" to bring God's life into the world. Without this "we slay God" and die ourselves in the process. Real union with God makes us like God, and the "highest work that God works is compassion. Thus compassion, while grounded in contemplation, is the ultimate norm and goal of spirituality. The compassionate person overcomes economic greed and thus works for justice.<sup>10</sup> He or she receives bread and everything else as gift, given to us that we might give it to others. In short, we are "royal persons" called to work God's own compassion in the world.

Fox develops the implications of compassion in his book *A Spirituality Named Compassion* and he applies it to the Earth in his *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. It is the attitude of universal sensitivity grounded in eros, celebration and play that seeks "erotic justice" for the anawim: the little ones and those oppressed by society which most recently includes the Earth herself.<sup>11</sup> These are "prophets" who are non-elite, who dream of global justice and care enough to intervene for it. They are the feminists, the Third World, the lay people who are slighted by the establishment. What is needed is a return to roots, to our common sharing of God in creation, so that New Creation can work through us by God's Spirit. By "eros" is meant "hands on" experience, "suffering with" the poor and thus taking their concerns as one's own. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, creating movements of liberation. It is seen in Jesus' work of reconciliation: to oneself, others and the world. Where Fall-Redemption theory creates dualisms, sees heaven as after death and spirituality as contemplative, Creation-spirituality is historically involved, sees creativity now and is actively compassionate. Fox is convinced that we need to move from concern about the historical Jesus (though this also is needed) to recover

the Cosmic Christ who suffers in the crucifixion of the Earth. We need to repent of our sins against the Earth and to work with our creator God for its renewal.

### **Evaluation and Comparison/Contrast**

It is striking that the stages Matthew Fox found in Eckhart's view of spiritual growth (befriending creation, befriending darkness, accepting inner divinity, co-creativity) closely parallel the historical stages I had discovered through quite another method. Trust affirms creation and is the ground of all growth and healing. Individuating faith opens to darkness and takes us beyond all finite values to their ground in God. Communitarian faith releases co-creativity and delight in the arts and imagination. And mission faith releases compassionate care for all people and the Earth. In many ways Fox's writings illustrate and fill out much that is involved in these stages. On the other hand, there is no clear parallel in Fox to what I have called "familial faith." He seems to deny the on-going importance of that stage when he relegates it to his view of "Fall-Redemption." Further, what Jesus' resurrection does is make historically real those paths by taking history seriously and remaining faithful to God's people despite their sin. Thus Fox's position and the developmental view I presented share a common view of different aspects of growth, but they differ in how the stages interrelate. That springs from their very different name, grounding, and attitude toward change.

First, the name "Creation" spirituality in contrast to "Fall-Redemption" spirituality creates the very "dualism" Fox everywhere attacks, as though these positions were incompatible with each other. In fact, every orthodox theologian holds to a Fall and Redemption (as he himself implies by saying Christ is "not only a prophet of the New Creation but the New Creation itself."<sup>12</sup> Eckhart himself, who is not "creation centered" but "creator centered", says that if the soul leaves God for nothingness, "it cannot with its own power come back to itself again." Only Jesus can cleanse the temple and bring us back..<sup>13</sup> And, on the other hand, every Catholic theologian holds that creation is good, a gift of God that is not totally lost in spite of sin. So his two categories are not ontological dichotomies but descriptive of different perspectives.<sup>14</sup> The same could be said of his list of so-called contrasting qualities such as "faith as assent to truth vs. faith as trust", etc.<sup>15</sup> These also are certainly not mutually exclusive. The difference he is pointing to I have placed in different developmental stages. Seen from that perspective they can mutually enrich each other rather than create the very dualism he opposes.

Secondly, the term "creation spirituality" is Fox's own, not Eckhart's, and suggests an inaccurate grounding. Eckhart does see God in all creation, Fox's "panentheism," but this is fully attainable only through grace and a "breakthrough" to "new creation" (what I call "resurrection"). Thus, as Fox puts it, Eckhart is champion of "realized eschatology," i.e., resurrection now, which restores our union with God through the death/resurrection of Jesus, i.e., through forgiveness not just a return to creation. By speaking of art and Jesus' parables in the same breath, or the billions of years of the universe before humans and the time after the Fall as of equal value, Fox makes no clear distinction between the two orders. Is the "original blessing" he refers to "creation" or "new creation" (i.e. redemption!)? The two are very different, as different as Nature (creation) and Grace (God's free redemptive love), though never dualistic or separate. New Creation puts to death the old and raises it to a life beyond the original creation though including it. It presupposes freedom (which is God's gift to nature) and raises it by

grace. "We were created without our will," Augustine noted, "but we will not be redeemed without our wills." Thus creation is transpersonal and cosmic, new creation interpersonal and historical (as well as including the transpersonal and cosmic).

Thirdly, Fox's suggestions for change need nuancing according to the above distinction between Creation and New Creation. Recontact with creativity and a kind of cosmic compassion, and even a return to our origin in undifferentiated oneness would be very helpful in healing our inner split. But can we simply bypass the centuries of "sinful" human choices and their historical implications. Why is it that we have not chosen the way of "joy and creativity"? It does not follow that because God is good and grounds us that we are free to turn to that goodness at will. If we could save ourselves, why haven't we? What does it mean that "the sins of the fathers and handed on to their children unto four generations," and how can we be freed? I submit that the move to self-emptying and compassion is but a response to the deeper initiative of God's reconciling love. Creation can prescind from historical choices, resurrection must bear the weight of history and call for repentance and reconciliation of roots.<sup>16</sup> They are not mutually exclusive, but the New Creation (resurrection) now has priority and puts creativity in right perspective. Our deepest "emptying" is acknowledging our sin and the sin of our ancestors (see Dan 9:1-23) and seeking God's forgiveness and "New Creation" in our poverty.

Thus Jesus took our death-bringing choices on himself while remaining rooted in God's forgiving love and this empowered a new beginning for those who believe and receive that regenerating forgiveness. All creation "waits" for that freedom of the children of God, Paul says in Rom 8:20. It is consigned to futility (or emptiness) for the sake of that hope. This resurrection power is already at work in us (Col 3:1). This is our "re-creating or originating" blessing. But the resurrection restores this blessing only through undergoing the painful implications of historical choices, what tradition has called "original sin." Only God's forgiving love brings creation back to God. All creation was meant to serve humans (who named it), as humans were to care for creation through obeying God. But they chose their own way. The resultant punishment was that Adam would dominate his wife and the woman cling to him, and the Earth would grudgingly yield crops. When Adam and Eve were open to the creativity of God, the Earth also was creative. When they turned away, the Earth responded with grudging fruitfulness, and exploitation and domination entered history. The Yahwist symbolically was telling the story of sin and our human predicament. Healing comes not by trying to correct our own mistakes, but by opening to the new beginning initiated by God.

This we see in Jesus' faithfulness. As human he suffered his nation's sinful temptations which were like those of Israel, yet he responded with a surrendered trust in God. During his life he showed he had the authority over creation intended for Adam. He stilled the storm at sea, and fed the multitudes. His death was the culmination of his trusting life, and through his resurrection he "sent" the Spirit to continue this new life with his disciples. What Adam was called to and lost by distrust, thus beginning a history of exploitation of the Earth, Christ restored not on the basis of the old creation, but by believing in the "new creation" of God's justice. The world is restored to God's favor not by a return to the past (creation), but by God's own reconciling call from the future-the resurrection. It is important to understand the resurrection as such an incipient restoration in this world.

### **Discernment: Listening to God's Call for the Earth Here and Now**

Discernment is a kind of "connatural" knowledge, that is, we become sensitive in those areas that are part of our own maturity. The more we mature in care for our own body, Christ's Body, and the Earth, the more attuned we will be to what furthers or hurts its growth. I think of Juan Luis Segundo, the South American theologian, when he came to the University of Chicago to work on his analysis of Paul in light of Liberation Theology. His results were severely criticized. "You are reading social liberation into the text," they said. He replied: "Karl Earth's Commentary on Romans was also at first rejected, but now it is required reading!" In other words, we see what we are ready to see, but the fact that we don't yet see it does not mean it isn't there. Paul was interested in liberation, but academic theologians at that time were not.

And so also with the Earth and Christ's presence at its heart. We see and hear what we are ready to see and hear. Something can be there (like a radio program is in the air waves), but we might not yet be tuned in. Learning discernment is learning to "tune in" to what is really there. It is an art that we grow into gradually. What we want to tune into is the Spirit of Jesus or Jesus' way of life, and to distinguish that from our own human spirit or the "spirit of this world" (or Satan and the powers of the dominant culture). Let us look first at the marks of the Spirit of Jesus:

First, as Paul affirms, in the Spirit we can cry out "Abba, Father." (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15). Jesus gave us that word for God and it reveals his own intimacy and trust. We humans—you and me personally, our neighbors and all people of Earth—are adopted children of God through our sharing in Jesus' Spirit. Earth has been and is being given to us by our loving creator as a personal gift to care for. The Spirit of Jesus opens us to this dependence on God, and interdependence on all created things. We are to serve God's glory in caring for Earth. As we serve God, we will experience other creatures as brothers and sisters-of the same family. We depend on them and they depend on us. We will grow healthy together or we will get sick together. Care for our Earth is ultimately service of God. When we see that clearly, we will have taken the first step in "tuning up" our sensitivity, for we will begin to look out for the Earth as we look out for God's interests and for ourselves. Our trust will gradually be restored.

Secondly, at the heart of this world and ourselves is the resurrected Christ and the Spirit. As Paul says, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). That is, as Christians we take Jesus' own life/death/resurrection as our "Law", our norm of growth. How Jesus related to family and culture and the Earth (by cutting free of each to focus of God's call, and by reconnecting in a healing, creative way) is model for our way of living. Jesus saw God's Rule of love in all things, in the sun "shining on good and bad alike," in the woman making bread and the wild flowers. So we are to see Christ dying and rising in the poor (Mt 15), in the poor creatures (as St. Francis did). Creation is not a past event but an on-going relation to God in Jesus Christ, and "new creation" has restored permanently Earth's connection to the inner life of its creator and redeemer. It is Christ's extended Body, enlivened by the Holy Spirit. So care for Earth is not only in our best interest, it is serving the Body of Christ and "for the glory of God." If we learn to "tune in" to this truth, we will see the trees and animals in a new light, as revealing the artistry of their creator and the indwelling of the redeemer. We will find a new peace and gratitude and wonder.



Thirdly, the Spirit of Jesus creates a community of faithful love. In the same Spirit different gifts are given for the building up of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:6). Thus, to be tuned into the Spirit is to be tuned in to community in God, to remain in relationship to God-given community, and also to be tuned into Earth. There will be a sense of grateful mutuality.

Fourthly, our God, we believe as Christians, is a humble God who will not disrespect the freedom given us. God is always calling us to truth, but mostly quietly in whispers, like the tiny whispering sound Elijah heard on Mount Horeb (2 Kgs 19:12). That God is humble we see in Jesus, who we believe is the only full revelation of God (Jn 14:9; Mt 11:27). "Learn of me," he said, "for I am meek and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls." That is how God "breaks through" (or seeps through) all our human creations and distractions—in the meek and humble "who will inherit the land." (Mt 5:5) Teilhard de Chardin noted that the points in evolution that give rise to new breakthroughs are vulnerable and slight. It is not Dinosaurs that became human! And human babies (as distinct from young animals) are not able of themselves to cope with life. They are dependent on adults to teach them to mature. Jesus said we must become "like little children" if we are to enter God's kingdom, that is we must get in touch with our own vulnerability and sensitivity. The touch of God's Spirit will always "humble" us even as it raises us. It will make us aware of our limits as of God's power.

That indicates, further, that we grow in sensitivity to God, ourselves and the Earth more by co-suffering than in any other way. Suffering is key to letting God and the Earth "break through" into awareness. Jung observed this. "Without pain," he said, "there is no consciousness." Facing these "growing pains" and finding God through them is what those in "individuating faith" experience. The ability to reach out to others (and the Earth) who are suffering is a mark of "communitarian faith." Thus we go beyond Jung to say: "Without suffering, there is no compassion, no getting outside ourselves into feeling for others, no getting beyond ourselves to God." The Spirit of Jesus creates this kind of compassionate community. Not that all suffering does this. It depends on how we are "tuned in" to it. Suffering makes some people bitter and resentful, because they blame others and God and resist seeing what it reveals in themselves. Other people (as I myself experienced) become depressed and despondent, because we feel powerless to correct things and believe suffering "ought not to be." But if we see death and resurrection as a step in transformation, a kind of participation in the suffering of Christ, then we begin to see suffering as a call to new life. In fact, it is "necessary" ("...did you not know that the Christ had to suffer and so to enter his glory" Lk 24:26). Suffering then reveals value (it reveals what we fear is or will be lost) and it motivates us to treasure it more dearly. The person facing death, values life most fully. When we truly face the possible loss of our Earth, we will finally learn to value it most dearly!

Fifthly, then, joy and creativity founded on God's inner presence is a sure sign of the Spirit. The community that experiences joy in shared compassion, reaches out to bring others to that new life (the mission stage). It is a joy founded on gratitude for being given what we could well have lost, for being loved in a most remarkable way, and being able to respond in love. This humble joy gives rise to grateful response, to care and especially care for what we feared might be lost—our relation to God, to one another and to our Earth. This creative joy is a sign

that we have fully "tuned in", for it reflects our creator who saw "all things as good," and who never abandoned us even when we abandoned God, but reached out in Jesus to restore us to communion.

These are facts for those who believe. The more clearly we tune our lives to these facts, the greater will be our sense of peace and groundedness and freedom to respond in love. But we grow into these facts step by step. Discernment means tuning in to where we are called to be in this process and taking the next step. "To those who have more will be given." The truth of this perspective will become ever clearer as our lives get attuned to it. On the other hand, if we see by different principles, we are suggesting, we will gradually be separated from the truth revealed in Jesus (see Jn 14:6) and will be enslaved by "other gods" (Jn 8:31-36). We might not know we are enslaved. We might simply be doing what everyone else is doing and think we are free. But try to be your true self and see what pressure is put on you to conform. The God of Jesus allows us freedom, to go or to come as our heart leads, and find life in abundance.

What are signs of the evil spirit or the "spirit of this world?" We might first think of the Exorcist and the blasphemous evil that possessed the little girl, but the Genesis account shows the evil spirit is far more subtle than that. Satan deceives under the guise of good, and leads us away from obedience to the word of God to following our own experience of "good and evil" (that is, of not distinguishing good from evil). When dealing with evil spirits, it is not just an attitude, but a power—what Ephesians calls "principalities and powers." It takes God's power to cast them out, so we need to discern clearly what powers are really at work in different movements.

St. Ignatius says that the evil Spirit leads us from riches to honors to pride, and from there to every other evil, whereas the good spirit leads us through poverty, to dishonor, to humility and from there to every other good. By humility he means humble submission to and love of God—the very direction we have been pointing to in this book. The evil spirit ultimately works in a way directly opposite to the good spirit. Where the good spirit witnesses to God as loving parent, the evil spirit wants us to identify with God ("you will be like God knowing good and evil"). Where Jesus' Spirit centers us in a personal relation to Jesus as Lord, the evil spirit leads us to other powers—our own wills, money and prestige, some charismatic leader, national pride, etc. Where the good spirit keeps us connected to our God-given communities, the evil spirit creates divisions or cults that are separatist and controlling. And ultimately, the evil spirit is diametrically opposed to the cross: "Let him come down from the cross," the priests and elders taunted Jesus, "and we will believe in him" (Mt 27:42). The way of Jesus' humility is just the opposite from the way of the evil one. The way of Jesus is to trust God despite the suffering, the way of the evil one is to put oneself in place of God—the ultimate distrust in God's way.

There is no possibility of compromise between these two spirits. In confronting the evil spirit during his temptations, Jesus simply quoted Scripture and finally commanded the spirit to leave. No argument or compromise would work. So also, if a culture or individual is under the influence of an evil spirit, no compromise is possible. One can dialogue with those who have different perspectives if there is good will and openness to God's love, but if the other power is controlled by the evil spirit, the only intervention that seems to be effective is an authoritative command for the spirit to leave. We believe that the battle to save the Earth is not just with flesh

and blood (though there are also human differences) but with principalities and powers that want to destroy God's creation. Where there is good will, one can work for a common goal; where the spirit involved is false or evil, there is no possibility of real cooperation. The subtle will to power will be behind every action.

Let us look at some examples of perspectives that differ from the view we have presented. How would we discern these paths?

For example, there is a diffuse perspective that goes by the name of "New Age," and many of this persuasion also care for the Earth. We are not rejecting the beauty of many of their insights, and certainly not their care for the Earth. Sometimes people's lives can be truer than their explanations, but it will help our own "fine tuning" to look at their world view and its implications. This view finds God in the Earth (as sort of Gaia principle) and in ourselves. We are God, not creatures of God. Since we are God, sin (if there is such) is simply error and an erroneous way of living. Suffering results from such error and can be eliminated by those who are more enlightened. If Jesus could be as enlightened as we now are able to be, he could have avoided his suffering. When we recognize our oneness with all others and Earth itself, we will overcome the illusion of our aloneness and begin to live in harmony with Earth and to truly reverence it.

A brief look at this perspective shows very similar concerns to the ones we have presented. There is a sense of the divine in creation, of our oneness and interdependence, and of our need to "die" to our self-centeredness and care for all, and of God within us empowering us to do this. If we are not careful, our rejection of their perspective would mean losing much of what we need for our own Christian development. And yet there are subtle shifts of perspective that would ultimately lead to a loss of our own unique call and a loss of freedom. If we are God, for example, salvation depends on us, and on our efforts. A subtle pressure results, and a subtle despair when things don't seem to change for the better, and a subtle pressure on others to conform. If I am the truth, then those who disagree can only be wrong. Further, if I cannot sin, I also cannot be forgiven. My sense of untruth and sin is uncorrectable. I can only "forget" it and turn to the present. But then a subtle unreality begins to build up within, and separates me from my past (my family and tradition) and from committed relationships that include past, present and future. One becomes a "Now" person, not in the expanded sense of respecting and incorporating past and future; but in the sense of repressing past and future. Finally, growth is measured by becoming a "higher master," a greater and greater demand is put on one's whole life to be God. Instead of humility increasing, pride increases as do the demands pride makes. A friend of mine took part in an intense workshop for people from dysfunctional families. The leader of her small group was called "Mad Dog", a former marine sergeant who seemed to live his therapy role similarly. She gradually learned that he was one of the most effective therapists she had known, and privately he confided to her that he had originally been a part of the New Age movement and had conducted large meetings. Only gradually did it dawn on him that more and more of his life was being swallowed up by these meetings and the great amounts of money he was making. He began to see the wisdom in Jesus' way and opted for his present work—much less lucrative, but filled with the freedom of knowing God was in charge and respectful of our individual gifts. He experienced the enslavement caused by the new age perspective. Instead of suffering being the enemy, it was now the key to trusting that God really was in charge. For the

resurrection approach, the world is loved and saved, and we are freed to make our own unique contribution to the process. That subtle difference had led to a massive pressure, but it indicated that the beginning itself was flawed and needed retuning.<sup>17</sup> That sort of "New Age" view turns one from the personal God of Jesus to a vague divinity that one shares and is. It is in fact not "New" at all, but a reenactment of Adam and Eve's sin in modern dress. It is regressive rather than progressive, for in identifying with God, we are alienated from our personal and community relationships. One glimpses the evil spirit behind it, even though many of its goals are good. That spirit will need to be cast out, while integrating the good aspects that can enrich one's Christian perspective.

Other examples could be given. There is the secular model that sees salvation only in our human efforts and in the developments of science and political power. Both science and politics are God's gifts and can serve the good of the Earth. However, since both science and political power work with general structures, the individual can easily be overlooked and can ultimately be discounted. We are then valuable only if we fit the current scientific or political perspective. The "poor" are those that don't fit, and so are not taken seriously. But Jesus, as we have indicated, identified with the poor, and it is the poor who will "inherit the land," so Christians need to correct that attitude before it creates a world of mass subservience, as is happening already for many. There may be an anti-religious spirit behind one's science and technology, which would prevent any real cooperation with a Christian spirit, but it may also be people of good will doing the best they know how who are also open to what others can contribute. Science and technology have their place, but ultimately it is not our interventions so much as our "letting go" and "letting God" (as 12-steppers say) that will often be of most help. A case in point is the clean up of Lake Erie. It was so polluted that only the hardiest of organisms could survive in it, but when those responsible stopped polluting it, the Lake itself began to renew itself till it is reasonably clean today!

And there are certain Christian perspectives that would also need "retuning" according to the resurrection perspective we have presented. We have already considered the positions of Matthew Fox and Thomas Berry. One accusation they were attempting to answer was that Christianity has contributed to making possible the "domination" of the Earth that we experience in our modern industrial age. The ancients, and American Indians, saw the Earth as God's very embodiment, and use of it for mere human ends (like mining, hunting, even agriculture) had to be brought into line with the gods through rituals.<sup>18</sup> By affirming God's transcendence over creation, the Judaeo-Christian tradition may actually have paved the way for seeing the Earth as an "object" given to humans to "subdue" (a misreading of Genesis 1:28). The Earth is passing, so we can use it as we will. This view tended to see resurrection as separate from this Earth, something Jesus and we attain by transcending this Earth. In failing to value our interconnection with the Earth, it was opened to be treated as an object, as the scientific mindset has increasingly done. We have argued, in contrast, that through the resurrection Christ becomes "Lord" and is intimately identified with believers join this Earth. This perspective would actually bring us closer to the ancients' view. We would need to respect our foundations (the Earth and our body) as part of our total being that has been regrounded in Christ. Our care for the "least" in creation is the key to becoming whole ourselves.

Or we Christians may move in the opposite direction and so value asceticism that we neglect the world and the body. Resurrection is beyond this life, so we shouldn't pay too much attention to this Earth which will pass away. This is represented in some ascetics of the early church like Simon Stylites. Such asceticism may be valuable for a certain stage of spiritual growth (as Saint Ignatius of Loyola discovered), but it is not the final answer.<sup>19</sup> When one has clearly put God first (what I have called individuating faith), then all creation is recovered in so far as it helps us to find and serve God. There is danger of remaining stuck in the familial stage (a kind of social Christianity) or in rejection of it (the moral, ascetical reaction) and not moving on to finding God in one's own unique gift which can help one's community develop further.

In conclusion, at every stage of spiritual growth and care for the Earth it is God who leads. We need to discern God's call, and in order to do so we must change as well as the Earth. As we grow, we will need the experience of active involvement (the eco-volunteer), but the more we recognize that the devastation of the Earth is more than we alone can correct, the more we will need to experience God's presence and help, and the help of as many others as possible. It is then that discernment will be most needed, for "not every spirit is of God" (1 Jn 4:1). The mark of God's spirit is humble, self-giving love which makes us courageous and committed to building loving community. The mark of evil is a subtle pride and self-centeredness that focuses control in itself. Following such a spirit, no lasting good will result, and much harm and divisiveness can result. Those grounded in God will bear fruit with patience, for they can ask God and will receive (Jn 15:7).

As we grow in awareness of God's love, we will experience healing in our own bodies and lives, and we will grow in awareness that we also can be instruments of healing for the Earth. It is also true that our healing care for the Earth's needs will help us find wholeness in our own lives. The poor Earth, and God through the Earth, will then heal us. In this process of growth we will experience God's power working in the world and in ourselves to transform the world. We will need to stay attuned to God's power and be able to distinguish it from other powers also at work in the world. It is to this issue of discernment in concrete experiences of life that we now turn in Ch. 5.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problems and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U Press, 1982). James Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (Harper & Row, 1981) presents a developmental view of faith that explains the other theorists like Piaget, Kohlberg, etc. John H. Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith* (N.Y., Seabury, 1976) gives a view of faith development more based on liberation theology. The literature on human and faith development is expanding all the time, which shows our present awareness of need to mature into more inclusive value orientations.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert T. Sears, "Healing and Family Spiritual/Emotional Systems," *Journal of Christian Healing*, vol 5 (1983), 10-23, for a brief view of Bowen and Nagy and my stages of development in relation to healing.

<sup>3</sup> See Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells: the Spiritual Journey of a People* (N.Y.: Orbis, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Fox notes that he discovered Eckhart only after publishing his dissertation on culture and spirituality Religion U.S.A. and his first two popular books: *On Becoming a Musical Mystical Bear* and *WHEE! We, wee All the Way Home*, his study of everyday mysticism. He found that Eckhart, though in many ways neo-platonic, differed from Augustine's dualism and really expressed his own desire to find God in creation. He outlined what he saw as four stages in Eckhart's spirituality in "Meister Eckhart on the Fourfold Path of a Creation-Centered Spiritual Journey" (in *Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes* ed. Matthew Fox (Notre Dame: Fides, 1979) pp. 215-248. He developed this more fully in *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Creation Spirituality in New Translation* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980) where he selected and commented on 37 of Eckhart's sermons according to the fourfold path he had found. He presented his own version in *Original Blessing: A primer of Creation Spirituality* (N.M.: Bear and Co, 1983), and developed the fourth path more fully in *A Spirituality Named Compassion: the Healing of the Global Village, Humpty Dumpty and Us* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979) and *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: the Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> See Footnote 1.

<sup>6</sup> Three of these reflect Aquinas' threefold way of knowing God: *via affirmativa* (affirming creation and creator), *via negativa* (disallowing from God what pertains only to creatures), *via eminentia* (in which affirmation and negation, speech and silence are synthesized in mystical union). Fox notes a fourth in Eckhart, from the dynamism of God in history, the *via transformativa* or compassion.

<sup>7</sup> See Fox, "Meister Eckhart on the Fourfold Path...", p. 220. Where Aquinas states that "God is isness" (*Deus esse est*), Eckhart goes further to say "isness is God," (*Esse est Deus*), and is unmediatedly present in every creature. This means for Eckhart, however, that in themselves creatures are nothing (they are not God and God alone is, as is clear from the second path.

<sup>8</sup> Following Jung, Fox sees Ignatian spirituality as without a "via negativa", and through Jesuit influence this attitude permeated Western culture. (*Original Blessing*, p. 129) This is a serious misreading of Ignatius, but it does point to a kind of moralistic distortion of Jesuit

spirituality that became prominent after the restoration of the Society of Jesus in 1814. Ignatius' whole focus is on detachment and putting God's glory first through poverty, humiliations and humility and following Jesus' way. Where he differs from Fox is his clear focus on union with Christ in this process and service of the God of Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> See Fox, *Breakthrough...*, Sermon 30, p. 418 where Eckhart quotes Augustine's True Religion: "The law of divine providence is such that people are not helped by those higher than themselves to the knowledge and experience of God's grace unless with a pure heart they help to the same end those who are lower than themselves." What we receive we must give away.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Sermons 32 and 33. In an article on Eckhart and Karl Marx ("Meister Eckhart and Karl Marx: The Mystic as Political Theologian," *Listening* (Fall, 1978), pp. 233-57) Fox points out how by preaching to lay persons such as the Beguines and Begards on equality in God in the vernacular, Eckhart aroused the suspicions of the political and church establishment. He was critical of the merchant mentality of his day, and of the greed for power of the establishment. His condemnation may well have been motivated by political concerns, even though he gave room for critique in many of his statements when taken out of context.

<sup>11</sup> See *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, pp. 17, 147.

<sup>12</sup> See *Original Blessing*, p. 300.

<sup>13</sup> See *Breakthrough*, Sermon 32, p. 453.

<sup>14</sup> This makes his categorization in *Original Blessing* of theologians who are supportive of creation-centered spirituality or fall-redemption spirituality very arbitrary, since each has something of both perspectives. Is Ignatius, who wants us to "find God in all Things" a "Fall-Redemption" theologian (p. 129)? Fox himself says in *Breakthrough* (p. 2) that Ignatius knew Eckhart and Peter Canisius actually translated Tauler's works (himself a disciple of Eckhart). And he quotes Walter Nigg (*Warriors of God* [N.Y.:Knopf, 1959] p. 338) as saying: "Ignatian spirituality has much in common with that of Meister Eckhart; it is impossible, indeed, to approve the one while rejecting the other." This very thing Fox himself seems to have done! Or is Hildegard of Bingen a creation theologian? The Hildegard expert Barbara Newman says the opposite: "properly speaking, Hildegard's teaching is not creation centered at all; it centers on the Incarnation, in which the feminine divine like all else finds its deepest meaning. Sapientia in this context represents the eternal counsel, the absolute predestination of the God-man, which is symbolized in feminine form by the predestination of Mary and Ecclesia." (*Sister of Wisdom: Saint Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (Los Angeles: U of Calif Press, 1987, p. 250). Or is Irenaeus, who says Jesus must recapitulate every stage of human life to redeem it, a "Creation" theologian. The list could continue.

<sup>15</sup> Instances of other "contrasts" are: patriarchal (Fall/Redemption) vs. feminist, ascetic vs. aesthetic, mortification of the body vs. discipline toward birthing, control of passions vs. ecstasy and eros and celebration, suffering as wages for sin vs. suffering as birth pangs of universe,

death as wages for sin vs. death as natural event and prelude to recycling and rebirth, holiness as quest for perfection vs. holiness as cosmic hospitality, return to a past state of perfection and innocence vs. imperfection as integral to all nature, begins with sin [?] vs. begins with Dabhar as God's creative energy, miracle as outside intervention vs. miracle as wonder of existence/isness/creation, egological vs. ecological and cosmic, in control vs. letting go, climbing Jacob's ladder vs. dancing Sara's circle, elitist vs. for the many, particular vs. universalist, emphasis on Jesus as Son of God not prophet vs. emphasis on Jesus as prophet/artist/parable teller and Son of God who calls others to their divinity, build up church vs. build up Kingdom/Queendom, repent vs. transform and be transformed, eternal life is after death vs. eternal life is now, emphasizes the cross vs. emphasizes the resurrection, duty vs. beauty, guilt and redemption vs. thanks and praise, theistic vs. panentheistic (God in everything), etc. All of these, I would submit, are to be seen as "both/and" rather than "either/or," but nowhere is that indicated in Fox's book. Has he really "healed" his relation to his tradition?

<sup>16</sup> To be fair to Fox, he seems to have moved in this direction in *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. There he critiques Vatican II's document *On Non-Christian Religions* for affirming "we must forget the past." He continues "Justice requires an acknowledgement of the pain and suffering of native peoples caused by Christian avengers who completely lacked a mystical consciousness....A mystical consciousness gives us the freedom to let go and to ask for forgiveness." (p. 66) The same forgiveness is needed for the sinful institution!

<sup>17</sup> Saint Ignatius Loyola has two sets of Rules for Discernment that are part of the *Spiritual Exercises*. One of his directives is to trace the trajectory, the 'tail of the serpent' when one notices that the result is unrest and oppression. Go back to the beginning, he advises, and see where one got led astray, and learn to discern that false direction as soon as it gets started. In our case, the subtle identification with God rather than grateful reception of being and redemptive forgiveness from God, is the false path that ultimately led to the oppression.

<sup>18</sup> See Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962)

<sup>19</sup> Ignatius' advice to St. Francis Borgia illustrates the point. At the beginning of his conversion Ignatius had encouraged a program of exterior penance with good results. But when Francis was solidly committed to spiritual growth, Ignatius had him curtail any penances that might harm his health, urging him to love his own body as he would love any of God's creatures, (see Jules J. Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* (St. Louis, Inst. of Jesuit Sources, 1982), pp. 169ff.) Thus, there is a time to limit use of creation to become centered in God (what I have called individuating faith), but then creation needs to be readmitted as an expression of God's love (my communitarian stage). Discernment must thus take one's stage of development into consideration.



## **CHAPTER 5: DEEP POWER: THE CREATOR AT WORK**

by Al Fritsch

"It is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4)

For the Christian, resurrection is a powerful deed that is the foundation of faith, the source of hope, and the inspiration of gratitude and love. It refers to a happening two millennia ago that revolutionized our thinking about death. It is also a transcendental event that extends in space and time to this age and includes the promise of each person's victory over death. But there is more. If resurrection is victory over death, does that victory extend to the Earth itself? If Earth suffers and is redeemed, does it also share in the grace of the victory? And are the New Heaven and New Earth as promised in Isaiah some transforming interventions from God alone, or must we humans help co-create them? And if we find the whimsical Creator throughout Sacred Scriptures, would it not be within the Divine sense of humor to bring this transformation about through those who are regarded as weak and forgotten and poor? Wouldn't it be more dignified for them if they were an important part of the rising of the new creation?

We can't definitively answer some of these questions, but through the discerning process just discussed, we can discover answers that will assist us. If the answers are as we suspect, then a profession about resurrection is very important for bringing forth a New Earth. We may be tempted through a concern for ecumenism or interfaith cooperation to deemphasize the Christian truth/event/mystery of resurrection and emphasize commonly held mutual goals or actions. Granted we prefer to deal on levels of common interfaith agreement especially when our environment is under attack. However, hiding our *raison d'être* is not good ecumenism. The unity we seek is pluralistic, valuing each one's deepest convictions and tradition. We have nothing to fear by being clear about our deepest convictions, for at the very depth we find God and God (as Christians believe) is love and values everyone.

If we are convinced that Earth-healing is a non-elitist democratic process involving the poor as equals, then the extent of the resurrection mystery's proclamation must be as immense as possible. Are we saying that all must profess an explicit faith act in order to participate in the healing process? No, but honesty and sincerity requires that the believer speak out, not in a sense of self-righteousness or triumphalism, but through a genuine conviction that expressing one's true convictions is part of healing. Healing is our fullest participation in proclaiming the power of the resurrection.

I realize not everyone shares my belief system, but I would very much like them to know how much I see it affecting the life of our planet and indeed their own lives.<sup>1</sup> The power of Creation is good news; the power of re-creation or resurrection is still Better News. While sincere people may doubt this existing or expected event, their respect for my beliefs (as I for theirs) will allow the healing process to advance with lessening antagonism and distrust. The environment for healing will be improved for we share the same general hope and common goals in healing the Earth. This will be apparent when we hear the individual testimonials as to how healing is currently occurring. Those professing faith in the resurrection know it will occur

but not how. Believers need reflect in order to develop a common view of "how" resurrection will occur. That in itself will be powerful. In other words, bringing about resurrection requires the cooperative action of those knowing the event and others of good will. We need each other, and such working together from our distinctive view points is far closer to the magnanimous spirit of our Creating, Redeeming and Enlivening God than would be powerful, but not fully participative deeds. By acknowledging our distinctive faith, we enter into a deepening faith activity that takes us closer to the Earth, not away from it.

It is true that some publicly profess the resurrection but show little or no regard for the welfare of an Earth they regard as merely passing away. They may even consider trashing the Earth as hastening the day of the Lord, the Day of God's Wrath. Others may show great care and gentleness in touching the Earth and truly believe that through their efforts the Earth can be healed and brought back to life. I confess to having a greater affinity for the latter group and find in their actions more consistency with resurrection than in the protestations of the former.<sup>2</sup> What we need is to look more carefully at the actual effect of resurrection power in our experience, and how it differs from other forms of power.

### **A Phenomenology of Power**

Mystery has always baffled me. I like real puzzles and have worked on several which have taken years to complete, namely the amount of energy used by an average American, the geography of the ethnic composition of the United States, and the quality of waste disposed of in our world. Nature around us is the unfolding of mystery. How can a calf stand up and walk? Where did those fossils originate which are a thousand miles inland? What makes the birds fly south at given times and know their way over such long distances? Mystery is at the heart of our ageless journey to God; it is in our youth learning what is around us and our old age as we prepare for the coming life. It is our constant awareness that answers are possible and that God's power moves us to that ultimate answer, Divine Power. And it always seemed a greater mystery that answers will someday come — and yet they do.

As Christians we find the shadows of mystery everywhere. They appear most pronounced on Good Friday, that moment of deepest desolation, which celebration the Church mercifully shortens, for it is so difficult. In the economy of salvation Calvary is brief and Easter enduring. Our experience of Calvary today is rooted through prayer and sacrifice in that first pivotal moment; what Easter was extends now and into the future as an ongoing process. With a radical change resulting in the healing of the Earth, Calvary may become a forgiven past event in geologic time. A New Heaven and New Earth is an eternal Easter.

Having said this let's not dismiss Calvary. In fact, for many of us liturgically oriented Christians Calvary is made ever present. It is a firm belief on the part of hundreds of millions of us that this Calvary event is present as long as there is suffering in this world and this is symbolized by a crucifix rather than a cross only. Calvary includes every suffering person especially those more conscious of participating in this event. The suffering Christ includes the entire suffering of the Earth - people and others --a "sacrifice" or "making holy of the suffering Earth. Being conscious of suffering and participating in the community of sufferers is deep

power in its most elementary form (see Col 1:24: "I Paul fill up in my body the sufferings of Christ for the sake of His Body the Church").

My pilgrimage to Calvary in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was one of life's singular spiritual experiences. Two of us hurriedly slipped away from the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel program. We rose very early one Monday morning (our only Monday in Jerusalem) and walked to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre two miles away. I entered the shrine with mixed emotions. At that moment when I felt all my faults and weaknesses would surface. I actually had the most gentle but firm sense of empowerment while climbing the steps to Calvary and touching the rock on which the cross was erected. It struck me clearly that this place of sacrifice has global dimensions and yet is wrapped in the warmth of God's personal forgiveness of each and every one of us. Calvary is mine, this Holy Land is mine, this Earth is mine, and yet all is ours in Christ. We all are in this together; we must sacrifice together to save what is being desecrated; we must have a global outlook and not narrowly focus on personal concerns; we all must be forgiving as Jesus is forgiving. I felt a call to focus all the more on a more prophetic role. This place, this Holy Land, this Earth is home to me. How dare we tolerate the desecration or damage of this place, land, world any longer?

We take our Calvary experiences with us to Easter. We enter into an eternal process. Calvary is our dying; Easter is our life -- and all our being chooses life. Death and life. This is an eternal polarity that we face, both physically and spiritually. Mortality: we struggle to accept it, ponder it, cope with it, meet it, confess it. That spiritual struggle foreshadows what we go through each day that we continue living and continue dying. The greatest unreality is to flee from the polarity, deny it, ignore it, or speak as though the people just pass away or that pets are "put to sleep."

Easter in my youth was a mixture of many ceremonies and activities. On Holy Saturday we obtained a supply of Easter Water and proceeded to go about all the fields and amply sprinkle the land so that God might bless the fields with good crops. Since non-believers could have misunderstood the ritual, the activity was performed in secret. The entire ceremony made a very strong impression for it made me conscious of a dependence on the God for the harvest, our collective need to work the fields, the ever-youthful conviction that spring would return once more, and the inherent passivity before the forces of nature. Easter was at the heart of our agri-spirituality and our power resided there.

Easter Water returned me to the primordial water of our evolutionary past. The sound of that water along with the flames of fire, the two great symbols of Holy Saturday, took us back to our very distant dawn of collective human existence, when we emerged from the waters and first discovered fire. In some ways these two symbols remain with us as marks of our redemption through baptism and the fire of the Spirit. They become resurrection's enduring beacons and sounds.

The first stirring of mysterious power is expressed in the liturgical event of the Eucharist, where sufferings are offered and through some mysterious transformation power comes forth. This power of resurrection is released when we accept the role of co-sufferers with the suffering Jesus, whose pain extends in space and time. As believers we witness to something new, a

throwing off of the old; an introduction to the new. If we suffer with him, we can be raised with him. In so doing we become resurrection persons and people, willing to share in bad times and good, in sickness and in health, in summer's abundance and winter's scarcity. In one mysterious liturgical event we can bring these two times together and understand their connectedness.

Christ redeemed and redeems; as a redeemed people we also are called and empowered to redeem and renew a wounded world. We are called to enter into the profoundest activity. Through suffering we become co-creators, participators in the building of a New Creation. Here is still a greater mystery— that while we are imperfect sinners we are called to help refashion a glorified Earth. How wonderfully it was created and more wonderfully re-created. Then in the cosmic beginnings we were a glint in God's eye; now we breathe and live and can respond enthusiastically as co-creators, in fact, recreation is dependent upon our response.

If what we have just written is true, then we have described "power," because we are invited to be powerful instruments in a powerful event. This power is a promise accompanied by a peril: the promise of becoming members of the Creator's family; the peril of submitting to the temptation either to abuse power, misplace power, or run from it and hide behind our misunderstood powerlessness. We can respond to power in various ways:

- a) We may affirm the power of God or attribute it to an idol;
- b) we may thrash out in an illusionary sense of "worldly" power;
- c) we may sense our impending powerless condition and refuse to follow the trail leading to it;
- d) we may feel empowered by the resurrection yet pretend that it is beyond us as weak beings - and in false humility relegate to another to transform the social order.

At the moment of any consideration of power, we also come face to face with our gravest temptations. If we never accept this confrontation with sources of effective power and their accompanying temptations, we would forever be left with the little temptations and allurements that make us so ineffective. To be like Christ is to suffer with him, and that includes being tempted like him and with him. As we truly enter into the mystery of resurrection we see that the peril of temptation looms ever more threateningly and so we need to recall the consoling words of Jesus: "Have no fear you of little faith."

The power or "*dynamis*" to conquer temptation and to accept an empowerment within our powerlessness is a movement from God, not us. The heart of the resurrection mystery is that while powerless we are raised to power. Are we like pawns on the chessboard of life, or are we the powerless, who suddenly are empowered through some spiritually transforming event? Being pawns involves no free human choice. Pretending to be nobodies ultimately has little to do with Christian humility. We soon realize that true humility is recognizing and accepting this power in us, but knowing full well that it did not come from us and we are unworthy recipients.

## **Spiritual Empowerment**

Spiritual empowerment occurs on two arenas — that of the individual before God and that of the community or social structure before the Almighty. In both arenas power is from Another, and the temptation exists to usurp the power oneself and use it for self-centered goals. That is illustrated in the temptations of Christ. We see in them the interplay of secular and ecclesial power. The question put to believers is when is the proper moment to act to alleviate human need, or how do believers confront authoritarian institutions — through violence or non-violent means? Each of these is a book in itself.

We will subdivide our reflection on power and powerlessness into five moments or circumstances when we are confronted with different opportunities or expressions of power (roughly corresponding to the five developmental stages presented in Chapter 4):

- 1) Initial form: God's overwhelming power in sacred events and natural phenomena (power of Another) and our temptation to idolize that in others;
- 2) Familial form: Our illusion of mastery and control over events and persons (power over others);
- 3) Individuating form: Our coming to the realization of our own ultimate powerlessness in transforming events and self (no power by ourselves);
- 4) Communitarian form: Our realizing a mysterious power in powerlessness and utilizing this in a spirit of love (empowerment with others);
- 5) Mission form: An identifying with God's power in us as an empowered or co-creating people (God's power through us).

### **1. The Almighty**

God's power overwhelms us. It is in the mighty wind, the roaring sea, the strong earthquake, the rushing flood, the avalanches of winter, the hailstorms of summer. God's power converts hardened sinners and strikes down the mighty. It is the power of faith that moves mountains and can make the crooked ways straight, that can correct what appear to be impossible situations.

I recall this sense of God's power when the very first moments of creation were described in a public television presentation on the cosmic origins of the universe and the burst of activity in the first pico-second of creation. The very structure of the atom was formed at that instant and in the intensity of that fraction of a second all of the next twenty billion years unfolded. One could not help but be caught up in the drama and the infinite power of that "Big Bang." Even if other theories should replace this one, the awesomeness of any birth, of any first moment, is still beyond our imagination.

Many of us have had overpowering experiences of our Creator. We may later attempt to juxtapose this instantaneous feeling of God's power with the previous long periods of service and learning and waiting. A first sense of Almighty power came in an instant and yet included all the scientific training that preceded it. In a micro-second, I too became part of the creative hand of God where process and event are both operative. It was humiliating because I was seated before an instrument that I normally despise, a television — perhaps I watch less TV than any other non-blind American. How God stretches us by choosing to be revealed where we would least expect!

Salvation history manifests the power of God in many different ways: the tumbling of the walls of Jericho; the passing of Israel through the Red Sea; the return from Exile; the marvelous deeds of Jesus; and the resurrection. Powerful deeds in history continue down to our age in each person's conversion, in the marvels of technology, in the widow's mite, in the rise and fall of empires, in feeding the famine victims of Somalia, and in the Conferences of the United Nations.

While many examples of power can be shown, the mere recognition of these is not necessarily empowering. Acknowledging power may put the fear of God in us, which may be traumatizing. We may freeze before power like a caged mouse before a boa. We may recognize power, but be terrified. Power fills our senses but we shrink back in awe and wonderment. A paralyzingly fearful god is not the God revealed in the Scriptures. The Scriptural God empowers believers (like Moses) to act on God's behalf. A terrorizing god, before whom we cringe, is more like a spectacle or temptation from other powers in the world. Are there not lesser powers that turn us away from the inviting mystery of Divine Power?

A major temptation at this level is to be subservient, to acknowledge the unconquered powers around us, to glorify these powers, and to block out the loving call of God. Idolatry is the attributing to lesser powers what belongs to God alone. Creaturehood is certainly good, but it is not All Goodness. These creatures - heavenly bodies, forests, trees, animals, the oceans, wind, waves, springs, Gaia — have powers and can even exude power, but they are not the Power Source. The temptation to idolatry is strong throughout human history for in the atmosphere of awe and respect comes a focusing in on the object of respect, the idol. That tendency was not any more prevalent among distant, ancient or unenlightened people than it is today. All we need to do is reflect on the modern idols -- the automobile, boat, plane, appliance, suburban home, position, degree, idol. Watch a customer standing before a revolving luxury vehicle, revolving slowly on a dais. Where does appreciation cease and adoration begin?

Believers know that Earth is not a Gaia, a hidden goddess which will be provoked to conquer its oppressors and environmental desecrators.<sup>3</sup> For believers bestowing such power on Gaia is idolatrous. For them Earth does not have the power to reap vengeance, even though certain sensate qualities may be attributed to it such as suffering, memory, joy. Rather, for them this planet is weak, fragile, dependent on our love and care - hardly an Almighty. It needs our concern, not adoration. Idolatry is reverencing the wrong source of power, whether it be nature, unconquerable mountains, emperors or "spiritual masters." Was it not the words of Jesus' tempter, "I will give you all this power..." when surveying all the kingdoms of the world? And Jesus replied: "It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.

" (Luke 4:5-7) The ever present temptation is to ignore the true source of power and to substitute another.

## **2. Power Over Others**

At this second stage power is not transcendent but imminent, not power from another but power exercised over another whether this be an event or person. It is the power I felt when I graduated from High School, the power after killing an animal, the power in completing the damming of a lake or building a house. Who has not exercised or experienced this power that comes from personal achievement or success, for better or worse. It's the power to amuse, to abuse, to misuse. The power-master need not consider the other as slave or servant but as one less worthy of dignity or less learned or less in stature. It may be considered by society as quite legitimate when accompanied by responsibility and obedience (a recognized authority and a willing subject). It is the power over others.

At first glance it appears to be the healthy competition of the free market society, the accepted discipline of life in school from kindergarten through graduate school, the everyday work force struggling to acquire, hold or move forward in employment. It is the power driving an economy, the power on the playing field, the power of the office of president, and the power of the media and advertising. Some of this is neutral, some good for the sluggish, and some merciless and ruthless. All in all, as necessary as this stage of power is, it suffers from its imperfections just as does the stage of eco-volunteering in Chapter 3. Our culture glorifies in it, relishes it, champions it, and tries to bless and sanctify it. This power permeates our everyday world and sweeps us up under its wings. But it has a continually bad habit of forgetting its Source.

Some entertain the illusion of power and think their intelligence, personality, gift for words, wealth or dominance over others are real, lasting and something merited or bestowed on them for their efforts or good luck or proper stewardship. Rendering deference to these pretenders of power only enhances that illusion and makes the silent permissive party to it as well. They terrorize the world by their assortment of social, economic or political power plays that so many permit to occur. Thus living in a world of power brokering and competition is addictive. If we fail in this stage we sometimes thrash out all the more and expend our attention and energy on still further mastery and control. Any failure is one of not mastering the situation or people properly and thus the master strives to master all the more — and may do so violently.

Political power comes from different sources. If it is derived from authority vested in individuals through inheritance, "Divine Right", or physical might, then the degree of accountability by leader to those under that power is greatly reduced. If political power is democratic in origin and derived from the consent of the governed, then it is a participatory power through which the electorate exerts a certain control over the elected. Within the democratic system the illusion of power is less tempting—provided the electorate is truly involved and responsible. On the other hand, non-involvement will erode the democratic process and create a new form of manipulation of power.

In non-democratic and autocratic societies the powerless are people who know their condition — the subservient, the cowed or beaten down, those forced to live in totalitarian regimes, the bone poor, the homeless, those without tomorrow's bread. The powerless may share in the illusion of power, for within their own collective self rests the ability to bring the mighty to their knees, if only they unite to do this. The illusion is that powerlessness is a temporary condition (within one's life span), and one in which sufferers have little recourse except to endure and wait for the opportunity to strike back using the same power that has oppressed them. This then becomes simply trading positions with oppressors instead of rectifying an unhealthy situation by reaching a deeper level of awe, as was evidenced in Communist Russia. Nonetheless it is a very real temptation of the powerless. If only we would call down heaven and rise to the occasion with blazing weapons and awesome might. For a brief moment the rebellious oppressed see stone becoming bread.

Jesus is tempted to overcome his physical hunger (akin to removing one's impoverishment through exploits of mastery and violence) through a miraculous changing of stone into bread (Luke 4:3). We each dream of becoming still greater masters through similar exercises of power, and some may give in to the temptation. Christ did not. He responded: "We do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." He recognized the true Source of the power to fulfil human needs and submitted his action to God. This is his mastery of the situation rather than a mastery of others.

### **3. Powerlessness**

Accompanying any consideration of power is the realization that I (we) do not have the power of ourselves to accomplish the saving deeds for which I am (we are) called. We are limited, mortal, imperfect. Sin takes advantage of us. We see strength slip away, death curtail good movements, suffering come over the most healthy, an accident reduce thriving enterprise to ruin. We ultimately see how little we are able to accomplish on our own. We make mistakes and watch some grow into ever-deepening problems. Like a bad dream powerlessness becomes a fog that chills our bones. It is our moment of burnout, a failure that strikes us in the face, the deepest embarrassment, the ultimate defeat, the conviction and sentencing, the bankruptcy, the acknowledgment of defeat, divorce, ultimate separation, the terminal medical report. We experience our individual and loved ones' powerlessness and all our being is drained.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem impelled by the Spirit. In the other great temptation after the pronouncement of the keys to Peter, Jesus is tempted not to travel that way by the newly appointed prince of the apostles, of all people. "Get behind me Satan, don't stand in the way," Jesus rebuked Peter. He knows the journey requires speaking the truth in the public places and driving out the moneychangers, thus incurring the wrath of the establishment. This, in turn, will surely be followed by the plotting and the betrayal. Jesus takes the road leading to a powerless condition and does so deliberately. One needs to remember this when reflecting on the powerlessness of the Calvary event and the ignominy of the cross. Jesus does not evade powerlessness through miracles or physical force but responds with love and forgiveness.

We sometimes knowingly get into predicaments that lead to such powerlessness and then proceed to allot blame to self or others. What can we do at such moments? At the moment of



deepest darkness we find ourselves alone -- or do we? We are faced with a decision. This moment of powerlessness can turn us to despair or be a time of opportunity. As Jesus we must choose which way we will go. Quo vadis? Those are the times to re-examine our purpose for coming or going or merely standing.

I recently resisted the temptation to acquire a gun when someone shot and killed my watchdog. I had been moved to such a reaction by having owned guns in my youth and believing (through a confused interpretation of the Constitution) in the right to bear individual arms and the sense of power that comes on dark windy nights when danger may lurk just beyond the hills. Add to that my advocacy work which is considered empowering work. When no distinctions are made, this equates to secular power, to the power of a weapon, to becoming like those who exert power through terror and the gun. Clearer minds asked me whether it isn't the weak who stand behind the gun. It was a telling question which made me rethink my attitude toward power.

To choose to enter such a state of powerlessness and rest ultimately on God who is all-powerful is simply to acknowledge that in the final analysis we are powerless over sickness and death and our own existence. Actually this is our most real state and one that can truly ennoble us or ruin us. Our greatest temptation is to flee from it, to reenter the world of illusions of grandeur, to let our mind escape what our body cannot. When Dan Berrigan visited here a few years back I told him how powerless I felt, having had such grand dreams about what would be achieved when I left Washington. He said I was simply discovering the ultimate state of powerlessness that we all have before God. When fully understood it is a moving and maturing insight.

#### **4. Power in Powerlessness**

A sense of powerlessness without perceiving a fruitful outcome may lead to a variety of options: humble subservience, despair, violent rebellion, or creative action. Hope rests in seeing another power stimulating and catalyzing us to take vigorous action. The power of God works through us whether in popular 12-step programs (which call upon a Power greater than oneself to assist) or when believers trust in the power of prayer. Powerlessness becomes creative within the mystery of resurrection, a divine invitational gift of grace, renewing us and inviting us to enter into the ongoing creation process — the ongoing actualization of God's love in human history.

This power in powerlessness supercedes a power coming through altruism or "charity," the power of a millionaire to distribute wealth as the possessor sees fit. Is not the holding on to such power (even under the name of stewardship) an exercise of hidden control — a power trip? It may well be. The greatest burden in working with, of all people, the public interest and environmental groups is the hidden agendas of many of the leadership, the need to exercise control - and power. On the other hand, public interest groups can exert an immense power for good if only they could get beyond those spoiling agendas. Less selfish workers perceive a WE who can affect change. If the WE could sense themselves as a companionship of concerned but ultimately powerless people, then new power would arise. In fact, knowing our ultimate powerlessness is humorous and worth a good laugh together. The embryonic power in

powerlessness is that at the deepest moment of our inability to act rests a spiritual seed that lets us smile and laugh and explode with joy. And this comes as gift from Another.

Perceiving spiritual power in powerlessness is the dawn of Easter, the rolling back of the stone of lethargy. It is the power of Emmanuel, God-with-us. God makes us from nothing; God creates this moment of realization from nothing of ourselves that we can point to. resurrection springs from Another, not from something in ourselves. From our own powerlessness we are called to believe in our ultimate empowerment. From death comes life, from the tomb, a resurrection. Here we become an instrument of God's own power and we can receive and deliver Good News, not by earning a blessing, but simply because God enjoys working in and through us.

We can enter the greater joy of God, and be a greater manifestation of power, when in our powerlessness we become an empowered people. This is the pico-second of regeneration, the instant when the dynamics of our own lives give a glimpse in greater detail of the first instant of the world's creation. And God fashions again, but now within us, not just in space. We become a new Creation, and enter into a mystery unheard of in previous ages. If we marvel at the powers of Creation, let us all the more marvel at the powers of resurrection already beginning in us. If we realize this, and that it first happens in Jesus, then we are believers in the empowering Easter mystery at work in the world.

The prophetic voice in the wilderness is a manifestation of the powerless being empowered. It is not a democracy of large masses or numbers at work, but it empowers all the same, for God's power is manifest. The prophetic witness stands on the authority of the word presented. If that word is false then the witness has no authority. If that word is true, then the voice of the powerless rings loud and clear, an empowerment that manifests its spiritual origins. This sign of resurrection is also and all the more achieved by the witnessing community of believers, who reveal their vulnerability or powerlessness when they risk speaking out on an issue related to false or misplaced power. Here democracy can truly work. These become a powerless people empowered in the Lord.

Note that many secular forms of "empowerment" do not start here but in the second stage of power over others, and never get beyond that. Such is not truly empowering in the way we are describing. It often is an illusory power that can actually weaken the individuals it moves.

Both as prophetic individuals and communities we see the nothingness of ourselves and the greatness of God standing juxtaposed. The contrast overwhelms us, but even in this stage there can be some degree of attention to self, some distraction from the work to be done. At this stage of empowerment temptation is again present, but now in a more subtle form. We can stay caught in an illusion of powerlessness when we need to manifest God's power in us. Or we might make an empty show of power to gain recognition, rather than await the community building guidance of God. That is the third temptation of Christ, namely to throw himself down from the parapet of the Temple and be caught up by others — the good spirits (Luke 4:9-12), to gain public admiration and following.

Those engaged in empowerment may fall back on the illusion that power is magic, is done when we do the dramatic powerless act. We need to act with the means at hand, the practical everyday tools of change. There is no magic to spiritual empowerment, to raising up the Earth. We need to engage in work to bring this about. We share Christ's temptation when we dream of God sweeping us up in an aura of righteousness that overwhelms the enemy and baffles the unbeliever. We daydream of the short cuts, the sense that evangelization is busy work and that our nervousness to get things done is redemptive. The dramatic upsweep when we leap in where angels fear to tread may not be forthcoming. We just might plop down and break some bones.

No, those prompted by the Spirit of God are in for the long haul, despite their powerlessness. Bob's friend felt called to work in Kensington, a slum area of Philadelphia. She would walk the streets blessing while her neighbors hid behind closed doors for fear of the gangs and drug pushers. She would see the graffitied walls and littered lots. One day she heard of a college offering to supply materials for renewing lots if some the neighborhoods would get together to help. She felt called to make a garden in a corner, vacant lot near her that was the recipient of garbage and litter and graffiti on the building walls. She went through the neighborhood to get volunteers, but no one volunteered. She went a second time, and got a few (she needed six). She went a third time, convinced it was God's call. Finally, she got grudging support (they had no hope, so why try?) They finally cleared the lot, and the college financed the fence, but the workmen put it in without cement and it fell! More delays. No one would help paint over the graffiti, till a Baptist church group from outside volunteered. Some others helped repair the fence. The garden was planted, and there is now a place of hope in that burnt out neighborhood! There is graffiti all around, but somehow this garden lot is respected and not trashed. Little glimpses of hope have burst forth. That shows the combination of God's grace and human cooperation despite so many set backs. It shows resurrection at work!

### **5. Co-creative Power—Easter as Deep Mystery**

Let us review our steps toward deep power. The first moment touches God's power as remote, fundamentalistic, authoritarian, distant from the person as observer, a fearful, transcendental powerful other. Like an infant perceiving parental authority, we are tempted to reverence this adorable power through the practice of idolatry. A second moment comes as our we master a situation. Here there is the contrast between the one who has and the one who has not, the charitable affluent and the needy. While appearing at first glance to be other-interested, there is lurking self-interest here as well as at the first stage, and the needy receivers are forced to return thanks or obedience or deference. When this imperfection is revealed some are tempted to rectify the situation through intensifying their mastery and control. Or, we may realize our addiction to control and recognize our powerlessness to really empower constructive change (the third moment). This awareness may be brought on by a calamity that affects us individually or others near or loved by us. We are tempted to escape, to flee from this and to revert to a former state. But if we persevere with hope, the fourth moment is God's power transforming human powerlessness, and we become companions empowered through suffering and the willingness to seek forgiveness. As companions, we discover our weaknesses while understanding our own poverty. The poor serve as mirrors and feedback loops to see ourselves and to realize that we cannot do it all ourselves. Companions recognize that the Source of divine

power is not from themselves and the distance from that Source is narrowing. Divine love draws the soul to deeper levels of involvement. Our temptation is to see this resurrection event as a work of magic, which we are empowered to automatically call forth at our own discretion. If we respond to this new awareness of unworthiness with trust and commitment, it is not debilitating but the opposite, for through companionship we have the power to heal.

Through our co-working with God's call, we are drawn ever deeper into an identification with the creating God and with all God's creatures, which is our fifth level of power. Here power is ever deeper and more creative, the very act of being part of the Earth is the process of being made ever more into the image of the Almighty. We are more than tools and instruments and companions; we are now co-partners within the divine family. Again we may be tempted not to move further, for is finite Earth worth all this effort? Only God's mysterious grace drives us to deeper mystery, and makes us realize we are really healing our own true selves as we work to heal the Earth, for we and the Earth are the full Body of Christ growing to its maturity.

The experience of Dorothy Day, arrested and imprisoned in Occoquan in 1917 for attempting to picket the White House on behalf of women's suffrage, illustrates a deep solidarity that is the mark of this stage. She was 20 at the time, but her experience opened her to God at a level that inspired her whole life. She writes:

All through those weary first days in jail when I was in solitary confinement, the only thoughts that brought comfort to my soul were those lines the Psalms that expressed the terror and misery of man suddenly stricken and abandoned. Solitude and humility and weariness of spirit—these sharpened my perceptions so that I suffered not only my own sorrow but the sorrows of those about me. I was no longer myself. I was mankind. I was no longer a young girl, part of a radical movement seeking justice for those oppressed; I was the oppressed. I was that drug addict, screaming and tossing in her cell, beating her head against the wall. I was that shoplifter who, for rebellion, was sentenced to solitary. I was that woman who had killed her children, who had murdered her lover. ...The blackness of hell was all about me. The sorrows of the world encompasses me. I was like one gone down into the pit. Hope had forsaken me.... And yet if it were not the Holy Spirit that comforted me, how could I have been comforted, how could I have endured, how could I have lived in hope?<sup>4</sup>

That sense of identification with the poor pervaded Dorothy's life, her conversion to Catholicism, her total commitment to helping the poor worker and developing houses of hospitality for all the poor, her writing in the *Catholic Worker*. She had become a co-sufferer, and found Christ in all people and in the beauty of the Earth.

"Deep ecology" is based on a similar intuition that Earth related phenomena and solutions transcend the purely scientific and technological. They include the more personal aspects of the Earth, its artistic and intuitive dimensions which need emphasis if we are to explain the total ecological process. By analogy, one may call resurrection "deep power," or the spiritual power that God works through us. The depth of its working and value may (but not necessarily) depend on our free assent to its manifestation. God is at work. But for us to be involved, we need to affirm our own empowerment. Deep eco-power is our ability to effect

changes of a profound nature in relation to healing and renewing the Earth — provided we identify with its suffering and firmly believe that with the God within, we can save the Earth. At the same time, we will be healed and transformed, for we all belong to the one interconnected whole.

I am involved in a service that provides non-profit organizations with "Earth Healing" systematic resource audits of their properties. In this work, I have discovered that there are various levels of response. All strive to cooperate as much as they can, but the example that strikes me now is the humble but magnificent work of the Ruma, Illinois Sisters, the Adorers of the Precious Blood. Their continued work has produced a large farm that is extremely fruitful and productive, that is resource conservative, that allows for many crops to grow, and that is empowering in its diversity, health and productivity. The Earth itself has become a partner to the people living there; Earth and people are growing into a single community of beings. Earth empowers as its own powers are discovered. A new ability to do and be more fully alive is being discovered, not by finding Earth power alone but by finding God at work in this Earth.

Indeed, even our belief that we can save the Earth is a gift from God, for we are otherwise a powerless people. There is no magic formula that works invariably. Through self-purgation we perceive our state; through reflection we understand our humble calling; through prayer we are fortified to respond to the God, Who promises to always hear our call. With Mary in the Magnificat we can truly say we are blessed — to be called here and now; to be able to hear and respond to that call.

### **Earth Healing and Appropriate Technology**

Some who are concerned about the Earth tend to be overly philosophical. They prefer to attend workshops and talk with like-minded folks. What is needed to preserve and develop their insights is more practical applications and the use of Appropriate Technology. This extension of human (and divine?) power is often held with suspicion by thinkers from classical Greek times and to the present in some philosophical circles. On the other hand, our view of deep power accepts technology as a gift that can be either inappropriately used or appropriately utilized so that it enhances the worth of those for whom it works. We see technology as a neutral tool — full of promise when rightly handled and controlled, but a dangerous weapon when misused.<sup>5</sup>

What is needed today is more than technical evaluations related to immediate goals of profitability or utility. We need to know what happens to our culture when a certain product is used or what will a dammed river do to the people living in the flooded zones. Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) required for new environmentally impacting programs and activities are part of this deeper look before we act. So are Lifecycle Analyses required of many new consumer products which maybe shouldn't be on the market in the first place.<sup>6</sup> Without a deep power perspective one would be drawn to return to older secular "power trips" and see all in terms of resource expenditure or profitability.

## 1. Demonstration Centers

Appropriate technology (AT) is human and resource friendly. It is the type of tool that simple people can handle easily and that does not cost much to acquire and maintain. They use far less physical resources. For instance, the father of AT, E.F. Schumacher<sup>7</sup>, found in his work in the Far East that certain tools such as highly developed hoes and hand-pushed cultivators may make far better sense than to try to get a primitive economic infrastructure in place to convert farmers to using tractors and other sophisticated machinery. It was to develop applications of such AT methods for the use by lower income Appalachian people that we planned and constructed Appalachia -- Science in the Public Interest's Rockcastle Resource Center at Livingston, Kentucky. Here we have tried to implement many of the suggestions developed in the mid-1970s while in Washington, DC.<sup>8</sup>

Our basic technical philosophy is that bulk items such as food, fuel, building materials and water need to come from sources immediately in the neighborhood. Ideas can travel and be communicated easily and cheaply even through sophisticated techniques from very distant places. For instance, at our own Rockcastle Resource Center we have examples of low-cost housing, intensive gardening on very small plots of land and the use of solar energy in food cooking and drying, space and water heating and growing plants in greenhouses. One of these examples is that of a yurt, a Mongolian-type building in which the wall boards are held like the staves of a barrel and thus has no expensive framing system. This is monitored for wear and use patterns on the grounds along with a great number of other ideas ranging from solar hot water systems to cold frames in gardening.

Over the sixteen years since this demonstration center was conceived, a host of visitors have come and seen or participated in workshops on various types of appropriate technology operations. The Center has developed its own cistern system for storing water and its own dry composting toilet for converting human waste materials into a usable form for application as organic fertilizer in selected cultivated areas. With time an experience has accumulated that has been studied by others both within Appalachia and beyond. For that reason a series of twenty four technical papers have been produced and distributed far and wide. Six of these have been translated into Spanish and another six into French for interested people in other countries.

Other examples of "demonstration" can be found elsewhere in the United States (as in Mary Davis' book, *Going Off the Beaten Path* [Noble Press, 1991]). We champion this demonstration method because it respects where people are coming from, does not demand too much from them, accepts their own empowerment through individual creativity, and exposes us to our own weaknesses for all the world to see. This last reason especially opens us to deep power. We believe all forms of activity can reach this level, and offer the above only because this author is most familiar with it.

## 2. Resource Auditing Service

Authentic spiritual empowerment comes when we work to benefit the people, especially the poor. Back in the early 1980s a group of public interest people in Appalachia, through National Science Foundation funding, created a now defunct group called the "Appalachian

Institute." This institute sought to gather and spread the experiences generally originating in the Appalachian Region for use by people in all parts of the nation and world. In doing so this would give self-worth and respect for the gifts of the Mountain people, who have been too long regarded as being strictly on the receiving end of charity.<sup>9</sup>

Our own resource center took over this program during the Reagan/Bush drought years and it became the Resource Auditing Service and its "Earth Healing" project, a systems approach to resource discovery and use. This project invites communities to put their newly acquired environmental consciousness into action by converting their landholdings and other property into models of what the larger community can become — healthy ecosystems which revitalize their own neighborhoods. These communities can become prophetic models of sustainable resource use. New ways of using outdoor and interior space, fostering wildlife, utilizing energy, conserving and storing water, managing waste, producing and preparing food, and traveling and hauling goods are proposed through a report after videotaping and a thorough analysis of existing resources.

The Earth Healing team is composed of demonstration center operators who are not so much experts but rather service people putting together in handy format all resources at hand with a model approach as to how to develop them. It looks at all the sectors of the community as an integrated whole. Through help from a list of practical consultants a report is written discussing existing resources and future options. For instance, if two or three excellent sites for a solar greenhouse are located, the report will discuss them and then proceed to suggest pertinent literature or recommend a consultant for either a site selection or a hands-on greenhouse building workshop. Likewise a ten-year model development plan is presented as a discussion stimulus and a priority setter as the group takes on its process of identifying its own resources.

To date the Earth Healing Program has performed about sixty audits of a wide variety of non-profit institutions ranging from retirement homes to youth camps in over twenty states. During the summer of 1992 a gathering of the audited groups was held in St. Louis and the progress and obstacles were frankly discussed among the 60 participants.

### **Eco-Justice through Appropriate Technology**

Justice is establishing wholeness and equality as God intends it. Those properly empowered can bring about a just society. Thus we need to consider what the power is meant to do. If power is used to preserve an unjust status quo then institutions pervert their power. Too often higher technologies are used to control the lives of others and thus are tools of unjust power brokers. On the other hand, appropriate technology (AT) is a tool for empowering the poor and allowing them to continue to control their own lives and obtain the basics for decent living. AT is a means for preserving and establishing social justice. When applied to conserve the Earth's resources AT assists in the establishment and enhancement of eco-justice. Power and justice are closely related. Through proper use of power a just society can be established and/or preserved; misuse of power brings injustice.

Just as we can speak of five ways to deal with poverty (Chapter 3), faith (Chapter 4) and with use of power (this chapter), so we can further speak of five levels of justice with the deepening ones needed to truly heal the Earth.

At the first stage is a justice that looks to God as just judge and that we are merely those who receive justice from the hand or wrath of the Almighty. The justice of God is beyond any human being's ability to totally comprehend or to even attempt to imitate. However, this transcendent and mysterious sense of justice awaits a final day of deliverance. What has not been justly administered is due to God's patience. Someday it will be fully understood and established in a finality of heaven or hell. This image of justice while placed in a divine context has human application in the justice administered by a stern and unforgiving court, authority figure or autocratic state. What can we do but be proper in conduct and subservient.

At the second stage an attempt is made to refashion the justice of a stern God with that which is mediated by authority figures with a sense of forgiveness and pardon. This is still a Biblical concept. Here the human being enters the picture, like Moses and David and in the New Testament, Jesus, and in the role models of just people throughout history. However, what was said in Chapter 3 about charity applies here as well. Justice as distributed by imperfect human agencies is flawed and often hidden agendas are at work with subtle power plays. It is the politics of distribution of resources that we so often know in entitlement programs established with good intentions but not working perfectly. The recipients of the justice can be harmed if not allowed to advance.

The third stage emerges when we become disillusioned with thinking that we are furthering justice and hit the same proverbial stone wall that is found in our quest for power. We come face-to-face with our inherent injustice and that of our society and how when this is unrecognized it is so destructive. If we are honest at this moment we become conscious that we are powerless to establish justice on our own. Instead we seem to be furthering unjust deeds both to others and to the Earth itself. A dark night of the soul occurs.

At the fourth stage we hear the call of our just God, Who alone establishes justice. We search again for the models that have recognized this fact throughout history. What did they do? How did they proceed to root out the injustice so inherent in their own individual and collective lives? We begin to discover again that we can only be just in a community of just people, where corrective procedures are in place, and where people recognize the proper tools needed. We even find that individual role models need to give way to social models of communities, not individuals and that establishing justice is a work of a community in faith.

The fifth stage is where deep power is recognized. We are called by God as members of a justified family of those who now establish justice on the Earth. Our gratitude for being justified is that we help re-establish justice where misuse and abuse has disrupted our community and our world. Here we muster the profound depths of a theology of redemption and resurrection and identify our action in the Divine working of wholeness in this world — a truly authentic eco-justice. We work with others who are comfortable to using tools more adapted to their own resources, style and needs. We accept the proper place of AT in this establishment of eco-justice or healing our Earth.



Justice is more than words; it involves just deeds. In the case of the convicted strip mine operators doing community service for us (Chapter 3) the Commonwealth's lawyer wanted to impress the seriousness of their crime upon us. The approach taken by our Center is not to judge individuals but to consider each as worthy of becoming a true healer of the Earth. In fact, no one can truly throw stones. Surface mining has often involved inappropriate technologies that ruined the landscape in delicate terrain. The combination of consumer pressure to purchase stripped coal and the desire to make a livelihood combine in certain circumstances to abuse our part of the country. Who truly is more at fault? Ignorance of the final effects together with an active risk of endangering others leads to damage to Earth and the neighboring human community.

In place of such harsh resource extraction processes as strip mining of coal on elevated slopes and clear cutting of forests with heavy equipment and chainsaws come alternatives that allow for the use of renewable resources such as solar power and the methods that allow for systematic extraction of wood but for ultimate sustainability of our forest reserves. These are truly AT methods and have been tried and true for centuries in some form or other. Now they await adaptation to modern circumstances.

This last sentence is the challenge that ties the message of deepening levels of empowerment to development of AT. The answers are hidden and not well known; they need refinement and further study, research and application. How the final process will look is still uncertain. It is not as though a brilliant master has an answer and that others need to follow. In place of this form of eco-fascism is the quiet calling by the poor and the lowly to assist, to participate, to enter into the entire process as equals, not merely as those allowed to serve in some limited fashion. The whimsical nature of God leads me to believe that it is precisely these, the lowly, who will bring about change, who are called to establish justice. The humble role of those of us who are more affluent is to prepare the way, to remove the roadblocks, to allow all to speak. We need to make AT available in its full potential. That means broadcasting its benefits even when it is not "profitable" in free market economic terms. It is extremely profitable in long term community and ecological terms -- the most healthy economic sense.

The next three chapters will move us into a deeper understanding of the variety of gifts. We have just looked at stages or levels which all are asked to journey through to deeper levels of spiritual healing. Now we will look at the variation that gives each person a uniqueness. First in Chapter 6 we will look at the complementarity of the masculine and feminine, in Chapter 7 the gifts that spring from psychological differences, and in Chapter 8 the rich diversity in our individual ways of opening to God. Each of these areas give testimony to the Enlivening Spirit working within us.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> How does one express religious beliefs when the reader is part of one's faith act and yet may not profess the same faith? I believe such readers are fellow believers in a rather fundamental manner for we all are listening and have common hopes for our planet. My urgency needs to become that person's concern as well. Even though we may not share a common faith, I am convinced that we need to share so that our faith may mutually grow. Through this communication, we each come to ever-deeper faith.

<sup>2</sup> This difference between professed believers and the non-professed but Earthly concerned is best exemplified in the modern handling of waste materials which has immense implications in spirituality. See *Waste Minimization: Widening the Perspectives*, Albert Fritsch and Timothy Collins, ASPI Publications, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> One reviewer liked Gaia, at least as a name that made Earth more real and personal. Earth itself seemed to accomplish that if taken (as we do) as a proper name. Gaia, in fact, is a Greek goddess and mother of Uranus and the Titans, whereas Earth (with capitals) stems from the Anglo-Saxon root "*eorthe*." Doesn't the New Age "Gaia" nomenclature follow an older age elitism of giving precedence to Greek or Latin over Germanic wording? This author strives to connect with the commoner in this case.

<sup>4</sup> See Dorothy Day, "The Long Way Home," in *By Little and By Little: The Selected Writings of Dorothy Day*, ed. with intro. by Robert Ellsberg (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Some technologies are so sophisticated that people are as yet too inexperienced to handle them. This applies to nuclear power plants for instance, where the waste products baffle waste managers. People must simply know their human limitations which extend to technological applications. That critical awareness is part of deep power.

<sup>6</sup> A forthcoming book on Lifecycle Analysis will be addressing this issue in depth that will be coming out in 1994 edited by Arthur Purcell. This author has a contributed section dealing with Recreation and Services.

<sup>7</sup> See E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: economics as if people mattered* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1973), and *Good Work* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1979), for further development of his position.

<sup>8</sup> These ideas are adapted from my book *Ninety Nine Ways to a Simple Lifestyle* (CSPI Team: Anchor/Doubleday, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> In a trip to Haiti in 1990 this author found that the very problem of loss of self-confidence was endemic in that country as well. I was amazed at some of the excellent appropriate technology methods and suggested that a conference held there sometime in the future could discuss some of these methods with outside participants. The political crisis that followed in that unfortunate land immediately afterwards has put this plan in limbo.

**CHAPTER 6: THE RESURRECTION OF MALE-FEMALE AND  
EARTH'S CREATIVITY**

by Bob Sears

Male-female differences are basic to the variety of our giftedness for working with God in caring for the Earth. We are made in the image of God as male and female (Gn 1:27), and together we were blessed and commissioned to be fruitful and fill the Earth. Our fruitfulness reflects the fruitfulness and creativity of all God's creatures. To renew creation we need to recover the creative partnership between the sexes that God intended in the beginning, which also, then, would involve a creative partnership with the Earth. How can that be done? What has happened to create the many divisions we experience between men and women and the Earth?

It is striking that our awareness of the devastating violation of the Earth coincides with awareness of the oppression of women. It is as though life itself in its various forms is being oppressed by the dominant culture. The feminine, which is intimately involved with life and care for individuals seems to feel caught in the grip of masculine structures, goals and enterprises, much as nature is caught. The feminine, as it were, is "life" becoming aware of its own needs. At first this was to gain equality with men on patriarchal cultural terms—competing for leadership roles, equal pay, etc. But more recently there is a growing awareness that women and men have life needs and values—for relationships, care of individuals, time for beauty, life and feeling—that at present have little room in our hectic society.

If nature were given a voice, it would no doubt express the same sense of being unheard and neglected and having little space for its own inner reality. With no power to stand together and fight for recognition—as women are now doing—nature can only waste away and reveal its plight by sickness and death—as it is doing. The same truth is expressed a bit differently in each situation: we live fully only if we respect and creatively interact with polar opposites—male purposefulness, organization and vision with female life orientation, relationships and care for individuals and timing; nature's multiple rhythms with intellect's instantaneous vision and projects; matter and spirit. If we humans neglect these polarities among ourselves, we will not develop the ability to respect and love the rhythms and needs of animals and nature. Our attitude toward one another will parallel our attitude toward the Earth. If we dominate or neglect women or men, we will find ourselves dominating or neglecting the Earth.<sup>1</sup> So we need to look closely at our attitudes toward one another as an integral part of healing and renewing the Earth.

This is all the more important since it seems women are more sensitive to the need for Earth healing than are men. In Al's work with land audits (his Resource Auditing Service - see Ch. 5), there have been 30 religious communities of women that requested the audits and acted on them, but no communities of men. The religious men simply do not seem to see the need, or as a whole (with the exception of more sensitive individuals) they don't value Earth healing as highly as other needs such as finances, efficiency, etc. Indeed, we recognize our limits as men to be writing this chapter, but the value of doing so seemed to outweigh its disadvantages. We present it, not as a final word, but as an invitation for further reflection on the part of both men and women.

It is helpful to put our reflections in the context of history and of evolution itself, for healing means to make whole, and resurrection is God's "New Creation" which respects all previous levels and reestablishes right relations from a "New Creation" perspective. God's "dream" is given in Genesis, male and female mutually helping one another, walking in company with God and living harmoniously with nature. For that reality to be reestablished ("recreated") through the power of the resurrection, there is much we need to "let go and let die" that God might recreate the original dream.

We will begin, then, by looking at how male-female relationships reached the lack of integration we find today. Then we will look more closely at two forms of relationship—marriage and single life—at the development of male-female relationships and their healing, and finally at the larger (Earth) context that provides the global setting for the "home" we are called to create.

### **Male-female Relationships in History**

Recent feminist studies have proposed a "pre-patriarchal" period where women were the dominant influence in society and which seems to indicate an "egalitarian, democratic, and peaceful" society.<sup>2</sup> This period, which supposedly flourished from around 6,500 B.C.E., was superseded by an age that began with Aryan invasions around 3,500 B.C.E., and inaugurated a "patriarchal" rule that has more or less dominated civilization ever since. Only recently have the devastating effects of these "patriarchal" structures revealed their onesidedness and their destructive effects which have given rise to the ecological/feminist critique of modern culture. Present evidence does not fully substantiate this view, but it does challenge us now to see what caused the split between male-female perspectives and how it might be healed. Let us look more closely at what happened.

The story clearly begins much before this early mother goddess culture. Why sexual differences at all, already in plant and animal levels of existence? Clearly, nature loves and produces polarities that complement each other and make space for creative integrations. If all reproduction were by mere cell division (as with worms) there would be little space for novelty. Sexual reproduction allows each component to develop in a different space, with different qualities. When they come together, a creative new synthesis is formed which gives flexibility and adaptability to the resultant species. We have mentioned this principle of variation before. It is necessary for the health of life. Differentiation toward new creative syntheses is revealed and increases in every strata of our universe. Even the primary particles/waves show a similar polarity, not unlike the female (relational focus) and male (autonomy focus) that we find emerging with humans, and every succeeding level shows a similar "field/individual" polarity. So the emergence of male-female differences in humanity is not a mistake (some falling away from a more basic unity as some philosophers surmised), but a further development of a very important facet of our evolving universe, made in the image of our Triune God—where we believe the Father (Mother) gives rise to the polar reflection of the Son (Daughter) and their creative interaction (the Holy Spirit). The mistake is not sexual differences, but what we humans have done with them. As Teilhard de Chardin saw it, there is an "eternal feminine" at the heart of all creation bringing about successive integrations and ultimately the integration of God with us as Mary says "yes" to the Incarnation of God's Son.<sup>3</sup> So the basic polarity

developed from the beginning was heightened with the emergence of life and animal life, and has become most pronounced with humans.

How men and women related before 10,000 B.C.E. we know very little about.<sup>4</sup> Men were hunters; the women, it seems, cared for the children, were food gatherers and cared for the camp. Men who were to contact the spiritual (the shamans) could be clothed as women or in animal skins and feathers. They were identified with the whole mystery of nature and life. Yet humans then were wanderers with no stable economy. It seems that with the thinning of the animal population and the rise of agriculture and its cultivation humans achieved some stability, and women gained prominence as most closely identified with those forces of life. This was the world around 6,500 B.C.E. We have no writing from this period, but many primitive female figurines indicate the religious centrality of motherhood but also images of vultures peering out behind breasts indicate the connection of women and death. On the other hand, bull images in shrines of Catal Huyuk, also point to male virility as sacred.<sup>5</sup> The situation is not as simple as the above view portrayed it.

There are indications in this stage that women were largely responsible for developing small tools of agriculture,, domestication of small animals, weaving, pottery, home-building, and the use of natural medicines. Men developed weapons and later the plow used with larger animals. As Eisler presents the data from Minoan Crete, the society seems not to be matriarchal or patriarchal, but more relational, and it was peaceful for about 1,500 years before invasions from the more warlike, male-dominated cultures.<sup>6</sup> However, even this focus on invasions as causing the overthrow of feminine perspectives is questionable. This view seems hostile to men and in fact is not certain. In Catal Huyuk, for example, there is no indication of an outer invasion.<sup>7</sup> In Ruether's analysis of comparative studies of primitive peoples, when the women's role increased because of focus on agriculture instead of hunting, there seemed to be a reaction on the part of men to redress the balance. The inequality could well be a reaction against the growing power of women which brought on an inner regrouping and strengthening of men's power prior to the outer invasion.

Thus, to project the so-called "golden age" that later poets like Hesiod celebrated and remembered onto Crete or other prehistorical cultures is a tenuous hypothesis. What we do know, from the time of writing (in commercial lists, stories of military exploits, sacred texts and sagas), is that the dominant cultures worldwide became more and more organized and militant, with indications of a masculine reversal of an underlying feminine mythology. Marduk in the Babylonian Enuma Ilish epic slays Tiamat the Earth dragon, who represented a preceding female dominant society.<sup>8</sup> In the Old Testament the serpent (the animal of the mother Goddess) is the tempter of Eve and Adam. One could say psychologically that emerging explicit consciousness is threatened by the maternal instinctual forces it has just recently sprung from.<sup>9</sup> In any case, what emerged with that more male-focused consciousness was city culture, the king, military conquests and a hierarchical priesthood—the seeds of our prevailing culture today.

What we find is that great classical empires emerged, made possible by metal tools and weapons.<sup>10</sup> Already in the records of Sumer from the third millennium we find "the patrilineal family, slavery, an aristocratic priesthood, and a warrior nobility who control most of the land and rule over a peasantry as well as a slave labor force."<sup>11</sup> Women could have power (as with queens and princesses) but only because of their relationship to husbands or fathers. The men

were the dominant force. They built empires and fortified stone cities supported by large agricultural populations and massive irrigation systems. Finances from these enterprises went into building stone monuments, phallic-like towers, pyramids, and temples. Priests and scholars who read the stars for constant guidance, appeased the Divine for the people, separating the sacred and profane. Writing led to law and the earlier writings of the world's great religions. Neumann roots this stage in the Myth of the Hero, the masculine principle that seeks to escape the birthing and devouring power of the divine maternal womb. Negatively, it represents a "fall" and alienation from the Earth, as we see in Abel's killer Cain, who is a forger of metal (including weapons) and an ancestor of Tubal Cain who forged copper and bronze. We see something of the Old Testament's ambivalence regarding this shift in its mixed view of kingship. Kingship represented a turning from Yahweh in 1 Samuel, but a new relation to Yahweh in the Davidic messianic promise. The cosmos is no longer the womb of the sacred Earth-mother, it has become the kingdom ruled by the sacred warrior king from a transcendent throne (not unlike the move from transcendent power to mediated power we discussed in Ch. 5).

At the height of this period a striking transformation of consciousness occurred in three geographical regions: China, India and Persia, and the Eastern Mediterranean, including Israel and Greece. Karl Jaspers called it the "Axial Period"—the time around 500 B.C.E. with the process occurring between 800 and 200 B.C.E.<sup>12</sup> We find Confucius and Lao-tzu in China, the Upanishadic sages, Mahavira, and the Buddha in India; and the philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Greece, as well as the great exilic Hebrew prophets. "These teachers brought about a transformation from the mythic, cosmic, ritualistic, collective consciousness of primal peoples to the rational, analytic, critical, individualistic consciousness that has characterized the mainstream of human history since the Axial Period."<sup>13</sup> Persons were no longer embedded in the matrix of the group. They could criticize the structure of society, as we see with Socrates and the Hebrew prophets. They were no longer related to the universe and events through myth and ritual, but strove to determine the scientific structure of the natural world and record the events of history. They created philosophy and codified the law and the holy books that now form the basis of the dominant world religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Judaism are codified in this period, and Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism have roots here. The spirituality of this stage is one of transcendence, the transcendence of mind and spirit over the web of nature and fate.

The Old Testament shows shifts also in its view of woman and nature. Whereas in the Yahwist tradition (formulated about the time of David) God spoke to women and men, in the later Elohist tradition women were to come to God "through" their husbands, much as the people came to God "through" the authority of Moses and his successors. Increasingly women were subordinated to men, and even dependent on men to relate to Yahweh. Women were the possession of their husbands. The law was written for men, and to protect men's rights. Polygamy, though not encouraged, was permitted, especially if one's wife was childless or could have no male child. There was little sense of mutuality, but a clear hierarchy and subordination. I have termed this "familial faith."

During the Exile (parallel to Jasper's "First Axial Period") there is a move, as we saw in Ch. 4, toward "individuating faith" -- akin to the "explicit consciousness" of other cultures. The patriarchal principle that prevailed prior to the Exile is softened in the Wisdom strands of the tradition after the Exile. It is this Wisdom tradition that seems to have influenced Christ's own

activity.<sup>14</sup> The Exile itself humbled Israel and opened her to an immediate experience of God—what we called in Chapter 4 "individuating faith," or the sense of "powerlessness" (Ch. 5). There was the shock of the suffering of the innocent that we find in Job and Jeremiah. Israel as a whole shied away from this powerlessness and returned to a strong legalism in the priestly school and the Pharisaic, Maccabean tradition, but in the Wisdom tradition there is a softening of God's rule in the feminine principle of Sophia or Wisdom. For these Wisdom writers, monogamy is the sign of faithfulness to Yahweh. Thus, Tobit 8:6ff; 7:12 explains the words of Gn 2:24 as a recommendation to monogamous marriage, and the covenant between Yahweh and Israel as a marriage presupposes monogamy (Hos 2:18-22; Jer 2:2; Ez 16:8; Is 50:1, etc.). It is as though the cutting free of the spirit from ancestral patterns for a more individuated relation to God (which also carried with it a deep sense of abandonment by Yahweh and disillusionment that we find during the Exile) opened thoughtful Israel to their unique "soul", to Yahweh as "only God," and to the ideal of monogamous commitment of marriage. Yahweh promises now a faithfulness to Israel like the faithfulness promised the Earth in the time of Noah: "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you" (Is 54:9). It is also the time when even "eunuches" who are faithful to Yahweh "will have a monument and a name better than sons and daughters" (Is 56:5), and the desolate have more children than those married (Is 54:1). That new individuated relationship will be most faithful and fruitful.

The attitude toward nature was also affected, but it seems that nature was increasingly thought of as belonging to Yahweh, even if entrusted to humans' care.<sup>15</sup> We saw from the sin of Adam and Eve, that the Earth was no longer a willing servant of humans. It was cursed because of Adam and Eve's sin, and only with toil would it produce food. (Gn 3:17) It was further wounded by Cain's killing of Abel, whose blood cried from the ground. (Gn 4:10). The history of sin increased till the "whole world was full of violence" (Gn 6:11) and Yahweh determined to destroy humans and the Earth. It was Noah that God called forth in this crisis. "Out of the ground which the Lord has cursed, this one [Noah] will bring relief from our work and from the toil of our hands." (Gn 5:29) The flood itself was a return to chaos, and the occasion for a new creation. The wind again blew over the Earth and the waters subsided (Gn 8:1). Now Noah, a man of the soil (Gn 9:20) was told to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth" (Gn 9:1; 9:7). Fear of humans will be in all animals and fish and birds, and "everything that lives" is now given them for food (Gn 9:3) whereas only the plants were given to Adam and Eve. But Noah is not told to "rule over and subdue" the Earth (as Adam was). God promises: "never again will I curse the ground because of man" Gn 8:2). It is the first covenant promise, but it is made by God alone with no condition connected to human response. It is as though nature is God's, to be given to humans to the extent that they stay submitted to God.

Humans were no better after Noah but increased their sin till the tower of Babel. Yahweh intervened and called out Abraham and the patriarches, but even they only gradually emerged from sin into trust (see the Joseph story for a continuation of brother murder as well as God's continuing efforts to save). Through the Exile Israel is removed from the "promised land" because of their turning away from God, yet Yahweh would never again destroy the land. The section about Noah was likely written during the Exile for it is written in light of a "new creation" that Isaiah and the exilic prophets envision. It is as though Yahweh remains "wedded"

to the land, even though unfaithful Israel has been cast off, and Yahweh will restore it in the "new creation."

How is creation treated during and after the Exile? Jerusalem and its land was devastated, but God's promise of restoration still rings out. The heavens and depths of the Earth are to "sing out" (Is 44:23), for Jerusalem will be raised up (Is 44:26), and salvation will "bud forth" from the opened Earth (Is 45:6). Yahweh is about to create a "New Heavens and a New Earth" (Is 65:17). The Earth "will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Heb 2:14). During this time there developed a view of God's Spirit penetrating the whole Earth, and as Wisdom, rejoicing in the creation of all things (Prov 8:30). The time of fear in creation and among the animals that occurred after Noah will give way to a time of peace when "the wolf will be guest of the lamb" (Is 11:6-9; 65:25) and where "pain and sorrow will be no more" (Is 65:17-20). Thus, the time of the Spirit will also renew the Earth and bring peace to the creatures of Earth. Receptivity to the feminine in God brings a return to peace and fruitfulness. It is a cosmic vision of the fruitfulness of God's restoration, the "resurrection" (see Ch. 2).

In fact, however, with the occupation of the Ptolemaic empire and the Romans, this time of peace never seemed to materialize. Israel struggled to remain faithful, and increased its laws as a sign of fidelity. The Spirit of God seemed far off, and the land was devastated by wars. While monogamy was valued, women were treated as property of their husbands much as before the Exile, without an equal voice before God.

This was the situation in the time of Jesus. There were many competing ideologies and understandings of how God's Kingdom could be furthered. The Pharisees focused on the law, the Zealots on armed resistance, the Essenes on forming an elite priestly people. Jesus himself seems to have lived in large part by the vision of the Wisdom literature. He is open to women as to men in his company, he affirms monogamy as the God-given way for marriage, and proclaims forgiveness of enemies rather than war as the way to God's Kingdom. His nature miracles and parables show that he sees nature as under God and revealing God's mysteries, and his actions in relation to nature (calming the storm, cursing the fig tree) show that he saw himself as being given rule over nature as given Adam and Eve. The Spirit of God's graciousness (like Wisdom) seems to guide and empower him, and his actions bring justice and harmony to women and men and the Earth. Yet he and his way was rejected by the dominant patriarchal power structure both of Israel and Rome.

How was Jesus' way lived out in the early church? The various Jewish groups continued as before emphasizing cultic holiness. Those who followed Jesus, on the other hand, seemed rather to have looked to what God intended in creation for their view of holiness. Jesus had appealed to "the beginning" (Mt 19:4) for norms about marriage, and he spoke about worshipping God "in Spirit and Truth" rather than in this or that place in Jn 4:23.<sup>16</sup> Jesus restated the command to "Be holy as I am holy" (Lev 11:44) according to his view of God as loving and compassionate. They were to be "perfect" (Mt 5:48: meaning to "love" perfectly) or "compassionate" (Lk 6:36) as God was perfect and compassionate. Their norm was God's own love. True, the early church emphasized relationship to humans more than the Earth, yet the Earth was not totally neglected. Paul envisioned the Earth "in travail, waiting for the freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:19), and Christ was seen as Lord of the whole of creation. Women also seem to have played a prominent role. Homes of rich women became places of



worship,<sup>17</sup> and women prophets are mentioned in Acts (21:8ff) as well as evangelists like Prisca in Corinth (Acts 18:2ff). The Pauline writings give various titles to women: co-worker (Prisca), brother/sister (Apphia), diakones (Phoebe Rom 18:1ff), and apostle (Junia), and in Rom 16:6 and 12, he commends Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis for having "labored hard" in the Lord. In the view of Robert Jewett<sup>18</sup> "The authentic Pauline letters ...move on a progression that leads to a full acknowledgement of equality, while maintaining an insistence on the divinely given quality of sexual difference." Gal 3:28 seems to be a kind of baptismal formula: "In Christ there is neither male nor female,..." It witnesses to an early equality based on baptism. Similarly, in Christ there is a restoration of all things (Earth included) to right relationship (1 Cor 15:27).

This was the ideal, and seems actually to have been operative in the aftermath of the resurrection and in the early life of the church, at least among the Hellenistic Christians (Luke and Paul). However, it was not to last. Tensions among the wandering prophets and divisions among early Christians as well as individualistic gnostic tendencies led to a re-emphasis on structure and recognized authority after the destruction of the Temple. Christians saw themselves as the "true Israel" after they were excommunicated by the Pharisees in Jamnia. They were influenced by the prevailing social structures and began to model their own structures on those of Israel. This involved a greater emphasis on male headship and a form of hierarchy similar to that of Israel. We see evidence of this already in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and perhaps in the household codes.<sup>19</sup> Whatever the causes, church structure and the relations of men and women became more and more patriarchal. Equality was limited to virgins who had become "like men" whereas married women were to be submissive. Even virgins were not equal in opportunities for church service.<sup>20</sup> By the time of Constantine the patriarchal structure was solidly in place. Celibacy and monasticism were interpreted as superior to marriage, which view divided secular everyday life from spiritual life, rather than provide a vision of their transformation and integration.

The church's view of nature was also affected. Paul Santmire has accurately pointed out the ambiguous attitude of Christianity toward ecology.<sup>21</sup> People like Irenaeus and St. Francis of Assisi looked for a transformation of nature in God, and even Augustine in his later writings did not hold that nature had fallen, only humans. On the other hand, the New Testament so focuses on the salvation of humans that Old Testament emphasis on the transformation of land in this life was not emphasized. Under the influence of Neo-Platonic thought and the hierarchical view of Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius, a dominant "ascent theology" pervaded the West, from Aquinas to Bonaventure, Earth and even Teilhard. This view saw God in the material world, but only as a stepping stone to the final emancipation of spirit from matter. In the end, matter is no longer necessary for spirits united with God and the Earth will not be included in the final redemption. Instead of being included with humans in redemption (as Paul indicates in Rom 8:19f) this view sees it as subsumed in spirit or left behind. In Ch. 21 suggested that Love does not use others for its goals but blesses both humans and Earth. What actually developed was a theology that so subordinated nature to human fulfillment that nature's importance in itself was lost. It was the secularization of this subordination of nature to human fulfillment that opened the way for the technological exploitation of nature. That development in Christianity was not what actually caused this split, as Rupert Sheldrake has accurately documented,<sup>22</sup> but it did pave the way for the ascendancy of scientific objectivity, and the dream of total control of nature that unfortunately is still all too operative.

The effect of Christianity, however, was ambivalent. By stripping nature of its primal numinosity (a continuation of Israel's fight against pagan idolatry), and subordinating it to human fulfillment, a new technological relationship to nature became possible. Technology expanded through the use of printing, first invented in China and then in the West. It made possible the expansion of the vernacular which led to the modern nation state, and the further development of education and specialization. These trends promoted the growth of modern science and technology, culminating in the mass democracy of modern industrial societies. Before the advent of printing, a new place of learning broke out of the walls of monasteries—the university. The new urban culture also gave rise to new orders to replace the Benedictines: the Franciscans and Dominicans, and later the Jesuits—all playing a large part in the universities. But with printing rose also the Protestant Reformation, based on the vernacular and the printed Bible distributed to the popular culture. This, together with the Catholic response, gave rise to long-term cultural changes in the West which we even now experience.

Joe Holland has noted two changes that seem very alive today.<sup>23</sup> First, modern science became more and more secular and separated from the classical search for spiritual wisdom. And second, spirituality was returned to the feminine symbol, but now psychologized and eventually privatized. Whatever the cause<sup>24</sup>, this led to a spirituality of interiority that we experience today. This turn to the individual subject was furthered by the Protestant Reformation, with its rejection of the visible mediation of tradition and community through formal institutional authority, and its turn to individual conscience. Thus, while the institutional structure of Catholic and Protestant churches is critiqued as patriarchal, its culture and spirituality seems predominantly feminine (judging from who mainly take part in it). Activist men give priority to commitments in the outer technological and political world. Even the spirituality of ecology is in danger of becoming overly feminized and uprooted from the realism of science and technology.

What has resulted culturally has been a separation of large masses from the land and an equally dramatic weakening of the family system, due to industrialization, individualism and some stands of feminism itself, as well as modern secular society taking over many previous roles of the family like education, health and welfare. The family began to appear as a consumer of social and church services rather than as a creator of society and church. The family has been further weakened by the overuse of television, which has become the main instrument of socialization, placed in the middle of the home and displacing the traditional hearth. Male-technologies have gained prominence even in the home while feminine spiritualities have become privatized.

But we see cracks in this structure, and in fact this book is an effort to further emerging trends. Our very awareness of environment needs, as well as studies of social and family systems, are calling us to a more holistic view of life. We are becoming aware that we need to integrate technology to enhance the cycles of our natural, social and spiritual environments, rather than flatten them. Further, the spirituality of this society is increasingly grounded in creativity. We see we are responsible for co-creating our environment with our Creator, not simply at the mercy of it. In sum, we need to integrate the gifts of men and women, while recovering the best of each previous stage of development. Holland sees marriage as a symbol of the divine community of the Trinity, an image of the pluralistic integration we are now called

to. He must, I suggest, also integrate the single state in his considerations to fully express the newness we are called to through the resurrection, but both marriage and celibacy need to be renewed and healed if our full God-given creativity is to be released.

### **Can Male-Female Relationships be Healed?**

The very quick overview of history we have undertaken shows that male-female relationships have always been a challenge and problem as well as a gift. The story of the Fall itself indicates that Eve enticed Adam to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree and so disregard Yahweh's command. And Adam, instead of owning his responsibility, turned against Eve and blamed her. What was meant to be partnership in caring for God's gift of the Garden became a relationship of suspicion and temptation. This was the Yahwist's insight, told in story form during the time of David (who had himself disregarded God to take Bathsheba and have Uriah killed). What seems clear, not just from this story but from world mythology, Jungian depth psychology, and our own experience, is that women are essential to man's dream being fulfilled and can very easily take the place of God, and vice versa, men can very easily take the place of God for women. If that happens, however, they become idols for the other and blocks to what each most deeply wants—intimacy with God. Freedom and basic trust gets lost and what replaces it is suspicion and control — either domination by the man (who has more need for autonomy) or clinging by the woman (who has more relational needs). When deep trust is lost, so is our openness to any "other" and the Earth. The Earth also we may either cling to or dominate, but in either case, it will no longer be the loving dialogue partner it was meant to be. We are cast out from paradise! The Yahwist's story is the story of us all. It reveals both the high call (to image God) and the tragic state of male-female relations. Can they be healed? I believe Jesus has made that possible through his resurrection, but first we need to see different stages of male-female development.

Just as there are different levels of involvement in ecology (Ch. 3), different stages of spiritual/emotional growth (Ch. 4), and different forms of power (Ch. 5), so there are different stages in the development of male-female relationships that we see throughout history and in our individual relationships. We have considered the pre-Judaeo-Christian era and their emphasis on mother-goddess figures and virile bulls. It was preverbal and more felt than explicitly known. This would correspond to a more "felt" unity in relationships, especially to the child's relation to mother or father (my "initial faith" stage). Recent studies have shown how our God-images have deep roots in this stage.<sup>25</sup> Family therapists would call it "enmeshed" for there is little space for individuals to grow without intense resistance from the one's family or community.

The next, patriarchal, period was prominent from the emergence of writing on, but reached its apex in what we termed the "First Axial Period" (c. 700 - 200 BCE), or the emergence of explicit consciousness in China, India, Israel and Greece. This period was dominated by a masculine consciousness, and women were subordinated to men. In individual relationships it corresponds to "social marriages" or the selection of a partner according to a "role" or cultural expectation of beauty or importance. We are attracted to partners who correspond to our background or family or social expectations, often without even knowing it. It is amazing how couples repeat the dysfunctional patterns of their families (as well as some functional ones). Alcoholism, heart attacks, divorces, child abuse — every sort of pattern runs

in families. The sins (and other patterns) of the parents truly are handed on to offspring, as Scripture says (see Ch. 4 for references). It is how most marriages start, and why they go through crises getting to true, person to person relationships. Each partner (or at least one) has to become "disillusioned" with false expectations put on the other and find an individuated relation to God and their true selves before they can really relate freely to the other. "There have to be bad marriages," observed John Sanford the Jungian therapist, "before there are good ones."<sup>26</sup>

That break in cultural expectations and new centering on God is witnessed to in Jesus' life and teaching about relationships (communitarian stage). He himself said that "unless you hate (i.e.. love less) father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters and your own life for my sake...you cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26). And again, "who is my mother and my brothers...however does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." We have to break from ordinary familial ties to rediscover them in God. Thus, even though it caused his parents pain, he stayed back in the Temple "his Father's house" when he was twelve before going down to be subject to his parents (Lk 2:41-51). And he obeyed God even when his religious leaders thought him blasphemous. His concentration of God explains his teaching a permanent commitment in marriage since God is faithful despite difficulties. And there can also be celibacy (which can be seen as an individuated relation to God) for the sake of God's Kingdom. In human relationships, the transition to such individuated relationships is filled with doubt and uncertainty. It is what is called a "mid-life crisis," where one sees the flaws in oneself and the other and is tempted to leave the relationship. Only when we see that all human relationships are flawed, and only God-centered relationships are trustworthy can a new relationship be "resurrected." Thus, if we are faithful, disillusionment gives way to a new, freer relationship, grounded in God and in finding God in one another. It is this ability to respect the other as other that opens us to delight in variety and pluralism. We become "companions" of one another, and so also of the Earth.

In the final (mission) stage, God becomes the center, and our delight is to work together to let God's Spirit bring others and the whole Earth into the same sort of loving companionship. This is what I have called "mission" faith. It is the ideal, but because of various social, political and religious forces, Christianity in many ways cycled back to forms similar to what we saw in Old Testament familial structures. Where Jesus seems to have moved to an individuated community point of view, early Christianity, after living these structures for a time, returned to a hierarchical, "familial" point of view, with glimmers of the other stages emerging in history.

I believe that it is only from the "communitarian/mission" point of view that we can fully understand and appreciate Jesus' teaching regarding male-female relationships. Jesus affirmed two unprecedented things for his time: that marriage, grounded in what God has joined together, is not to be dissolved, and that in heaven there is no marriage and that "those who are perfect" give up everything, including wives and husbands, for the sake of the Kingdom. We have to understand this developmentally, I would argue. That does not mean that humanly committed marriages that are harmful to the spouses (for instance, when they have chosen dysfunctional partners in continuity with dysfunctional family patterns, etc.) cannot be dissolved, but that "what God has joined, let no one sunder." When married love is grounded in God's love and has the touch of individuated freedom grounded in God, it is unconditionally committed and lives on in heaven as on Earth. On the other hand, the call to remain single for God's Kingdom

(celibacy) does not mean that because there is no marriage "in heaven" there are no sexual differences (Mary is clearly not male as "Mother of God") or no on-going loving relationships. It means rather that the limitations of human marriage are transcended in heaven. Both marriage and celibacy point to their grounding in God, and mutually illumine each other.<sup>27</sup> Like individuating faith celibacy is grounded in God and is key to the new kind of creative relationship (communitarian faith) that is New Testament marriage. It is that new type of relationship (and new kind of family) that we need to look more closely at since it is also key to a analogical relationship to the Earth.

I experienced this myself when I was growing in a deeper relationship with a woman. My strength was thinking. I was at home with ideas and objective data which I could analyze and see in an overall perspective. My woman friend was more at home with particular experience and the intricacies of relationship. After some period of friendship, I began to realize a shift was happening, to a deeper love. My own inner self was coming alive with the wonder of life. At the same time, I noticed that I looked at the world differently. I sensed a kind of inner involvement with trees and grass and living things. It was as though I was in touch with their inner source of life. The experience was more a glimpse of what could be and gradually faded, but it made me aware of how male-female relationships open us to our deepest self (how the anima, as Carl Jung puts it, leads us to the deep self) where we meet God within ourselves and in all things. That was an individuating experience, I came to realize. Not all male-female relationships tap explicitly into that deep self. They can also be complementary in a social sense, finding in the other what complements our particular gifts. That is familial, as we said, and most marriages begin at that level.

Familial marriage (and human friendships) as we experience them have both gifts and limitations. The mother of James and John came to Jesus to ask for the first place for them. She had high ambition for them and competed for the best place. It is natural for parents to want to push their children forward, to have high ambitions for them, especially if they haven't actualized their own ambitions fully. Perhaps their mother had not been allowed to realize her full potential in society, and sought to fulfil it in her sons. It seemed natural for the disciples to prevent mothers from bringing their little children to Jesus. He had more important business to attend to, and children were to be seen and not heard. It seemed natural for those in authority to "lord it over" their subjects, and for parents to take a similar attitude toward their children. The family is the cell of the religious community and hands down the tradition, but it also hands on a kind of collective egoism that resists other families and other cultures and tries to gain power for one's own family and nation. Natural marriage itself is often a cause for prestige. One's marriage has to meet the family's approval, and often the culture's approval. This attention to the family's "good name" is natural and good as far as it goes, but it betrays a kind of collective egoism that Jesus calls his disciples beyond. He told James' and John's mother that such places of authority were not his to give but God's (he pointed beyond the familial to an individuating relation to God). He came to "serve", not to rule. Applied to families, spouses are to "serve" one another, not vie for authority and power as Eph 6:21-33 indicates.<sup>28</sup> Far from prestige being the goal, Jesus said they had to become "like little children," i.e., be in solidarity with the least. Far from exalting one's family or nation, his disciples had to "leave their family" and care for God's children in other nations, as he himself did for the Syro-Phoenician woman. In other words, relationships in Jesus' way, whether married or celibate, are based on recognition of one's weakness and need for God, on one's need for healing and reverence for the child within, and a

universal care for the human family. This sort of "family" presupposes individuated spouses who sense a call to care for the whole human family.

On the other hand, those who are celibate are also called to serve the "Kingdom of God," that is, the rule of God "on Earth as in heaven". From a familial point of view, celibacy can separate the sexes and lead to a sense of superiority over such "worldly" relationships. That is exactly what happened in the history of Christianity as we saw. Pride was what the early writers warned celibates against, as today they might be warned against one-sidedness and a disembodied spirituality, and an inability to form affectionate creative relationships.

In actuality, both marriage and celibacy have the same ground and goal—to lay down one's narrow life in service to the whole human family. Joe Holland sees celibacy as a victory of the patriarchal separation from natural rhythms and sexuality and a sublimation of the feminine into divine Wisdom. If that were all there was to be said, then Jesus' celibacy would indicate a stunted and idealized relation to the feminine and a separatist mentality. The truth is just the opposite! He showed a singular openness to women, taught them as he did men (as we see in his relationship to Mary in Lk 7), and he was most involved in his people's destiny. Christian celibacy does not have the anti-sexual bias that we find among the Essenes. Its focus is on a new kind of community rooted in the resurrection (Lk 20:34-36). Nor is it opposed to Christian marriage which itself is rooted in the covenant of Jesus with the Church through his resurrection (Eph 5:21-33). The option of celibacy shows that marriage is not simply a natural event that everyone is called to, but a vocation like celibacy that springs from one's individuated obedience to God. And marriage shows that celibacy is not a-sexual but a grounding in God's personal intimacy that frees one to relate to the other sex with individuated creativity. The pre-Christian view of marriage was patriarchal. The way Christianity actually developed was more like the OT than the NT as we saw above. What is needed now is communitarian, a form of individuated community grounded in the spiritual freedom of men and women rather than simply a focus on marriage in its natural form.

We arrive at this humble and grateful attitude, it seems, only through a good bit of suffering. We have to move through disillusionment regarding our first expectations about marriage and our partner in order to let go of making him or her our salvation instead of God. Only God can really "partner" us as we most deeply desire, and the suffering we face makes us turn humbly to God for help. Then we begin to see the marriage as a kind of miracle, a special gift of God that will only endure with God's on-going help. "An understanding woman [man] is a gift of Yahweh," Sirach (26:2) says. It is vocation.

We may be helped by prayer for this healing. I always conclude a counselling session with prayer for what was revealed (provided the person is open to that). I trust that Jesus as resurrected can take us beyond the blocks of our parents or ancestors to ground us in the new family or "new creation" of God (first lived in Jesus' own "holy family"). We can be freed from our "invisible loyalty" (see Nagy's concept treated in Ch. 4) to our family of origin or our cultural pattern to see our healing or changed view as a gift for our family rather than a betrayal. As one example among many, one woman was referred to me by another therapist because she was enmeshed in her family and seemed unable to get free. She was the scapegoat of the family, and whenever she visited them, she was the brunt of all their accusations—"too heavy, never amount to anything, why don't you get married? etc." I prayed with her that God would

cut her free from these family patterns, and allow her to find her true affirmation in God. She could find her own peace in God if they continued to abuse her. I saw her only an hour and then she was going to visit her family. She wrote later that her visit was extraordinary. They abused her at first, as they always did, but she decided to go upstairs and read and find her own peace. Then one by one the family members came up to her and talked one on one. Her change had brought a change to the whole family system. This was but a first step, but it shows how systems can change when even one person opens to God's new creation in a new way.

Those who do experience this depth of individuated relation to God and individuated community do not put male and female attitudes and actions in competition with each other. Those who have some touch with their whole selves know that there are masculine aspects in women and feminine aspects in men (what Carl Jung calls the animus and anima). Their ultimate attention transcends sexual differences for the person. They respect differences as very important for the creativity of the whole. Thus, while women tend to be more person-centered and attentive to particular history and individuality, these individuated women would not put down organization and universal goals and the need for clear analytical thinking that they find in institutional structures. They would realize that without institutions nothing can last. Conversely, while men tend to be more task-oriented, analytical and generative of institutions, they would see the shallowness of institutions if they overlooked the individual needs of the poorest of their members. Those grounded in God know their own weakness and are compassionate toward the weaknesses of others. They recognize others, and the Earth itself, as God's gift entrusted to their care. They look for bridges between the most diverse of people—and hence between men and women themselves—rather than struggle to mask their insecurity in competition.

### **Resurrected Relationships and Care for the Earth**

What is the relevance of such resurrected male-female relationships for care for the Earth. Is there an ecologically responsible marriage and celibacy? We believe so, precisely through a dialogical covenant relationship to the Earth as to God and one's partner. It is not by accident that patriarchal domination of one's marriage partner has coincided with a similar domination of the Earth. The attitude we take to our inner partner will be the attitude we take to all our relationships. The root of both relationships lies in our relation to God, for as we reverence God, we will reverence God's creatures and the gift they are to us. The OT was aware of this truth as we saw. As Adam and Eve turned away from God's commands and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not only was their relationship to each other turned into shame and blame, but also their relationship to the Earth became one of hard work with a grudging nature.

Similarly, the restoration of the paradise relationship in the power of the resurrection both restored spiritual intimacy between men and women (as John's Gospel indicates with Jesus' apparition to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20) but also the disciple's power to "rule" (ie. care for) the Earth.<sup>29</sup> All creation groans awaiting the freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:22), for to us is entrusted authority to care for creation and help it to its fullest unfolding. Only when we ourselves bring our creativity and relationships into the clarity and power of God's resurrecting Spirit can we channel the Earth's energies in right ways. Our passage through suffering makes us sensitive to the suffering Earth.

Thus, as we see it, both men and women (or perhaps better, the masculine and the feminine, since some women have the more "masculine" gifts, and vice versa) bring different gifts to the healing of the Earth, and these gifts are meant to complement each other. Science and modern technology have been more "masculine," analyzing, organizing, oriented to the future of greater control of the powers of nature. The "masculine" approach to ecology seems more political and activist. A "feminine" approach, on the other hand, is more appreciative, nurturing and focused on the individual's life and local (domestic) conditions. For this approach the Earth is more a living dialogue partner, to be respected in its own right and not simply subordinated to human fulfillment. The creation-centered approach seems more in accord with this attitude. It is easy to see that both these approaches are needed. Without attention to organization and action, care for the Earth can degenerate into romanticism and leave the suffering Earth to be exploited by the activists. But without attention to the individual and life, and the celebration of the beauty of the Earth, activists can be eaten up in tasks and activity and trample on the life that is right before their face. To use a medical analogy, there is task oriented attack on disease in our dominant medical establishment (the AMA's approach) that is masculine, in this view. We find a more person-centered, nurturing approach in the hospice movement or home nursing care, and in homeopathy, which focuses on the individual, getting a full history of the individual's symptoms in order to prescribe the remedy. There is a definite tension and polarity between the two approaches, as there is between real men and women, but that tension can create a space for creativity and respect for differences. But more, the very suffering involved can open us to God, beyond and within all differences, and to the new creation that springs forth when we accept our limits and open out to others and the world.

Where are we now? There are indications that people are in various stages and there is a growing awareness that we have to move to a respectful complementarity if deep Earth healing is to happen. In any case, biological creativity springs from the union of male and female, and spiritual creativity also includes those polar opposites. What is important is not to reduce each one's gifts to the other, but to create a space where each approach is heard and has an influence, and where each appreciates and calls forth the giftedness of the other. This grateful mutuality will then form the foundation for the many different gifts that produce our ecological balance. Just as the Persons of the Trinity are distinct, yet freely delight in each other and are creative in the Spirit of their love, so humans are made in God's image as male and female, and are to reflect each other through their very distinctiveness and become "fruitful and multiply", i.e., become sharers in God's own creativity.<sup>30</sup> Creation happens when opposites interact, as Arthur Koestler argued,<sup>31</sup> and creativity will be released when men and women move from competition to complementarity and mutual joy. They can do that, I have argued, only when they find God at the center of their relationships and so recognize that they form one reality in Christ so that each one's gift enrich the other rather than detract. Each perspective will color differently the various ecological approaches that are presented in Chapter 7, and all together are needed for the rich diversity of God's creativity.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A recent work carefully examining the interrelationship of attitudes toward the feminine and the Earth is by Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: an Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992). Ruether presents a covenant and sacramental theological approach to healing. Ours focuses on the resurrection as basic to those views.

<sup>2</sup> See Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1987) which has popularized this view. She builds on the work of Marija Gimbutas, esp. her *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), who in turn uses the data of James Mellaart, *Catal Huyuk: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1975). Rosemary Ruether, *Gaia and God*, Ch. 6 examines the evidence for the feminist hypothesis and finds it wanting. She rightly cautions about mixing myth and history in this story of a fall into patriarchy. The data needs to be carefully sifted, but the main line of the rise of patriarchy and its effect on the subordination of women seems clear enough.

<sup>3</sup> See Teilhard de Chardin, "The Eternal Feminine" in *Writings in Time of War* (London: Collins, 1967).

<sup>4</sup> See Ruether, *Gaia and God*, Ch. 6, for a rather thorough overview of the archeological evidence available.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> See Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> See Ruether, *Gaia and God*, p. 154.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-19.

<sup>9</sup> This is the interpretation of Erich Neumann in his *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (Bollingen Series XLII, Princeton University Press, 1970), esp. pp. 63-73.

<sup>10</sup> See Ruether, *Gaia and God*, Ch. 7 for an overview of this development. Joe Holland also describes this stage in his paper "Conservative/Liberal Exploration of the Postmodern Stage of Human Culture," in David Ray Griffin, William A. Beardslee, & Joe Holland, eds., *Varieties of Postmodern Theology* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989) but with more conjecture.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>12</sup> See Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, trans. Michael Bullock (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), quoted by Ewert Cousins, "States of Consciousness: Charting the Mystical Path," in Fredrica R. Halligan and John J. Shea, *The Fires of Desire: Erotic Energies and the Spiritual Quest* (N.Y.: Crossroad, 1992), p. 139.

- <sup>13</sup> See Ewert Cousins, "States of Consciousness...", p. 140.
- <sup>14</sup> See Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (N.Y.: Crossroad, 1984), Ch. 4 "The Jesus Movement as Renewal Movement Within Judaism."
- <sup>15</sup> See the interpretation of the Noah covenant in Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *A Worldly Spirituality: the Call to Take Care of the Earth* (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1984), pp. 73-9.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. 5.
- <sup>18</sup> See Robert Jewett, "The Sexual Liberation of the Apostle Paul," *JAAR Supplements* 47/1 (1979) 55-87:74f., quoted in Fiorenza, p. 206.
- <sup>19</sup> See Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 245-284. Colossians 3:11 quotes the Galatians text, but omits male and female, and the later code (3:18-25) highlights submissiveness slaves to their masters, children to parents and also wives to husbands (which point is more developed in Eph 5:21-33). E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Collossian Haustafel* (FRLANT 109; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), p. 144, suggests that Colossians is reinterpreting Galatians 3:28 because of conflicts between its equality and the surrounding cultural norms. The origin of the "code" is a Christianized version of a Stoic ethical code. Thus, we find a tendency to adapt the new equality of Christ's view to the norms of the surrounding culture. At the same time, there is a change in the code in accordance with the "mutual subordination" of Christ's new life (see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Press, 1972), Ch. 9: "Revolutionary Subordination," pp. 163-192.
- <sup>20</sup> See Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 278.
- <sup>21</sup> See H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). Santmire carefully discusses the church's attitude toward nature throughout history, ending with Karl Earth and Teilhard, and shows a horizontal approach of fertility and healed nature and a vertical (ascending) approach of spirituality gaining control of nature. It is the second approach that became dominant.
- <sup>22</sup> See Rupert Sheldrake, *The Rebirth of Nature: The Greening of Science and God* (N.Y.:Bantam Book, 1992), Chs. 1 and 2.
- <sup>23</sup> See "Conservative/Liberal Exploration of the Post-Modern Stage of Human Culture."
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas Berry suggests that this privatization stemmed from the trauma of the plagues of the 14th century which uprooted the Christian doctrine of redemption from creation, and replaced it with an inner experience of the Savior, and an outer technological drive to control unruly nature. See his "The New Story" in *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), pp. 123-137].

<sup>25</sup> See Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979).

<sup>26</sup> See James Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion* (N.Y.: Scribners, 1967), 110f.

<sup>27</sup> See Max Thurian from Taize, *Marriage and Celibacy* (Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1955).

<sup>28</sup> See John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, for an interpretation of this passage as "mutual subordination".

<sup>29</sup> See Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *A Worldly Spirituality* (pp. 43-72). for an interpretation of Gen 1:28 "subdue the Earth" as "takes God's place with regard to the Earth." Dominion then means to rule as God would, which in our argument we are empowered to do through the resurrection power.

<sup>30</sup> There is concern today to see the feminine in God and even to return to pre-Judaeo-Christian Goddesses. The bibliography is vast and needn't be cited here. Suffice it to say that God certainly has feminine aspects being the source of femininity, and yet transcends sexual differences. Sexual language is used analogously of God. We have sometimes used Father (Mother), and sometimes, when focused on Scripture, simply Father since that is the Biblical term. Actually, the personality of the Holy Spirit as relational is more feminine (see Donald Gelpi, *The Divine Mother: A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), and Mary has traditionally been seen as embodying these aspects of the Spirit (consoler, inspirer, intercessor, etc.). However, any such position is debatable so I choose simply to say human male-female community reflects Triune community.

<sup>31</sup> See Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (N.Y.: Dell Publ. Co, 1964).

## **CHAPTER 7: EMPOWERMENT: GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

by Al Fritsch

The power of the resurrection manifests itself in the activities of Earth healers in a variety of ways. Each healer brings uniqueness and richness of diversity into the process (the third principle mentioned in Chapter 1), which gives wholeness to both planet and human community. The diversity of feminine and masculine gifts have just been discussed. In this chapter we add the many ways that people of both sexes can and do enliven the process and testify to the movement of the Spirit in our world. A diverse eco-system proclaims its health in the multitude of plants, microorganisms and animals present; a healthy human community proclaims its health through encouragement of the many and diverse talents present in its members. We all have niches and we need to be conscious of the importance of creating and preserving these.

### **The Need for Respecting Diversity**

A healthy human ecology of healing is not one of professionals, specialists, and elites alone; it includes all people who steward, show concern for, celebrate, advocate for, show compassion for, attend to, delve into the mystery of, and develop in a proper manner the resources of the Earth. Some heal through healthy habits of co-existence, others find health in spiritual contemplation and prayer, still others in actively preserving the environmental conditions for good health, and others in immediate treatment of the illness. Longer range healing occurs through educational processes that usher in the sense of mystery for the planetary diversity, and when people also show compassion and are ready to assist when harm occurs. Still others will not tolerate victimizing practices and thus prophetically denounce them. And finally some will help generate a healthy atmosphere through entertainment.

Believers understand such healing diversity is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to act and serve as models for encouraging and inspiring others. And it is more than mere understanding. The believer experiences an outflowing of healing power just as Jesus felt that power leaving him as healing occurred during his ministry.

Earth healing begins to occur even while the harm is still being done. Gently and quietly there is a revolutionary process. Unlike revolution of physical violence, it is bathed in human love and concern that has confidence in the gifts of many. The tragedy is that the right and left of the political and religious spectrum do not respect the diversity of gifts in people not of their immediate persuasion. The broadening of this atmosphere of respect is an imperative for the continuing spread of the healing process. Healing has already begun in the resurrection of the Lord. We need to catalyze it and enhance it so that resurrection becomes an ongoing event and penetrates the entire universe. In each of our gifts we see different facets of resurrection power.

I discussed eight models of ministry in *Down to Earth Spirituality*.<sup>1</sup> There is no magic in that number, but there is some order to how the models are arranged (see the last section). These patterns of action were the ones that I have found to be activities pursued by the environmentally concerned people I've come to know. The initial impetus for developing this series was that some people and groups (especially funding source) disparage certain environmental activities,

thinking that some modes of action are not as important as others. In Washington, DC the political lobbying and the legal advocacy took major importance. In the strip mined areas of Eastern Kentucky community organizing was the activity.

As I mentioned in my introduction, in the fall of 1987 a social justice group in the Appalachian region sponsored a project on ministry. Those of us being interviewed did not realize that we had been prejudged by the organizers who ran the survey until the interviewer admitted that the editor had just about finished the report — before a number of us had even been interviewed. The community organizers' bias against my type of ministry of demonstration had already been cast. I tried hard to influence that report by writing a lengthy report on diversity of ministry and by speaking at a subsequent meeting, but failed. What had been written was written and a number of ministries performed by noble people in the region were ignored or classed in areas of lower rank. This was occurring at the same time that I was developing some reflections to counter those who regard stewardship as the highest form of religious environmentalism. Gradually, with modified suggestions from others, the eight models emerged and have seemed to withstand the test of criticism. See the following chart:

#### MODELS OF ACTION

	<b>Perception of the Earth</b>	<b>Individual Character</b>	<b>Shadow</b>
1.	Mother	Kin	Passive
2.	Resource	Master	Rapacious
3.	Gift	Steward	Uncritical
4.	Victim	Good Samaritan	Possessive
5.	Suffering	Compassionate Co-Sufferer	Over-Sensitive
6.	Mystery	Educator	Hesitant to Act
7.	Oppressed	Prophet	Rebellious
8.	Whimsical	Comic	Light-minded

These eight have a psychological basis in the way we conceive our Earth and how we are to relate to it. These models point to actions taken by people seeing Earth through a variety of viewpoints - as related, resource, gift, victim, suffering, mystery, oppressed, and whimsical. In turn, this variety is manifested in a diversity of environmental activities. To me this is proof that the Spirit is at work in our movement to heal the Earth, "for there are many gifts but one Spirit."

A biblical basis for all these models is found in the various types of healing from the Gospel and Acts of the physician/healer St. Luke. The parable of birds and flowers (Luke 12:22-32) manifests a kinship (1) with the healing and teaching power of these creatures in our midst. The whole of Acts shows the utilization of the resource (2) of the Good News as a message for a needy world. The Prodigal Son parable (15:11-32) exposes a squandering of a stewardship/gift (3) and yet a forgiving hand being offered to start life afresh. The Good Samaritan (10:29-31) tells of prompt unquestioning healing activity of someone who possesses pity (4). The women on Calvary's way (23:27-32) and again at the tomb (23:55-56, 24:1-11) exemplify the healing power of co-suffering (5) or compassion, and the mystery (6) of the Emmaus episode (24:13-15) is a teaching mode in which the respect for Tradition and the past is recalled to begin a healing process. John the Baptist (3:10-18) minces no words in prophetically (7) exposing sicknesses in the society (a pre-condition for healing) as does Jesus in driving the money changers from the Temple (19:45-46). The whimsical (8) nature of the great salvific struggle is best expressed in Mary's *Magnificat* (1:46-55) where the mighty ones will become powerless and the lowly rise to high places. All are healing processes but in greatly different ways.

Earth healing is part of the resurrection event because it was Earth which first experienced the effects of the resurrection. It was within this planet that the event unfolded through the earthquake, dazzling lights, and the quickening of new life of that First Easter. The Earth is the sub-stratum of that unique event and its healing was begun two thousand years ago. What we do is actualize that event which is already fact for the Earth fact. It is not as though the Earth has awaited us; we join the Earth in witnessing to what has happened in it, but at a much later date. Earth and people are witnesses together and we are healed together. What we do in our diversity is show the richness of the Spirit and of the resurrection power that has already begun to enliven the Earth. As people of faith we are now conscious of this unfolding before our eyes.

Our Earth Healing actions are modeled after the event of the first resurrection. We inherit the full range of different types of messages delivered by its first human witnesses, developing from the diversity of their personalities. Some skipped for joy, some were overcome, some first ran and hid, others immediately found companions to help lift them from their darkness over Jesus' death. In this chapter we have progressed to some degree to the companion stage of the resurrection. The book, as it were, progresses to deeper levels of understanding, and this chapter is witness to that part of the Good News that involves the healing of communities through the diverse gifts of individuals working together, each working to build the whole in his or her own way, and each extending Easter in space and time.

As mentioned earlier, those who do not profess belief in the resurrection but are concerned about the Earth show their germinal hope each time they work together with others. It is a cooperative effort that is not necessarily expressed in the terms of our faith, but is expressed in our common action. The key is a general cooperative attitude in building up and not tearing down others. Those seeking companionship from diverse sources will be in the community of Earth healers even when they do not formally celebrate Easter. Believers are those who also testify in various ways to the good news that all may participate in the healing of the Earth, not just the elite, or the talented, or those who count themselves as saved. Each of

these is an Easter Person. We are all the present day Peters, Magdalenes, disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Psychologically we differ; as formal believers we announce the truth which already is emerging before our eyes, that we have unique niches and that we may testify to the Spirit's generosity. The formal believer as developed in the next chapter salutes that mystery of divine calling through prayers of thanks.

While all Earth healing activities are good, still each has its shadow side, either brought on by an over-concentration in the good, or by a failure to see the limitations of the respective model. Shadows exist wherever the sun shines on us and Easter is full of sunlight.

### **The Types of Models**

As we take each model singly, we will (a) identify the people who are more attracted to that manner of action, (b) specify some Earth healing relationship, (c) determine how it reveals the resurrection mystery in a particular way and (d) briefly consider the shadow side and limitations of each model taken singly.

#### **1. Partner or Kinship Model**

"We are called by God to be holy, not to be immoral." (I Thessalonians 4: 7)

a) Who? People who tend to identify with this model include those who are artists, naturalists, homesteaders, those with a regard for New Age ideas and bioregionalism, people who expound deep ecology, those who love animals and trees, transcendental poets, and various types of craftpersons.

b) Earth Relationship? The kinship of Earth and people is profoundly ecological — and theological. All beings on Earth are interrelated in both origin and destiny and the health of each organism, whether human or otherwise, is intertwined with that of other beings on this planet. This interrelationship is with those who came before, are living, and who are to come afterwards. Creatures are made of the Earth's dust, transform Earth by their interactions, bask in its glory and suffer in its agony. Kinship is an essential part of all Earth healing, just as caring love, trust and reconciliation is essential to all human healing.

c) Faith Expression? In Christ's death, all were scattered; through his resurrection all are being brought into union with Christ so that all can be submitted to God (1 Cor 15:27-28). Does this "kinship" of all extend to other creatures and the Earth as well as people? In Chapter 2 we argued that there is good reason to say it does — that everything in some way is raised up with Jesus. "All creation waits with eager longing for the revelation of the children of God." (Rom 8:19f) Believers await a New Heaven and a New Earth (Isaiah 51:16; 65:17; 66:12; Revelation 21:1) that is coextensive with all creation. So a sense of kinship surely is an expression of the impact of the resurrection. Earth is kin to all in origin, current existence and future, and the entire community of people and creatures owe it the respect of a member of the family of the One who gave Earth its future. If it is washed in the Blood of the Lamb, Earth too is meant to

rise in glory. Human beings are free to choose their destiny through deliberate actions; Earth depends on these free agents to lead it to its destiny, a destiny somehow related to those free choices. The community of Earthly creatures assist each other reaching salvation through a participative and cooperative endeavor. Earth is the medium of human salvation and participates in that salvation event in some mysterious manner that is proportionate to this intimate relationship. While we anticipate that participation, we cannot fully define it.

d) Shadow? Respect for one's kin extends to conservation of resources and needs to show itself in commitment of time and energy. The shadow side of this model is one may neglect to translate the planetary outlook into concrete action and the experience of kinship may lack a critical analytical component. For some this sense of universal kinship becomes a rallying point against those who exploit and over-develop the Earth's resources. But it can degenerate into mere warm feelings and fuzzy thinking, and maybe even an escape from the hard knocks associated with meaningful work for social change. Tree hugging needs be accompanied by tree pruning, planting, protecting, and maybe even spiking.

## 2. Mastery Model

"When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture will come true. Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?"

(I Corinthians 15:54-55)

a) Who? Masters include all who pursue formal education or an aesthetic discipline, those engaged in professional training and research, and those seeking to become good artists. Also included among those who may seek dominant roles are those in many other professional positions: people in the military, in governmental enforcement agencies, in politics, lobbying and the legal profession and in information gathering and publication. Self-mastery extends to the athletic, those in vocational training and the persons concerned about the health of the family and self.

b) Earth Relationship? To accomplish something or show dominion is to master — knowledge or the arts, self-control, a language, a culture, a difficult assignment, the Earth. Mastery contains an expression of power which is needed if the resources of the Earth are to be rightly used. We need those who are willing to accept responsibility for healing the Earth and for helping bring justice to humanity. Mastery is not a neutral operation but can have either positive or negative aspects. At best it includes the legal, technical, scientific, artistic and other professional triumphs of the last few centuries.

Technology is the fruit of this mastery and needs not be considered as negative as many with ecological interests perceive it. Often it is identified with modern high technology, but some technology of a suitable and appropriate nature provides welcome tools for obtaining food, clothing and shelter. Its use, in turn, allows for leisure time, a necessary component of being human. When technology is too primitive, the technologist spends excessive time struggling for a living; when too complex, the technologist is ensnared by high maintenance costs and operational complications - and thus becomes a slave of the machine.



While Earth is in some way controllable, still it defies complete dominance. Earth is a wild creature that challenges any attempt at ultimate mastery by human beings. Excessive control and dominance can wound it, but the human master is also threatened and wounded in the exploitative act.

c) Faith Expression? "Jesus is Lord" was the earliest resurrection creed (Phil 2:11). "If we endure with Christ, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim 2:12). All final power and authority rests in God and has been given to Christ, "resurrection" deals with power and is a "mastery" over death and suffering through rebirth and new life. In one way death is the wild card that breaks up human efforts at controlling things and creatures. Through the resurrection event Christ is Lord and master over the powers that engineer and execute the destruction of his ministry. He freely gives himself over to the hands of wicked people, but still the forces of evil do not triumph, except in the eyes of the unbeliever. Jesus becomes master over death, and the ultimate master of healing. For the believer, this mastery over death is supreme, for God is still in control.

Resurrection is the trophy of the contest, and the ultimate assurance that good triumphs and evil is conquered. It becomes a promise that invites the believer to enter into the struggle, and to risk engaging the opposing forces of devolution. But resurrection constantly calls people to self-mastery both in their individual and communal lives, and it gives us the power to produce good results and to discern and oppose the evil spirit, despite our frequent feeling of powerlessness.

d) Shadow? After all the critique of the Judeo-Christian tradition as being the cause of the ecological crisis and the criticism of Columbus and the many white Europeans who came to these shores to explore and exploit, it is obvious that mastery has a shadow side. The history of slavery, castes, and serfs speaks for itself, for here mastery means control over other persons for one's gain. No single civilization or culture monopolizes this model in either its sunshine or its shadows. The greed of colonizers comes quickly to mind, as do the captains of industry bent on exploiting laborers and the resources of the Earth. While their methodical probing and thoroughness is an asset, the masters of politics and economics can become the controllers and exploiters ~ deep shadows traversing our planet.

### **3. Caretaker or Steward Models**

"Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain;  
but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest."  
(John 12:24)

a) Who? The Earth's caretakers are exemplars of this model: farmers, gardeners, landscapers, foresters, grounds tenders, monitors of natural resources, game wardens, road crews, the park police, caretakers, and a host of others. Home or "ecos" is cared for by homemakers and those who maintain the interior environment such as janitors and institutional managers.

b) Earth Relationship? The seed is part of the cycle of events in natural processes all around us. Seed falls upon the Earth, gives up its own existence so that another may be born. In its sacrificing death comes new life, as when the Salmon come home to lay eggs and die. Does it surprise us that this sacrifice is found in many of the Earth's species? It is as though nature accepts the fact that through death comes new life. Life given up and life springing up again, a cyclic Earthly process. Seed sown by human hands initiates the growing cycle which moves to harvest, new seed and new beginnings.

Stewards (not considered here a masculine term) are those who enter into cyclic natural processes. They care about and respect natural ways; they see their own limitations, their mortality, their temporary responsibility for God-given gifts, their own thankfulness for seeing Earth and their own human resources as gift. In a few short years their abilities to sow and reap fade and they must step back for others. Their stewardship involves allowing the step-back to be painless, gentle, loving, encouraging, enthusiastic. For them the short period of growing season is an opportunity to fulfill the adage "making hay while the sun shines." Stewardship is the brief sunlight of many human careers, and it is essential for healing the Earth.

c) Faith Expression? A wise steward is like the Good Shepherd, who never leaves his flock untended (Jn 10). They know their own mortality and nature's limited, fragile and vulnerable cycles. That very vulnerability is seen as gift and draws out their care. Jesus' vulnerability also is revealed in his dying, and this makes us and him all the more grateful for the resurrection. Resurrection shows that God's stewardship and care for the Earth goes beyond death. Jesus returns to care for his disciples and, we are arguing, for the whole Earth. In the same Spirit, the steward feels the unfinished nature of the Earth keenly, and pours out loving care on it. For these people stewardship is not of human origin. Care is in the hands of the Creator who took billions of years of patient processing to bring the Earth to its present condition. That length of time and the Providence that it required is an experience imprinted on all creatures called to care in a special manner. Stewards know they have missed the mark and brought devastation to the Earth. As our caring God initiates the grand recycling process of Redemption, stewards try to cooperate with God in repairing the damage done by negligence and exploitation. For them, resurrection beckons the squanderers of a misused stewardship to try again. The Prodigal Son has returned, the past is forgiven, and the mercy of God and plentitude of Earth beckons a new beginning.

d) Shadow? The steward's shadow side is most often overlooked, especially by those who regard this as the prime Christian model. Stewardship breeds a righteousness, especially in a world such as ours of litterers and "slobs." Stewards seldom question how the resources were designated for then- own care. Their sense of responsibility verges on an unquestioning loyalty to authorities who bestow gifts upon them. Where does care — even loving and heroic care — end and sharing responsibility commence? Must not stewards also be critical of the system or rather do they find excuses? How did the stewards obtain dominion over land or house or business or position in the first place? When do they need to turn it over to others? It may have come through theft, deception, force. It may require redistribution for the sake of justice. Resurrection raises the lowly (the shepherds and the poor). It reveals God's perfect stewardship as creating lasting justice, whereas ours is temporary and imperfect.

#### 4. Good Samaritan Model

"And who is my neighbor?" (Lk 10:29)

a) Who? Good Samaritans see the harm done the Earth through the brokenness of human struggle and greed. This harm is just like a wounded neighbor or stranger by the wayside and requires immediate response. Good Sams who respond intuitively and immediately include those of the health profession, rescue workers, police, governmental environmental regulators, soil conservationists, reclamation workers, those who respond to floods and accidents without a moments notice, Habitat for Humanity volunteers, and a host of others. They do not ask for recompense, for attendance at prayer meetings or for any sign of preset gratitude. They see an immediate task and respond.

b) Earth Relationship? Neighborliness is a human virtue which recognizes that we need to live in harmony with those around us. Our common good demands it. A certain peace in a vicinity is required so that we can proceed with obtaining the basics of life.

Neighborliness is expanding through communication and the media. As we become aware of distant places we perceive that neighbors are more numerous than our ancestors thought. The shifting tides of life take us to new neighbors and bring them to us. The community of all beings are part of that neighborhood or environment which extends to the farthest reaches of this planet. All plants and animals are neighbors and all have been in some degree victimized by the greed of fellow human beings. Are we so distracted that we pass by, or do we notice them? It is essential for healing that we do notice and respond.

c) Faith Expression? Christ has taken on himself the sins of the world -- a supremely Good Neighbor. His neighborliness extends through the victory of the resurrection to all, giving the healing balm of victory so that the stricken may rise and go forward. The Resurrected One is the ultimate Good Samaritan. Pouring oil on the stricken is suffering and sacrificing for others; coming back and making sure that the recovery is occurring properly is an invitation to partake in the resurrection.

To physically assist in healing another is to accept the costs of time, resources and all. Calvary is coupled with resurrection not as cost and reward but as road and destination. The Resurrected One has traveled, found the wounded and healed them. In so doing, resurrection is both a proper conclusion of a healing event and the initiation of an extending of this event in space and time. Easter healing releases new life. The resurrection is the ultimate sign of hope that the victim will not be left to go unnoticed. Easter coupled with Pentecost is our seeing the victims and doing something about them immediately. Herein is the energy it takes to extend healing. It is unacceptable that the poor go unnoticed for "he who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will himself also call and not be heard." (Proverbs 21:13)

d) Shadow? The shadow side is that Good Sams sometimes neglect to notice when enough is enough. They may be tempted to convince themselves that doting care is healing. Healers must perceive that their charges are on the road to being healed and must do certain things themselves. The compulsion to be needed actually works against good neighborliness and can generate

dependency or resentment. Another shadow side is the Good Samaritan is that help may come at too high an economic price in a health care system that is able to accrue huge profits at the expense of the needy and afflicted — and is in need of profound reform.

## 5. Suffering Servant Model

"There is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials..." (I Peter 1:6)

"The whole creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth." (Romans 8:22)

a) Who? Those included in this model are sufferers with some form of infirmity - the elderly, poor, disabled, imprisoned, lonely, those suffering mental illness, and those who care for the suffering in a very personal manner. Here are the forgotten and overlooked people, those who seem totally unable to live a higher quality of life. Yet these fit into the great mystery of Earth renewal just as they fit into the broader picture of Calvary/resurrection.

b) Earth Relationship? Great portions of the Earth's environment suffer from the abuse of polluters and exploiters. Devastated hills from surface mining, vast stretches of polluted rivers and clear-cut forests, sprawling development of fertile plains and valleys, expanding depletion of the ozone layer at the two poles, and creeping desertification in Africa are all maladies of our fragile Earth. The birthing of a new Earth is not without travail, and many whole volumes tell the gruesome story.

The Earth's environment does not suffer alone. So do people and other creatures, especially those living near these maladies. So do those in prisons, slums, hospitals, and senior citizens' homes. Add to these the multitudes of the forgotten and overlooked and marginalized. Suffering people and suffering Earth, one community of those in pain. Suffering calls for compassion and efforts to alleviate it. The suffering people and Earth bring to light what needs healing and what we would prefer to keep hidden: the destructiveness of our life style, the self-complacency that narrows our concern. Suffering also opens us to the need for God's healing, for in it we realize "we are powerless in face of this evil" (a social first step in a social 12-step program).

c) Faith Expression? Jesus is the suffering servant, who identifies with the suffering, but also opens creation to God's healing intervention. Resurrection is victory over suffering. It does not negate suffering, but rather gives it meaning and spiritual value. The great Easter event proclaims that NOTHING THAT HAS SUFFERED INNOCENTLY ON THIS EARTH IS LOST. All is gain, for all leads ultimately to rebirth, victory, and a cosmic resurrection. Through the Suffering One's resurrection the community of believing sufferers awaits another event that is already united in totality to the Easter renewal that has already occurred, namely the Easter of the New Heaven and New Earth.

The Good News to those who suffer is that they (both people and all other suffering creatures) are not overlooked nor totally forgotten. The Resurrected one descended into their

respective hell and brought them forth from their meaninglessness. Sufferers are empowered through their communion with the Suffering One to realize that suffering time is precious time for burning off personal faults and misdeeds. Purgatories on Earth are times of preparation for rebirth and resurrection. Social sin, so ensnaring that it bogs us all down, is burnt away.

Obeying the call of the poor involves a loving acceptance of suffering as a reality, as something in our own lives and in the world around us. The Earth suffers as well as people so that through its suffering it might become a new Earth. If the poor are to raise up the Earth, the suffering ones are the role models and thus leaders in the healing process, not by a hierarchical leadership, but by being the first among eventual equals to be in solidarity with the suffering planet—Many within the environmental movement misunderstand suffering. They prefer to be beautiful people who regard their intelligence, attractiveness or wonderful cause as sufficient to save the Earth. They are reluctant to see the shabby, unsightly, incapacitated, or the wounded as part of the movement -- and potential contributors to the New Earth. Resurrection faith speaks otherwise. Rebirth requires going down into the Earth's suffering bowels and finding profound suffering agents of change.

d) Shadow? Every noble undertaking has a shadow side. This even applies to those who may freely offer their suffering in union with the suffering and resurrected Lord. The sensitivity of the sufferers leads to a compassion (its root meaning is to suffer with another) for Earth and creatures. But this also includes a sensitivity that can become acutely felt, frayed, and difficult to deal with. The length and intensity of suffering may make one overly sensitive to the insensitivity of the healthy. Sufferers may be tempted to cease the struggle and even become embittered by their own condition. Thus all the more reason for the advent of Base Communities among the suffering, for social models of how the suffering are empowered through community.

## **6. Educator Model**

"This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to anyone in past generations." (Ephesians 3:5)

a) Who? "Educators" are those who strive to unravel the mysteries of faith and all creation — catechists, school teachers, university professors and research people, those running Elderhostels and kindergartens, the adult educators, and those striving to enable the disabled. Earth as mystery becomes subject material for educators and learners alike.

b) Earth Relationship? Mystery whether natural or supernatural is pervasive to the more sensitive, the very young, the primitive peoples. With time we regard this sense as standing in the way of our more "realistic" concerns of the day. Sophistication and the addiction of consumer products take their toll and in our more contemplative moments we feel that loss. Among primitive peoples who are close to the rhythms of the Earth the sense of mystery is strong throughout life and may even grow with years. Our hopes are that educators will nurture

that sense of mystery in their own fields and inspire others to advance boldly and respectfully in the face of Mystery. This is the fascination that truly heals.

I recall one of the great mysteries of my younger years was the cellar at home with a kerosene incubator, which contained about one hundred eggs that at a given time became alive with chicks. It resembled the metamorphosis of cocoon and butterfly. How can a chick come from a shelled yolk? And how did it all happen so precisely even though the eggs were laid at different times? How could a worm sprout wings and fly away?

Questions about the mystery of the universe flood youthful minds and only remain unaddressed because parents and teachers seem too busy or just plain unable to answer. Few admit the questions are far too profound for them and may touch the marrow of their own lives if they but seek answers. These people excuse themselves through the concerns of other business. Not being able to answer fully such questions is our ultimate admission of a God who knows more and who invites each of us to come into Mystery.

c) Faith Expression? resurrection touches the deepest of mysteries: how can one rise from the dead? How can the believer participate in this past historic event now or in the future? How can an Earth that seems to be nearing the point of death be a participant in rebirth and regeneration? Will Earth be saved as we know it, or take on a totally new form? Must it suffer and must it also die?

The mystery of resurrection goes beyond human reason and becomes a Faith event. A sharing in the deeper sense of God's all encompassing Mystery includes the new life of the Chosen One, first to rise and then to go before his disciples. Now the believer sees through the eyes of faith a promise of eternal life. Moreover, this mystery is not for the select few or the formally professed, but for the greater community — non-Christian peoples, other creatures on the Earth, other worlds apart from ours. Resurrection is not a singular phenomenon for the elite, but rather a universal and participative event understood in many different ways. True, the Easter narratives involve testimony by a small number to an experience of the Risen Lord. However, Scripture in its totality extends salvation to ever greater spheres of influence, and ultimately to the whole cosmos as we have seen. If resurrection is intimately connected to Salvation, then the event has a universal character.

d) Shadow? Even environmental education has a dark side to its activity. Teaching is demanding, out going and energy depleting, and so the natural impulse to limit non-educational activity is expected. Teachers tell of returning home bone tired from a day's work. It is tempting to see this activity as the only one necessary since its demands are so great. Isn't the well chosen word at the right time and place sufficient to effect change? But words no matter how eloquent and books no matter how learned are not enough. Our environmental crisis is not due to lack of knowledge, but proceeds from a lack of action. Converting teachings into social justice is the real challenge. Educators need to touch into the deepest mystery, which is how to move people to profound change. The shadow side is the tendency to regard teaching/learning as sufficient in itself.

## 7. The Prophetic Model

"Do you know that a little yeast has its effect all through dough, unleavened loaves, as it were; Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. Let us celebrate the feast not with the old yeast, that of corruption and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

(1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

a) Who? Those who engage in this model are relatively few in number, namely, advocates, defenders of the oppressed, Earth First! and Green Peace folks, whistle blowers, those who seek petitions for change and who are willing to sign them in oppressive circumstances, the ones who overthrow the money changers from the Temple of modern commerce, the leaders when others fail to follow, the one who resigns rather than work for an oppressive system, the margined, the outspoken, the beaten who continue to speak, the forgotten who work with the poor and articulate why they are poor.

b) Earth Relationship? Prophets are like yeast, a leaven of bread, a catalyst who bring about change and yet are able to do so as individuals or in small numbers. In democratic society we work in great numbers, and so the prophetic role is an anomaly. True prophets are the overlooked, and yet become significant by their testimony and contribution to the total workings in the structure. They are enzymes in the living eco-system who call forth and catalyze action.

Prophets are very much immersed in their times and ahead of them. They listen to the call, responding not through some fore-knowledge of events, but by seeing the present so perfectly that they know what the future will bring. They always place a conditional "if..." giving an opening for forgiveness and change of heart. The future is not in the hands of the fates; it can be recreated, but we must act now to do so. The problem has not been in the clarity of prophetic witness, but in the reluctance of the general populace to hear the message and respond properly. Rather, the public quite often spends more effort on quieting the prophet than on hearing the message.

c) Faith Expression? Jesus saw God's dream restored and in light of that vision of justice and harmony, he saw the disjointedness of his age and spoke out. He is the prophetic Word of God, fulfilling and superceding all other words, as we see in the Transfiguration where he stands between lawgiver (Moses) and prophet (Elijah) and speaks of his coming passion and resurrection that will transform everything into a new creation beyond law and prophet. Believers partake in a new Transfiguration, a changing of the world as we know it into something more glorious and brilliant. In this process, prophet is now more than a single person and is instead all of us. In this ecological age of no elites, we all are called to be prophetic to some degree, for each represents a unique perspective from God. What is astounding is that this is the precise meaning of our Baptismal grace — to take on the traditional role of prophet in a believing community. Resurrection/Transfiguration is a single event and the prophet has a primary place.

Resurrection is the eternal amen to the prophetic word spoken to the extent of death and which now is coming forth in new life. The call of a prophet is that of change, for the extremities of our present lifestyle cannot continue. The destitute must rise and become more

self-sustaining; the affluent must simplify their ways of living. Announcing this is revolution, and therefore, is taking a great risk.

Believers are moved by the Spirit to rise and speak up for the destitute and speak out against the wasteful. This distortion of what was intended for all the people cries to heaven. Resurrection, on the other hand, says Amen to those willing to confront oppression in all its forms. Resurrection encourages the lonely who dare stick their neck out and are ahead of their time.

d) Shadow? Prophetic witnesses are often overlooked and left out of the pale of events. This can generate frustration and anger. What is so clear to the prophet is not perceived as such by others. What went wrong? The prophets' anger, if misunderstood, may lead to burn out and drop out. Stress is sure to stalk the prophet and require extra time for recovery, The shadow side is that the prophets actually think they are God at times; they fail to determine their limitations and pace themselves; they take themselves too seriously and forget to laugh when that could help immensely.

## 8. Whimsical Model

"Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped himself in a cloak and jumped into the water." (John 21:7)

Few other such erratic actions are recorded even in the Scriptures!

a) Who? This model is more widespread than some would think. Certainly it includes comics, artists, dramatists, musicians, entertainers who discover the whimsical nature of Earth and grace us by causing us to see ourselves for what we really are. They are those who come in at times of tragedy to make another smile and sing. They are the Earth's cheerleaders, leading us on when we may prefer to be remain in gloom. They profess in their lives that humor is also part of the total testimony, and important for our human ecological balance.

b) Earth Relationship? Good ecology of the soul enjoys a laugh even in difficult times. The balance or harmony of all the Earth needs to be reflected in the movement of healing the Earth. What is more healing than a good laugh? And who can be healed faster than those who have or enjoy a sense of humor. Celebration and its enjoyments is very human, and so the whimsical nature of the Earth in which we live deserves more from us than sweat; it needs the spice of a smile once in a while. Funny how it is that all creatures know intuitively whether we enjoy their presence or not. Bob's friend's cat "Love" had been a stray, but through care she had become singularly sensitive and loving. When one pious and proper person visited, the cat bit his leg (a most unusual action!). Only when he said in passing "I hate cats", did my friend understand the action! The cat knew he didn't like her.

Earth reflects the whimsical character of its Creator. It has endured great strife but still has a resilience to arise and be merry. What believers can do as partners of the Earth is to see that the needed prophetic role does not stand singly apart from the divinely guided lighter side.



Humor becomes the spice in the barren cauldron of social sin and oppression. The comic stands in supporting relief to the gaunt shape of the confronting prophet.

c) Faith Expression? We are all caught in embarrassing circumstances or do oddball things occasionally. Few realize that the resurrection triggered some of these, where the seriousness of the situation is counterbalanced by divine lightheartedness. Wasn't this to be expected when the proclamation was that the lowly would rise and those in high places become humbled? Few care to admit it but the Magnificat is whimsical.

The events surrounding the first Easter had a touch of humor. Shouldn't those who are victorious be also joyful and almost intoxicated? The narratives of the Four Gospels show great confusion but an incredible lightheartedness that the somberness of Calvary could be so quickly lifted. The resurrection shows God's humor. A divine Yes!, but humorous all the same. Resurrection involves a laugh because death, that inevitable master over all, is now conquered. It is our last laugh for life is truly victorious.

Believers can become and remain quite uptight. Certainly the matter of the four last things (Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell) is not light. A heavy risk is at stake and we all know that we approach such matters in fear and trembling. Well we do, but should we? Are we so removed from laughing at ourselves that we fail to hear God laughing? The resurrection is God's greatest laugh over the powers of evil. Calvary appeared for but a brief moment to be what appeared to be evil's great triumph. But evil never endures and so the whimsical nature of the Almighty is soon revealed with loving speed a mere day and a half later.

A lighthearted God-man stands at a campfire and fixes a meal for the others. He makes a sudden appearance among friends at a meeting hall, and among two dejected people who just lost a role model and need comforting. The light hearted make others smile and laugh at hard times; they plant the yard with special flowers; they embellish the picture frame with funny characters; they see humor where others want to cry. They are resurrection people par excellence, people with faith that things will certainly improve, if all but have joyful faith.

d) Shadow? Even comics can cast shadows. How hard it is not to be cynical when developing humor, especially when realizing how slowly the healing process works. Sometimes comics do not know when to stop, when to modify the light with the heavy, how to transform the humorous to the serious for emphasis and action, and how to pause for the effectiveness of pure silence.

### **Further Reflections**

There is no absolute logic to the ordering of the models, yet as we look them over, we can see different emphases and how they complement each other. It seems the first three or four refer to individual activities which can be done without direct relation to other people. One could be a master of the Earth or a steward with or without other people involved. The second three or four deal with other people. Service, advocacy or entertainment are directed to healers of humanity as such. The middle two, the Good Samaritan and the Suffering Servant, seem to have a foot in both camps. For both of these are generally manners of dealing with people,

whereas in Earth healing they deal with caring for other creatures as well. Further, the latter four which focus more on people also appear to require more psychic energy, more public stance, more projection of ego than the earlier ones.

The models also show how different gifts complement each other and need each other for balance. We cannot become ecologically whole with only one perspective. Thus, the first complements the second, the third and fourth complement each other, the fifth and sixth and the seventh and eighth.

First, the partner model stands in contrast to the mastery model and complements it, for the former looks upon the interrelationship and certain equality of beings and the latter the superiority of one over others. In some manner all are called to see our humble place among others; likewise all are called to fulfill our unique role which requires a certain mastery and a particular competence others may not have. Each also must master the distractions and forces that want to dissipate our energies.

Secondly, the caretaker model stands in contrast to the Good Samaritan model for the former requires patience and long-term commitment while the latter demands instantaneous response when a difficulty arises. One involves planning and discipline, while the other is more impulsive and intuitive. Something of each is needed for wholeness.

Thirdly, the suffering servant is one who is immersed in the pain of life through an emotional involvement of self, of the whole of what one is. It is intimate, reflective, passionate. For the most part those in the educational model attempt to be dispassionate, thorough, objective, desirous of objective truth, giving service through communication with others. Again, they seem quite opposite (like the Jungian thinking and feeling types), and yet both are needed to complement each other.

Finally, the prophet, as already stated, is quite serious about the task at hand and burns with the fire to make change. On the other hand, the whimsical person is the counterbalance. The one who constantly says "lighten up." This type of person still delivers the message but in a different but complementary style.

The shadow sides of the various models give clues to further interrelationships. Over-sensitivity seems a problem with the first (partner model) and the fifth model (suffering servant), whereas insensitivity may be a shadow of the fourth (Good Samaritan) as to when the action is complete and the eighth (whimsical) as to when to become more serious. Over-involvement and burn-out is the danger to the second (mastery) and the seventh (prophetic), whereas uninvolvement in political and social factors may be the danger of the second (steward model) and the sixth (educator).

What about a possible ninth model? Eight is not a magic number.<sup>2</sup> I agree with some observers that possibly a ninth exists and that it reflects upon the process, furnishes the reason for its being, and offers critique on environmental activity in general. It is the area of wisdom. This may include historians, philosophers, ethicists and those who pray for the Earth.<sup>3</sup> If there is a dark shadow it comes not so much from these people but from a society that may expect

answers when wise questions are what are needed. Does the possibility of this ninth model suddenly compromise our discourse on elitism? This depends on how one conceives of wise people. Elders have always been looked up to for their lived experience. They bring a dimension of depth and patience. If elders are looked up to as having answers above and greater than in the other models, then they would reintroduce a form of domination. If they seek to raise important questions, and bring in the larger perspective, then they serve an important function.

Reaching back into the Scriptures we find this last model within the Gospel of Luke the healer, namely examples of wise people. Both Simeon and Anna give thanks and reveal the struggles lying ahead for the infant and his parents (2:22-40). Here both male and female elders unveil the upcoming sweep of the history of salvation. So often we Americans shunt our elders to senior citizen homes and make those who are most wise retire from universities and colleges. We overlook and forget our senior voices while incidentally many more primitive cultures value old age most. In the process our overly wasting culture stands out strongly and our low respect for wisdom hurts us all. The place of Simeon and Anna cannot be filled by younger members; only by those with the time tested prayer and wisdom to respond well.

In October, 1992, I was asked to give a reflection at the end of a scientific discussion at Beckley, West Virginia on the terrible problem of the death of the mixed mesophytic forests of central Appalachia, the world's oldest and most diversified hardwood forest. These advocates who were blowing the whistle on this terrible sickness that is spreading in these wooded areas were rebuffed by the U.S. Forest Service and described as over imaginative. In the urgency of the moment I had to have recourse to these eight types of models and suggested to the assembled participants to enlist all types of people, in fact, eight different types: those living in the woods and enjoying its beauty, the loggers whose yields will soon be drastically reduced, those who could serve as citizen monitors of destruction, the advocates who make appeals to contest certain malpractices, the local people who suffer through this destruction, the researchers and educators who were actually present and wanted to inform inhabitants, those who perform Earth First confrontational tactics and the many who can tell a powerful message through song and dance.<sup>4</sup> I was convinced that we needed to hear every voice, and let every perspective have its say if we were really going to bring our Earth back to life. I still am convinced of it!

We need to see that we celebrate and pray in different ways and that may reflect the types of activities that we undertake. This coming together is perhaps a characteristic of the ninth model, which brings together in one the other ways. For that reason we need a further chapter, one that accepts the richness of diversity and in liturgy elevates the work of the people to the sacredness that it really is. In this process the work of God within each activity is formally proclaimed -- and resurrection comes ever closer to each of us as we pray for the Wisdom to see all as essential facets of one healing process.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Albert Fritsch and Warren Brunner, *Down to Earth Spirituality*. Sheed & Ward, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> The number may be nine in keeping with the Enneagram promoters. There seems a close resemblance to eight of the descriptions presented in *Nine Portraits of Jesus*, by Robert J. Nogosek, C.S.C. (Dimension Books, Inc. Denville, NJ 1987). For those aware of this personality wheel, the nine is "kin" to all life, the eight seeks to "master" life, the seven is a fun-loving planner, the six a teacher, the four a melancholic sufferer, the three a project person or "steward", the two a helper or "good Samaritan" and the one a "prophet." What is left out is the five, or "wisdom" person. This may be a more contemplative approach that complements the activities mentioned here. As these authors approach their age of wisdom (the 60th birthday according to the Japanese!), one could expect that the ninth model may become somewhat more prominent. At present, however, it seems to be in unresolved conflict with the more democratic demands that each and every person has some unique contribution to make for healing the Earth. Does the wise person have more? Are there deepening levels to wisdom? Is there a shadow side? The reader is left with the challenge.

<sup>3</sup> A number of periodicals and other writings may fit this category such as "Earth Ethics" from the Center for Respect for Life and Environment, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

<sup>4</sup> See Albert Fritsch, "Eight Ways to Save the Forests," Convening Conference of the Lucy Brauns Society, October 1-2, 1992.

**CHAPTER 8: OPENING TO GOD'S HEALING LOVE**  
**FOR THE EARTH**

by Bob Sears

The many eco-ministries have a common ground: they are rooted in God's care for the Earth and our cooperation with that care. What unites the minister with God is prayer—not simply reciting prayers, but learning to be in ongoing dynamic relationship to our triune God who is constantly creating and healing. Prayer will have as many forms as there are ministries, for God ministers to us and the Earth in each of those ways and in many others. The resurrection reveals God's healing activity in the concrete expression of Jesus' life. In this chapter, we want to look specifically at the power of prayer in whatever form to bring healing to the Earth.

There is a story, brought back from China by Richard Wilhelm, that Jung loved and considered the essence of his point of view. It is the rainmaker story, and it illustrates many aspects of healing that are important for our considerations. In a province in China there had been an extended drought. Everything had dried up and a famine was feared. They had tried everything, and the local priests had prayed, but nothing improved. Finally, they heard about a rainmaker in a distant province and sent for him. They promised him whatever he wanted, but all he wanted was a house to stay in. Three days later it rained abundantly till all the province marveled. They asked the rainmaker what rituals he had performed. He said, "Oh, I hadn't gotten to any rituals. I come from a province that has just the right amount of rain, and all is fertile and lush. When I came here everything was so dry and dead, and I felt terrible. I continued working on my inner feeling for three days till I found peace, and then it rained!"

For Jung, this story showed how the inner and the outer are two sides of the same reality when we get to our deepest self. When we find peace within, we can effect peace without. Till we find peace within, we will never bring outer peace. The rainmaker knew what a lush, fruitful Earth was, and so he felt the devastation of the province he had come to. His discomfort and longing, it seems, channeled God's healing power into the ailing province. The same principle applies to healing the Earth. When we contact the wholeness of God and God's all embracing love, we find our own God-given wholeness and what we are called to become. Then we will sense what the Earth needs for its healing and move to accomplish it in cooperation with God. Everything works together.

My chart on faith development in Chapter 4 illustrates the dynamics of this process. Healing is cyclical. It breaks through to a centering in God's love in individuating faith and then reforms and reconnects with our "familial" relationships (with parents, spouses, children, community, etc.) in more freeing and honest relationships (the communitarian stage we treated in Chapter 6). Then it expands to the deepest bodily level to heal the inner child, body wounds, etc. (our initial faith stage) and at the same time reaches out to our all-encompassing totality—the Earth-in the mission stage. As the cycle progresses further, the healing gets deeper and more all inclusive. In the final analysis, we only know total healing when we know the end, the God-given dream of loving relationships between man and woman, children and Earth. To be "human" is to be a "person of the Earth" (Adam means "Earth-man", and human comes from

*humus*—the Earth). Full healing can only come when we include the Earth in our loving concern.

In dealing with the question of healing the Earth, then, I will first draw together God's "dream" that has been guiding us. Then I will consider praying for healing, and finally make suggestions about grounding our whole vision of the Earth in the creative love of God.

### **God's Vision and Ours: Paradise Re-created**

Our "story" is rooted not simply in the eons of evolution, but in the Biblical view of creation and God. It is a theological story, a story of God's dealings with humans and its historical implications, and so it is as valid today as when it was written. The Yahwist, who first wrote of the sin of our original ancestors, did so by first looking at the sin of his own day (the time of David). It was a time of domination, of loss of faith in Yahweh because of the multiple marriages of the kings like Solomon, of alienation of families torn by strife like that of David. How could this be, given Yahweh's goodness, which meant creation was good? The Yahwist intuited that this degradation was due to a freely chosen loss of faith in Yahweh. Humans were the culmination of Yahweh's creation, formed from Earth, given the power to name (and so direct) creation and given the commission to "master" it on behalf of God. But they chose their own way and the tempting of the Serpent, the Yahwist wrote. They chose to follow their own experience (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil),<sup>1</sup> and discovered their inadequacy (nakedness) and hid. Yahweh called them to account, and they each passed the blame to another—Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. No one would take responsibility, ask forgiveness, and change! Yahweh announced their punishment (which followed inevitably from their turning away from God as we argued in Ch. 6): Adam would dominate his wife and Eve cling to her husband (their free, grateful relationship was lost), Eve would give birth in pain (creativity was very painful) and the Earth would be hard to till and not graciously yield its crops. When Adam and Eve were open to the creativity of God, Earth also was creative. When they turned away, Earth also seemed to respond by begrudging its fruitfulness. This was Israel's experience throughout its history. When they turned from Yahweh, the land was despoiled and they were driven to the desert or into Exile. When they turned back to Yahweh, the land was restored (after many years of desert). The Yahwist symbolically was giving his probing insight into the nature and history of sin, all too real in his own day (and in ours!). Humans were given the Earth in trust, but when they turned from God, the source of creativity, they could only use power, an empty pride, dominance and force, and ultimately reduce the Earth from a garden to a desert.

Further, this sorry beginning had a history. Cain picked up the shame and guilt of his parents and doubted his acceptability; he envied and then killed Abel who embodied a loving connection with God (how we treat prophets!). War began because of the root distrust. Cain's descendants became city dwellers and workers of bronze and iron (they learned to dominate and subdue)! And this divisiveness among brothers, alienation and abuse between the sexes and pride and devastation of the Earth was handed down generation to generation till the great flood and afterwards to the tower of Babel (the pinnacle of human pride that scatters the human languages). Later on Joseph experienced this envy and hatred from his brothers, who themselves were alienated from their father (and God) and experienced the devastating famine on the land. God worked through Joseph's faithfulness despite suffering to save their nation and the

Egyptians. But the history of sin continued in the Kingdom (in fact it is during that time that the Yahwist is writing about origins) with the same predictable results. It is not enough to see what is needed. They have to do it.

It was this same pattern of envy and hatred of one gifted by God that led to Jesus' death, a pattern not unlike our own distrust of prophetic creativity and our desire to dominate it. Such generational patterns, we find, change only when they are acknowledged, understood, repented of and forgiven. This is how we are understanding Jesus' resurrection. As a human he was tempted by his nations sinful tendencies, as we see in the Scriptural account of his temptations. Yet instead of taking things into his own hands (our forebears' decision) he responded with a renewed trust in God. He successfully counteracted the temptation to rely on his power by accepting human powerlessness and relying on God, and he was given even greater authority—over storm and sea, and over the fig tree. He was the "meek" one who would inherit the land (Mt 5:5 is taken from Ps 37:11 where "meekness" means "submitted to God").<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, his death was actually a victory over human pride and deceit and the breakthrough of trust in God's "new creation," grounded solely in God's resurrecting power. Through his resurrection Jesus "sent" the Spirit to continue this new life with his disciples. Thus, what Adam was called to and lost by distrust, so that he started a history of exploitation of the Earth, Christ restored not on the basis of the old creation, but by the "new creation," by a reconciling call from the future that God is creating "totally new."

But as everything "new" from God, it preserves the old and actually perfects it in its own right. Thus, Scripture portrays the effect of the resurrection as Paradise re-created. Where our first parents were alienated from God, Jesus restores an intimate communion with God as "Abba", and confers it in the Spirit on Mary and the disciples. Where people were alienated from one another through many tongues, Pentecost restored unity through the Spirit's gift of harmonizing and interpreting diverse tongues (and gifts!). Where there was envy and self-protectiveness, now each one shared what they had for the common good. Where our first parents handed down a tradition of sin, Jesus and Mary are portrayed as a healed foundation of a new, divinely founded family. And all this restores "a New Heaven and a New Earth" which is given for human good and calls for human gratitude and care in response. "For all creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God, for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom 8:19-21)

Behind this restored vision is a new glimpse of our creator God, the divine Trinity, in whose image man and woman have been created. Jesus said only through him could God be rightly seen. God created us in "his" own image, Pascal quipped, and we have been returning the favor ever since! We create God in our image-judgmental, looking for flaws, looking for us to "prove" our love before loving us (as we look for proof from others). Jesus' revelation of God is very different. God loved us "while we were still sinners" (i.e.. before we proved our love) (2 Cor 5:21), and "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). This love was Jesus' guiding light. He showed it in action, not just words, by loving the unworthy and sinners, and having table fellowship with the outcast. Even Jesus' healings in Mark's Gospel are social statements. He heals the demoniac in the synagogue to reveal God as healer (Mk 1:21-28), and

Simon's mother-in-law that she can serve them and restore community. He cleanses the outcast leper and sends him to the priest so he can be reconnected to the community. He heals the paralytic to reveal the power of forgiveness, and he welcomes Levi to integrate even the tax collector. His healings restore outcasts to community and establish God's justice. But his very success brings envy and rejection. His ultimate revelation of God is in his commitment to God's way "even unto death." "No one takes my life," he said, "I freely lay it down" (Jn 10:18). "That the world might know that I love the Father, and do as the Father has commanded me, arise let us go" (Jn 14:31).

So Jesus' death is not just the result of sin. It is the result of his total self-surrender to God, and since all Jesus does is a reflection of God, God also is surrendering life for love of the world. Jesus reveals that God is self-giving love, and in that act of joint self-surrender on the cross, God's life-giving Spirit is released in the world to form a community of self-giving love as a revelation and reflection of Trinitarian Love. J. L. Moreno, the founder of psychodrama, noted that release of creativity is what heals. We can now add that it is the creativity released through love committed unto death that heals most fully.<sup>3</sup> To heal us fully, the ground of our commitment must know and love each of us personally, not just be a vague spiritual unity. Our unity must consist in more than transcending our differences, it must "increase" our differences at the same time as calling us to a freely chosen yet also "organic" unity. In our Triune God, we find a ground of unity that actually personalizes us in an ultimate way. We find our true name (Rev 2:17), and like St. Francis we can begin to name each creature as also uniquely cherished by God.

One final piece seems important for this vision. If the ultimate ground of our dream is God's own love, God's own act of self-unification abundantly given to us (as Teilhard would say), then creation itself needs to be divinely empowered to say "yes," "come Lord Jesus." Love is not fully expressed unless it is received fully, and God's love cannot be received fully except by God's Spirit, and those empowered by God's Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Bernard Loomer, the process theologian, illustrated this argument in a beautiful article called "Two Kinds of Power."<sup>5</sup> He pointed out how unilateral power, the power to cause an effect without oneself being changed, was how the technician works, or an architect. Such power treats the other as having no independent response. Relational power, on the other hand, has to hold its own too, but also to take into account the free response of the other. It's a different thing to kick a rock and to kick a dog! When one kicks a dog, one must be ready for many different responses and respond accordingly. If one is powerful relationally, one will not lose one's fundamental orientation (say to help the dog) in the process. God as the "unmoved mover" (Aristotle's thought and reinterpreted by Aquinas) was thought to act, but not to be affected by our actions, because such vulnerability would imply imperfection. But if God is the perfection of relational power, it would be a perfection to be affected without losing one's basic orientation-in this case "to love." Because of the immense power of God, only God could adequately receive the impact of God and respond accordingly! "To see God was to die" in the OT. Only by the gift of the Spirit is death not the final response, but a committed love transcending death.

This Spirit-empowered receptivity is embodied in Mary and the believing Church. She becomes the Earth saying "yes, be it done to me according to your word," which she could only do in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of John illustrates this in two powerful



passages.<sup>6</sup> At Cana, Mary is the one who notices "they have no wine," (i.e., no Spirit, for the wine at Cana symbolizes the abundance of wine at the messianic banquet). Like the rainmaker, she knows what being filled with the Spirit is like, so she knows the deadness of missing it and intercedes on their (and our) behalf with her Son. And after Jesus responds, the disciples, who came in separately, go out together! Mary's Spirit-empowered faith becomes the bridge between the disciples' disunity before Jesus' death/resurrection and their post-resurrection unity. This sign is fulfilled under the cross in Jn 19:26-27. Now Mary (and all in the church!) stands united with Jesus in his dying and shares that pain. And Jesus speaks those creative words to her and the beloved disciple: "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour "the disciple took her into his own."<sup>7</sup> From the side of Christ (as from the side of Adam) flows the Spirit that draws believers into a new family, a new "bride" with Mary as its exemplar.

As a clear expression of the loving receptivity and creativity of the Holy Spirit, Mary becomes the spiritual "New Eve," as the early Fathers like Justin, Tertullian and Irenaeus said of her, the spiritual Earth mother, the "Yes" to God's desire to share God's very life with us. Where Eve turned from God's word and brought division and loss of the garden, Mary received God's Word and brought to birth through sharing Jesus' suffering a restoration of God's family and the land. Mary is not separate from us in this, but reveals what the whole Church is called to, to receive in our very being God's Word through the gift of the Spirit, to bring God's life of self-giving love into our world through sharing in the suffering that are its birth pangs. Then the very trees of the fields will clap their hands (Is 55:12) to share the joy of the freedom (freedom to love fully) of human children. In sum, this is not just an empty dream, a wish for some future full of hope. It has already been accomplished in Jesus and Mary and has been expressed for a time in the early church. Like a breakthrough of truth that has ebbed and calls for ongoing recommitment to bring it into steady reality, it resonates as a dream in our hearts, and we are given God's own Spirit to carry it into reality today.

This is the dream restored. We get glimpses of it through the ministry of healing, but we also experience a deep resistance to this new life breaking through. There is resistance in ourselves, who are afraid to let go of our defenses and what we hold on to for security in order to trust God and receive as gift. There is resistance in social systems, family, church and society, which are threatened by such an unconditional trust. There is spiritual resistance, Scripture tells us (see Eph 6:10-17), which leads us to rely on the "principalities and powers" of this world, creates divisions between well meaning people, deceives under the appearance of good, and leads us away from trusting God to guide us in handling the problem. Real transformation and healing takes an unconditional reliance on God's promise and the permanence of the victory in Christ. How can we work towards its realization.

### **Steps in Prayer for Healing the Earth**

Before we consider what might be steps for healing the Earth, we need to assure ourselves that the Earth is a living organism that can be wounded and can heal. Experimental evidence from plants was brought to my attention through the work of Cleave Backster, an expert on the psychogalvanic skin response that is basic to the lie detector.<sup>8</sup> He decided one day to attach the electrodes to a rubber plant in his office. He wondered if the plant would respond

to cutting it. It did, but not as much as he expected. He then thought he would burn its leaves, and at the very thought the graph showed a violent response! The plant seemed to anticipate his intended violence. He then set up a situation where plants could "witness" a destructive action. Six people were selected and given numbers. Each but one was instructed on their paper to go into the room, look at the plants and leave. One was instructed to tear some leaves off one of the three plants before leaving. Electrodes were attached to the two "witness" plants, and each person again went into the room. No one knew who the destructive person was except the plants! There was no response for the five innocent persons, but when the culprit entered the room, the plants responded vigorously. They seemed to remember!

Another instance, this time the wounding of an area, is cited by Dr. Kenneth McAll in his book *Healing the Family Tree*.<sup>9</sup> Dr. McAll was traveling by banana boat over the Bermuda Triangle (a place formed by an imaginary line between Miami, Puerto Rico and Bermuda, where for hundreds of years ships and aircraft had gone down without a trace). The boat was caught in a terrible storm. One of the ship's boilers broke leaving them adrift. In his quiet leisure, he heard a droning outside. It wasn't the crew. He researched and found that this was the area where sick slaves were thrown overboard so their owners could collect insurance money! As Gn 4:10 says of Cain's killing Abel "Your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil," these souls were crying out from the sea. On returning to England, Dr. McAll got Anglican bishops in various places to celebrate Eucharist for those who lost their lives in that place, and later the Bermuda Anglican bishop did the same. Since the time of that celebration (1977) and his book (1982) there had been no reported accident in that region!

These are but two of many examples that could be cited. The Earth does seem to be affected by what happens on it (as we found in Appalachia) and does seem to get "healed" and made fruitful again as we repent for ourselves and the previous dwellers in the place, get reconciliation, and ask God to recreate the land. Sometimes it may only be that we stop polluting (as with Lake Eire) and the Earth and sea will regenerate. I remember seeing an article on the Illinois prairie. When they recreated the conditions of the original prairie, they found that the animals and birds that were indigenous to that environment began to reappear, as though from nowhere! Some feel that prayer could even regenerate desert lands like Arizona. If Elijah's prayer could bring rain to Israel after purging Israel of false prophets (1 Kgs 1:41-46), could not even deserts be restored if we returned to God's ways. We needn't look at what we've done (the past things), but at God who makes all things new. I suggest five steps that can help us in this process:

First, we need to be oriented to the new creation in Christ. The first humans were given authority to bring order to the universe (Gn 1:28) yet brought degradation instead through sin. Through Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection, all creation in solidarity with his humanity has been brought into God's own life and a fundamental right order has been reestablished. This cannot be lost. In Christ the universe is fundamentally saved. But only if we reground ourselves in this truth will that saving power be available to us. We need to change our ways and return to God through Christ, and recapture a vision of the healing that is possible. As we grow in that conviction and experience that power, the universe can be transformed and brought back to life. Healing prayer is grounded in this truth, and seeks Jesus' guidance for how to cooperate in the saving of the Earth.

Secondly, our power to envision and imagine needs to be transformed by this vision of God's kingdom. What we believe is what we give power to. Belief is not a surface act of mind alone, but is revealed in feeling, imagination and actual choices. Jesus' initial proclamation was "Repent and believe the good news." (Mk 1:15) Repent (Greek: metanoia) meant "change your mind" and the good news meant "God's rule is now present" As Elizabeth exclaimed of Mary: "Blessed is she who believed that God's word would be fulfilled!" Mary's faith (and ours like her) gave room for God's new creation to come. Healing prayer is often unsuccessful because we do not expect and envision the hoped for change. For example, we might pray for a friend to be healed of an illness, yet go on complaining about how he or she suffers. We are attending to the sickness, not envisioning her getting well and thanking God for it. We are made to be channels of God's creative light, but if our minds are filled with worries and fears, what we are actually believing is that the worst will happen. It seems to be a spiritual law that what we believe is what we cause (other things allowing for it). In counseling others, I have had to pray to release early life-forming decisions (like "men can't be trusted" or "I will never amount to anything") for they act like self-fulfilling prophecies. When such people do relate to men or begin to become successful, they do something to sabotage the relationship or their success. Their fear seems to be that their whole life perspective will collapse otherwise. When they get in touch with their early decision and ask God to change it according to God's perspective of love and forgiveness and new creation, they seem able to open to new possibilities. Not that we can ourselves change our faith. That is a grace that we can ask God for and that also comes through the support of others.

I myself became aware of how far back God heals when I was struggling with a sense of burden in my own life. Life seemed to me overwhelming, and I also saw the same pattern in my mother's life and her mother's. Through prayer with others it suddenly dawned on me that I had in some way made a decision, as far back as in the womb, that I would not be a burden. I was third and my mother was already burdened by my older brother and sister, and we have evidence that children pick up attitudes of their parents even in the womb. In any case, I knew the effects of my decision, but not my early responsibility for it. I did everything myself. I didn't want to be dependent on anyone. But that also meant I didn't share my difficulties or ask for help when needed, and life truly did become a burden. I needed to repent, to change my early decision, but that itself would have been only partially successful if God hadn't worked to uproot the early decision and begin to restructure my life accordingly. I asked God for this, and experienced a new ability to allow myself to be gifted by others, and to share my gifts. When we ask, we can experience God's forgiveness, but we also then become aware of God's power to restore what had been lost by our destructive decisions. We grow in gratitude and the desire to give to others what we have received. This convinced me further to pray for others that they also could get free from their destructive decisions. I began to see that this healing can also reach into our ancestors, as we saw with Dr. McAll's work. We can pray that generational blocks be released and that our ancestors open to God's forgiveness and healing. That indeed, is how I became aware of the extensive power of the resurrection to heal, and how I was led to pray for the Earth itself. Resurrection is a reality, not just a theory. Each of us needs to experience its power to forgive and to heal if we are to be convinced of its power to heal the Earth. We give no space for such change if we continue to focus on the problem rather than God's ever-present love and creativity.

If we focus on the source of healing, God's all-powerful love, we can grow in our ability to envision and expect healing. Agnes Sanford was led to pray for the Earth through her experience with healing prayer. She actually moved to California in her later years to pray for the San Andreas fault, that there would be no devastating earthquake, but only a dispersal of shifts through many land movements.<sup>10</sup> Jesus' disciples were shocked when Jesus commanded the storm to be still, but he corrected them for their little faith (Mk 4:40). How many of us believe that storms can be stopped by prayer? Barbara Shlemon and several others were giving a healing retreat for several hundred Indians in Montana when a tornado was spotted heading directly toward their camp. Not wanting the Indians hurt they thought of disbanding, but after prayer for guidance, they asked the presiding Bishop to say a prayer for God to turn aside the tornado and let only a slight rain come to water the ground. The Bishop hesitatingly complied, and returned to the Mass. Only a slight rain did fall. One would hardly have noticed except for a journalist present and the next mornings headlines: tornado divides and misses a healing service and then comes together again! Needless to say, the Bishop was quite impressed (he had said after Mass: "One does need common sense!").<sup>11</sup> We need to learn from the illness, whether it is the Earth that is in need of help or persons, but then pray for what is needed!

Thirdly, we need to pay attention to what the illness or disorder itself is communicating to us. It actually indicates what needs to be healed and is calling us to respond. If we merely fight the illness and do not learn from it, we will be causing the very thing we are trying to eradicate, because we are focusing on the illness, not the new creation. The example of homeopathic medicine helped me to understand this.<sup>12</sup> Not that it is the only way to cure, but it seems to work with the healing powers of the universe rather than merely fight sickness. *Homoios* in Greek means "similar," *pathos* means "suffering." Homeopathy is a form of medicine that designs the remedy to match the unique symptoms of the illness. Hahnemann, its developer in more recent times, surmised that the Peruvian *Cinchona* bark works with Malaria, because when it was given to healthy people, it caused the same symptoms (sweating, intermittent fevers, etc.) as did Malaria. The sickness was healed by a "like remedy." Hahnemann meticulously described the symptoms from other herbs on healthy people to match other illnesses. He discovered by further experimentation that the homeopathic remedies worked more powerfully the more the tincture was diluted. One part was mixed with 99 parts alcohol or water and shaken to make 1 potency, then one part of this with another 99 more parts water to make 2 potency, etc.. What was retained, it is clear, was not the chemical tincture itself but its vibrational pattern! That is, it was not physical inoculation, but a higher level illness that cured the lower. It made me think of Scripture's view of the serpent that Moses raised up, that all who looked on it were cured of the serpent's bite (see Jn 3:14; Nm 21:9), and of Jesus who died our death and bore our sufferings, that all who looked on him (the higher form of the illness) would be saved!

So also with illness. It is the body's effort to draw attention to the need for healing. Bernie Siegel, the cancer surgeon who has written on healing,<sup>13</sup> pointed out that the high suicide rate among doctors is likely because they are trying to cure people from death! An impossible undertaking! In his view, the doctor's goal is not to prevent death, but to help people to live fully in face of the fact that they will die. I recently found out a sore on my tongue was cancerous. I immediately began to value my singing (that I might lose) and what I could do with

my life (that I might not have much longer). And I examined what led to the sore, that I had neglected as not that serious. My body was making me repent and live differently, or I would die! I got the surgery, and things are going well as I pay attention to the changes needed. I experience the cancer as a gift. A call to change and seek healing. If I didn't change, it was a foreshadowing of the end! Isn't that what our Earth devastation, our accumulated waste, depleted forests and polluted water is telling us. It is a gift! Learn from it, change, or you can see what future is in store! The symptom is a gracious call, not an inevitable result. If there are no symptoms, the homeopathist has little hope for recovery because the body is not indicating the possibility of healing!

The tragedies of the Earth may also be healing for us. I recently returned from a trip to South Miami where I experienced first hand the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew. Trees were uprooted, roofs lifted off, homes totally demolished and people left homeless. My friend who lives there escaped with only the trees in her yard uprooted, but she said something deep and spiritual had happened to her. She was no longer attached to her home there and was free to go wherever she felt God was calling her. Many memories were attached to that home, but now she was released from holding on to them. Like Mary in the garden she could hear "Do not cling to me"--do not cling to possessions, or place or people or anything that keeps you from responding to God's call. That was a real dying for her, but it was experienced as freeing resurrection. Others experienced the concern and help from others, and a community of support was built up (as well as those wanting to exploit the situation!). Each tragedy is a call to respond with care, but we need to choose the new possibility and simply lament the tragedy or even increase it by exploitation.

Fourthly, what heals is God's Love. The more we are filled with God's love and forgiveness, the better channels we will be for all sorts of healing, including the Earth. If we harbor resentment or judgments against others, we block the power of God's healing. Many instances could be given. I think of the story of Fr. Jim Burke, O.P. given during a retreat. At a workshop he was giving one sister spoke of getting to like Detroit after harboring a dislike for many years. Fr. Jim felt her words like a knife. Whenever he thought of bad examples of cities, Detroit came first to mind. In the repentance service he asked forgiveness for his condemning attitude toward Detroit and asked for God's view. The result was that in the next few years he had 50 invitations for missions or retreats in Detroit, whereas before he had almost none. Forgiving love opened the way for God's love to work. As we pray for the Earth, we need to ask forgiveness for those who exploit the Earth, and for ourselves who in many ways have hurt the Earth or allowed it to be hurt, perhaps unawares.

Fifthly, we have found that blocks may often be from the past both in individual healing and in healing the Earth. As I mentioned earlier, places seem to remember what has happened on them, and similar evil seems to continue in those places. In the Introduction I mentioned how Barbara Shlemon had to pray for forgiveness for the Seminole Indians and for the whites who usurped their land before the land she built her healing center on became available. When that was done, the land became available the very next day!

A group of us in Chicago were led to have a Mass said for the civil war dead from Camp Douglas in Chicago, and to pray for the camp grounds. We found through a study of the local

history that some 6,000 (of some 30,000 all told) Confederate soldiers died there in inhuman conditions. The site of the actual camp (between 31st and 33rd and Cottage Grove in Chicago, a very suitable piece of land for building) had been a land for some time, with stones strewn all over. Three years after our service, a friend passed by the site and found that there was housing being built there. The land was becoming 'hospitable' again! We have experienced several similar instances: a site in Kankakee where an Indian meeting ground had been replaced by the town meeting hall, a parish that had a Ku Klux Klan ritual on its site and no spiritual renewal seemed to be able to catch hold there. After the prayer a parish mission was offered in the parish with a real sense of renewal.

It may be that the root of some present misuse or exploitation lies back in some original hurt, conflict, or injustice to the Indians, or even in evil spirits brought by some occult ritual. One example of occult bondage was a parish that never seemed to be able to grow into a community. There was constant divisiveness. Jobs around the church never got completed. There was a sense of oppression that pervaded the grounds. We were asked to pray for the church and a team including the woman pastor and two friends and our healing team gathered. We inquired into the history of the parish, and found that occult practices were likely performed on the grounds in the past, and many of the former pastors either died early or left the ministry. We prayed that God would heal and forgive the pastors, and would deliver the grounds and church from the effects of any occult practice performed on it. I was informed later that the atmosphere of the church changed noticeably since that prayer. The staff was more cooperative, prayer was easier, there was a lighter sense in the air. The creativity of the place was released. Christ's resurrection heals the past also, as we pray for forgiveness and reconciliation, or in such cases as these even for deliverance from evil spirits.

In sum, we find that the same principles that apply to healing of persons apply also to healing the Earth. The Earth is given to us to learn to love. As Psalm 115:16 says: "Heaven belongs to the Lord alone, but he gave the Earth to humans." As children teach us our sin by how they are affected by it, so God seems to let the Earth be devastated so that we will see our own inner devastation that causes it. But Jesus has come to restore to us power through his resurrection Spirit, and to share his Lordship that we might pray for its healing. Whether we will choose to restore the Earth or exploit it has been given to us to decide. It's death, however, will involve our own!

### **Finding God in All the Earth**

What we attend to, grows. That is the power we have through our faith. If we only see the problems, even if we try to eradicate them, we will see them multiplying. It is like trying to use pesticides on pests. They only seem to multiply with increased strength. The best way to prevent destruction is to begin building something positive to take its place. Strong vibrant plants resist the pests! Jesus told a similar parable of the good grain and the weeds. "A farmer went out to sow good seed. While he was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the good grain. When the servant noticed the weeds, he told the farmer, 'An enemy has done this.' The farmer replied: "Do not pull them up lest you pull up the wheat as well. Let them both grow till the harvest. Then collect the weeds for burning and store the wheat in my barn" (Mt 13:24-30 adapted) So also, all our efforts to correct our exploitation (like trying to purify our

polluted water) seems to use more energy and create greater exploitation. We need to learn to build what can be sustained, and beyond it all we need to build on the creative goodness of God, the positive ground that never deceives.

Marshall Massey, in a tape on "Saving the Land: a Religious Obligation,"<sup>14</sup> noted how many cultures experienced the same sort of soil depletion that we have in the United States. Rome itself in the time of Tiberias (who ruled in Jesus' lifetime), actually knew the reasons for its soil depletion but could not agree on any action. The devastation of then-land was a large factor in the weakening and final downfall of the Roman Empire (as well as their excessive expense for the military!). Greece, Egypt and Palestine itself are other instances of the same devastation through human misuse. The three examples of cultures that did act when they observed the devastation (our own American Indians, Hawaii and New Zealand's North Island) and still discovered a sustainable way of life, all employed a religious taboo to protect the land! It seems that we need to see the land as a privileged domain of God, a place where we find and reverence the sacred, if we as a people are going to act. Are there ways of finding God in nature? What we attend to, grows!

St. Ignatius Loyola, in his *Contemplation to Attain Divine Love* can help us see what is involved in finding God in everything. We need to begin to see with the eyes of love, to let go of exploiting things for our interests and begin to appreciate everything as entrusted to us by love. One who loves, Ignatius affirms, shares everything he or she has with the beloved, and gratefully receives what the beloved gives. That God loves is the constant affirmation of Scripture. That God shares everything with Jesus we have seen in Mt 28:18: "All power in heaven and on Earth has been given to me..." (see also 1 Cor 15:27f and Jn 17:22-3, etc.), and God has given us Jesus (Jn 3:16) and God's very Spirit (Gal 4:6, etc.). The very being of God is not just to unite (as Teilhard put it ontologically) but to give away his own—to love in a committed, covenantal way.

Further, love acts, it shows itself in deeds. One who loves does everything possible for the good of the beloved. God watched over Jesus and worked on his behalf, and Jesus did everything he saw the Father doing (Jn 5:19, etc.). The healings Jesus did revealed God's healing, the welcoming of sinners revealed God's welcome.

Now what Ignatius calls us to see is this divine, loving action present in all creation, calling forth our grateful response. As he wrote in a letter to Francis Borgia:

...those who leave themselves behind and enter into their creator and Lord have an abiding awareness of and loving attention to him, and experience consolation. They perceive how our whole eternal Good is present in all created things, how he gives existence to all creatures and conserves them in himself by his own infinite being and presence....For those who have a wholehearted love for the Lord, all things help them and serve them for an even greater reward as they draw near and find union in a most intense charity with their creator and Lord.<sup>15</sup>

He leads us by four points to an ever deeper appreciation of God's love in all things. We spoke above about "fine tuning" our perception, not to create what we are looking for, but to really see

and act on what is really there. What we believe is what we cause, and the more we see and believe God is loving us in all things, the more we will help transform creation in light of that love.

First, then, we are to see everything as God's gift and respond with gratitude. Love gives and sees everything as gift, and "God works everything for good for those who love God" (Rom 8:28). This is easier when we look at the blessings of creation, the beautiful variety of plants and animals, the glorious colors and sounds, and the beautiful working together of all nature. But if we are not to be "scandalized" by the suffering, the way animals feed on each other, and the dying as part of nature, then we need to find love and gift in the painful things also. As the Linns point out in their book *Healing of Memories*,<sup>16</sup> it is when we can be grateful for an experience that we know it is fully healed. When we can see even woundedness, even our wounded nature, as a call of love and respond with sensitivity and gratitude, then we will see in the light of God's truth. Nature is given, and gives itself. Dogs, trees, "want" to be needed, to be led. They seem to want to follow and to lead (As Al's cow taught him). A native American, Rolling Thunder, would talk to bees, to stay on one side of a bush, while he picked berries from the other. If he kept his bargain, they would do so. The universe is made for love and respect, and responds fully when appreciated as gift. God's eternal generosity is revealed in creation. This heals our "memory" and empowers us to "recall" creation in its deepest truth.

Secondly, however, not only is creation a gift. It is also bearer of God's own self-gift. Ignatius tells us to reflect how God "dwells" in creatures, in the elements, plants and animals, and ultimately in humans. I had been used to considering this point in light of Aquinas—the abiding presence of God in all God has created. Yet in light of the resurrection it appears anew. If the Spirit of Christ touches all creation, all creation "groans in travail" to attain resurrected freedom (Rom 8:22-23). If the resurrected Jesus can say to Paul "why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4 etc.), is all creation not the "Body of Christ" in the Spirit (as Teilhard held)? Can we not touch in the suffering of creation, the suffering of Christ for its transformation into God's compassion? When we resist suffering and fail to see its meaning, we miss its deepest inner truth. This "indwelling" of Christ is the deepest truth of all reality. "All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be" (Jn 1:3). This "word" illumines our minds, and like a "Copernican revolution" it brings everything into a new and divinely true perspective. Dying is for the sake of love. The fact that creatures "feed" on one another can be Eucharistic, much as the Eskimos thank the sea lion for giving its life that they could live on its food. No one "takes" Jesus' life, he freely gives it, and those who accept the free gift of another's life are deeply touched and then see their own lives as gift. We begin to see all in light of the communion (self-giving and receiving) of Eucharist. This heals our "minds" and brings them into tune with God's understanding.

Thirdly, Ignatius has us see God "laboring" in all things on our behalf, and as we watch God labor, we learn how our labor is co-creating with God. "Labor" itself is a feminine word. A woman is in labor till the child is born (Jn 16:21), and the disciples are in labor till the church is born. It is a fine word for intercession. Paul was "in labor again" till Christ was formed in the Galatians (Gal 4:19). So the "work" and "labor" of God is not just external activity, but permanent choice, fidelity, and ongoing relationship till creation grows up in Christ. This activity of God is presented in many Scriptural images. God is the vinedresser and prunes us



that we might bear more fruit (Jn 15:1-2). God is King and leader of the people (Pss 47, 93, 96-99), shepherd who himself will tend his sheep (Ez 34, etc.), mother who gives birth and does not forget the child of her womb (Is 49:15), warrior who is "Lord of hosts" and fights for his people (Ex 15:3, Is 42:13), creator who as a potter makes and remakes beautiful things (Jer 18:1-6, Is 29:16), savior who rescues his people when they become enslaved (Ex), and ultimately rescues them from death. This is God the Holy Spirit, life-giver, consolator, teacher, ongoing guide, gift-giver for the community's up-building, who will "lead us into all truth" and help us see the Christ meaning in our experience (Jn 14:25-6).

In each of these images, the work is not a once-and-for-all intervention, but ongoing nurturing care and concern. God "cares" for his work that it work out what it was sent to do (Is 55:10-1), that is in light of Jesus, that the work of Jesus be brought to completion. This is the "work" of the Holy Spirit, abiding with us, forming Christ in us and uniting us with one another in the one Body of Christ till all be submitted to him and he to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:27-28). And it is our commission to "care" similarly for the Earth (Gn 1:28-the true meaning of "subdue", as we saw, was to "rule" of God's behalf, which Jesus shows is "to serve"). As God "serves" us, we are to "serve" all creation. This heals our wills and brings them into "tune" with God's will.

Finally, in an all-encompassing vision, Ignatius would have us see all things coming from God and returning to God. Paul's vision was similar: "all things are subjected to Christ, that Christ may subject all to God, that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:27-8 adapted). St. Augustine expresses this same truth in a beautiful passage from the Confessions:

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would not have been at all. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace. (Book 10, Ch. 27)

This point adds an overall direction and providence. All gifts proceed from above, and through our free response are to be returned. Every gift is an invitation of God's love, a call, and the destiny of all creation is put in our hands to return it in love to God. Through the power of Jesus' resurrection this process has been begun in its finality. The "re-creation", the restoration of Paradise, of a "New Adam" and a "New Eve," a "new birth" and a "longing of all creation for divine freedom of God's children" has begun. For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, everything is. being transformed and redirected to God its source and goal. What is needed is our free response. Our decision to make God the center. Jesus is Lord, but he can only be lord in actuality if he has those who believe in him and follow him like Mary.

This is the "authority" given to us through Christ, to see the universe "coming", ever "coming" (i.e., evolving) from God, and to direct it according to its own deepest truth "back to

God." The whole universe, as Aquinas said, is needed to show the infinity of God. Ignatius used to sit for hours watching the stars, because it freed him from getting caught in the petty details of daily life to see the magnificence of God and the beauty of our service of God. It also shows the overwhelming generosity of God who never runs out of creativity and holds nothing back. God is not stingy. But it also shows God's vulnerability in the very vulnerability of nature. Love opens itself to being hurt, but that very openness makes it precious. It calls us to respond with all our intelligence and concern to labor ourselves to bring everything to its fullest perfection in love.

If, as Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God," then we will take off our shoes and treat everything with reverence and gratitude, even as we do everything in our power to protect and perfect it.

### **Joseph's Story**

Joseph's story in the Old Testament can be seen as the culmination of Genesis' account of Fall and God's interventions to save.<sup>17</sup> Genesis 37-50 is the third segment of the patriarchal sagas, Abraham (Gn 12-23) and Isaac/Jacob (24-36) being the other two. We saw in Genesis 1-11 how God created the world good, but how things degenerated through human sinfulness. This led to the destructive flood and later to the prideful tower of Babel with humans dispersed and divided through many tongues. The result, as begun in Genesis 2-3, was alienation from God, from one another through shame and envy, and from the Earth.

Beginning with Abraham in Gn 12, God gradually works to restore creation. Abraham is called out of his home for a promised land. He trusts God as fully as he is able, but he also shows his weaknesses. He lies to Pharaoh about Sarah, loses trust in God's promise of offspring as he grows old and has Ishmael by Sarah's maid Hagar, with later conflict between the brothers. Yet he buys some land for his burial -- the promise begins to be fulfilled. Jacob embodies a second step in the process by working toward reconciliation with his brother Esau (to heal the split begun between Cain and Abel). He also trusts God, but he also is far from perfectly exemplary. He deceives his brother and is himself deceived by Laban. His many children by two wives are rife with conflicts. Only Joseph is portrayed as a type of Old Testament saint, the culmination of God's restoring action. Despite his many trials and imprisonment, he trusted that "God was with him," and in the end he brought about a healing between his brothers, his father and himself, and a saving intervention for the land for both Egypt and Israel. We see in Joseph that healing is a process--often a very painful process--of trusting God in the midst of severe difficulties. Joseph is an Old Testament type of Jesus.

Joseph represents Old Testament Wisdom in person. As the oldest born of Jacob's favorite wife Rebecca, he is close to his mother and also especially favored by his father after Rebecca's death. He is a dreamer (like God?) and he incurs the hatred of his brothers when he tells the dream of the eleven sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf. His brothers, like Cain, are envious of the favor he has with his father, and seek to put him to death. Unlike Abel, Joseph is spared. Providentially, he is sold to traders who take him to Egypt, and he becomes

the trusted servant of Potiphar the priest. Again he is faithful to his master when Potiphar's wife (most likely neglected by her husband) tries to get Joseph to make love to her. When he refuses, she accuses him of seduction (frequently the plight of those who refuse to take part in evil) and he is imprisoned. God favors him there also, and he interprets the dreams of two prisoners, one of whom he asks to speak well of him before Pharaoh. But when that prisoner gets out, he forgets about Joseph (he has to learn to trust no one but God).

Two more years follow, and then Pharaoh has two dreams. The servant then thinks about Joseph (God's timing needs to be awaited) and he interprets the dreams of Pharaoh and is made executor after Pharaoh of all Egypt's resources (those that obey God are wise even with this world's goods). He marries an Egyptian woman and has two sons by her (no other woman enters the picture as we saw in Ch. 6 was the ideal of Wisdom literature). He is able to organize the grain storage with the seven years of famine in such a way that Egypt and all who come for help have enough to eat (he can bring about a right relation to the Earth, whereas his brothers' sin brings them to near ruin with the desolation of the Earth). Through all this Joseph is reconciled to his brothers and reconciles them with himself and their father. In spite of his suffering God has been faithful and brought about salvation. His comment to his brothers, who expected his retaliation after the death of their father Jacob, is a beautiful summary of the story and reveals Joseph's abiding focus on God:

Have no fear. Can I take the place of God? Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good, to achieve his present end, the salvation of many people. (Gn 50:19-20; see also Gn 45:5-8 where Joseph says clearly: "to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance...it was not really you but God who had me come here.")

Joseph had learned through suffering to see with God's eyes and to await God's timing, at the same tune as doing all that was in his power to do. In doing so, he became a source of healing and reconciliation, not only for his father and brothers and sisters, but also for the Earth. There is no ritual or public prayer in the Joseph story, only the repeated phrase that "God was with him." He had come to find God in all events, and so was the paradigm of Old Testament wisdom, and I believe a model for wisdom in our own day.

Ultimately, it is Jesus who is Wisdom for us as Christians, and he has made possible not only a "model" of healing but salvation itself. Jesus shows that with the power of the Spirit each of us can be like Joseph and make our contribution to Earth Healing. We will to have the same relentless trust in God with us despite many set backs and trials, but we are also assured that "for those who love God (and God's Earth) all things [ultimately] work together for good" (Rom 8:28). And in the end, as God was with Joseph, so we have the assurance from the resurrected Jesus: "Behold, I am with you always, unto the end of the world" (Mt 28:20).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carl Jung argued that eating of the forbidden tree was a "necessary fault," so that humans would advance in consciousness and not simply be slavishly obedient. This view, taken from the early Gnostics, has become quite widespread. However, it is not the Biblical view and is theologically false. Andrew Miles has shown persuasively the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil means to experience good and evil indiscriminately ("knowledge" means "experience" in Hebrew thought). That is, it means to grow in confusion not clarity, for as Sirach says, "knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom"! (Sir 15:14-17) (see his "Individuation and Submission to God," privately duplicated: Benedictine Monastery, Pecos, NM 87552) What is needed for explicit knowledge is otherness, and growth in love would provide that, since the more we love another truly, the more we experience their otherness (and hence our own). Sin was not necessary in the beginning (and is, not necessary now once we are in God's Spirit). However, once humans sinned, it was inevitable that we experience that break and consequent distrust and sin and need forgiveness and redemption in order to re-experience basic trust. That is the work of Jesus' Cross/Resurrection/Sending of the Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> See M.D.Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew's Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> See my "Trinitarian Love and Ground of the Church," in *Theological Studies*, Dec., 1976 for a fuller grounding of this perspective.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Earth was first to develop an analogy for the Holy Spirit as the God-empowered interpretation of God's Word, and Karl Rahner clarified it in the economy of salvation as the power of the Holy Spirit to receive God's Word. Just as the Word of God had to be divine to fully express God, so the Spirit of God had to be equally divine to adequately interpret and receive the Word. Otherwise, our human limits would distort God's self-revelation and self-gift.

<sup>5</sup> See Bernard M. Loomer, "Two Kinds of Power," *Criterion*, vol. 15, no. 1, Winter, 1976, pp. 12-29.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to the Taize brother Max Thurian (*Mary: Mother of All Christians* [N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1964], esp. Ch. 9) for this interpretation of Cana as paralleling and prefiguring Jn 19:26-7. There are differing positions on these two passages (see *Mary in the New Testament*, ed. by R.E. Brown, K.P. Donfried, J. A. Fitzmyer and J. Reumann [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978], but because of the symbolic nature of all of John, I find Thurian's position most persuasive.

<sup>7</sup> Many translations read "into his home." This is neither a literal translation, nor accurate to the symbolic meaning in my view. Literally, the text reads: "*eis ta idia*" (into his own), a word that is found in Jn 10:12 "my own know me and I know my own [sheep]". In other words, the beloved disciple entered into a deep sense of belonging grounded in Jesus' own heart to heart intimate "knowing." The church as a new family is formed with Mary as mother of the "greater Christ" (St. Augustine's term).

<sup>8</sup> See Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants* (N.Y.: Avon Books, 1973, chapter 1. The galvanometer is used in conjunction with an electrical current. The two electrodes form a bridge that balances resistance, "so that the human body's electrical potential—or basic charge—can be measured as it fluctuates under the stimulus of thought and emotion." (p. 20) It was these electrodes that were placed on the plant in order to measure resistance fluctuations on a polygraph. Others have had difficulty replicating Backster's experiments so they may need further study. Other experiments on the use of music for plants or the effect of healing prayer show a similar sensitivity in plants if not so pronounced as in Backster's experiments.

<sup>9</sup> See Kenneth McAll, *Healing the Family Tree* (London: Sheldon Press, 1982). Dr. McAll has many similar incidents in that book and in a sequel called *Healing the Haunted* (London: Darley Anderson, 1989). His experience might seem unbelievable were it not for his psychiatric success with anorexics and others by praying for ancestors. I personally worked with him when we prayed for Camp Douglas and found him quite balanced and insightful, and I have had similar experiences of my own.

<sup>10</sup> See Agnes Sanford, *Creation Waits* (Plainfield, N.U.: Logos International, 1978) for this and several other of her experiences.

<sup>11</sup> From a talk given by Barbara Shlemon to the Association of Christian Therapist's (ACT) Conference, in San Diego, 1982: "Healing Prayer for the Earth." Available from ACT: 14440 Cherry Lane Court, Suite 215, Laurel, Maryland, 20707. Tel. (301) 470-2287.

<sup>12</sup> This much maligned field is actually more supported by research than much of allopathic medicine. There were actually twenty two departments of homeopathy in 1900, including Harvard, Dartmouth and the University of Michigan. The AM A was formed in 1846 to slow the growth of homeopathy which had formed the first medical Association in the United States (The American Institute of Homeopathy) two years earlier in 1844. (see Dana Ullman, *Homeopathy: Medicine for the 21st Century* [Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books, 1988], p. 37) In 1910 the Carnegie Foundation sponsored the "infamous" (Ullman's term, p. 44) Flexner Report which purported to be objective but actually established guidelines to sanction "orthodox" practitioners of medicine and condemn homeopathic ones. By 1923 only 2 homeopathic colleges remained in the United States. Now the practice of homeopathy is only legal in this country if the practitioner has an M.D. or other recognized medical degree. Homeopathy is still recognized in Europe and India and the queen of England is actually mandated to have a homeopathist as personal physician.

<sup>13</sup> See Bernie Siegel, M.D., *Love, Medicine and Miracles* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1986), esp. pp. 5-6, and his *Peace, Love and Healing* (N.Y.: Harper Perennial, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> His work is privately published at the following address: Marshall Massey, *The Peaceable Kingdom Project*, 4353 East 119th Way, Thornton, Colorado 80233, Tel: (303) 452-3750.

<sup>15</sup> See Letter to Francis Borgia, quoted in Giles Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>16</sup> See Dennis and Matthew Linn, *Healing of Memories* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> I am relying on an interpretation of the story of Joseph given recently at a retreat to Jesuits by Fr. Carlo Martini, S.J., presently Archbishop of Milan and long time professor of Old Testament at the Biblicum in Rome.

## **CONCLUSION: EDEN REESTABLISHED**

Al Fritsch & Bob Sears

Paradise was, as God intended, an Earth that produced abundantly and provided a good life for its inhabitants — and this was a revelation of the richness of God and creation. God's representatives as carers of that Earth were human beings (now seen scientifically as the culmination of God's evolving creation). Adam and Eve and their descendants were entrusted with the resources of this Earth — and even after the Fall this commission has never been taken away. As Christians we believe that the primary revelation of God in honor and in cause, Jesus Christ and creation raised to a new level through his resurrection, has become the New Adam. In willingly accepting suffering and even death, he has been raised in hidden radiance to lordship of "Heaven and Earth" (Mt 28:18). A wonderful and cosmic creation gives way to an even more wonderful re-creation. God's original dream of humans caring for the Earth has finally come about through God's Son and all who share his new power. The New Adam calls forth a New Eve from his wounded side, and Earth, that abode of suffering, now becomes Eden reestablished.

Wrongdoing is confronted in its entirety and Eden is not abandoned, forgotten and relegated to the dust bins of an older unenlightened age. Truly a New Age has dawned, not a return to an idealized past, an uncorrupted creation, an original blessing. Earth has been touched and thus becomes a garden, not a return to wilderness. Resurrection in its awesome mystery has now occurred, for within the shroud of Creation's misty origins has come redemption. This is recognized and through God's new blessing, Jesus Christ, all is profoundly transformed. The Good News is that sin and wrongdoing does not have the last word. The divine first Word becomes God's last as well; what was spoken in the whirling dust of an ancient age is now spoken again and all the more clearly as a forgiving and restoring word, spoken in our own time both in Easter's dawn: "Do not be Afraid, Go tell the others...", as well as in Easter's waning hours: "My peace I give you." The primary revelation of encouragement and invitation to spread the word comes in no other place but an earthly garden. Paradise's blessing gives way to Easter joy, and it is truly good.

In one moment we are swept away in joyful vision; in another instant we return to the cruel reality of our weakness and temptation. When the evil spirit said to Jesus that all the powers of the world had been given to him to give to whomever he chose (Luke 4:6), he was not entirely wrong! Only it was not given to the Evil One by God but by us. Power had been given to human beings, and by turning away from God they indeed had given Satan power. On the cross, Jesus broke Satan's power and following the resurrection he received again "all power in heaven and Earth" (Mt 28:18). He showed this authority in his relation to nature (by commanding the storm at sea to be calm or by using the unfruitful fig tree as a parable of Israel's sterility). But that power did not get carried away with his Ascension. It is given to those who believe, stay, endure, proclaim, and nurture this tired Earth. It is given to rich and poor, to men and nurturing women, to the disabled and those who walk boldly forward.

Through that resurrection the divisions that separate us are being healed as a people, and even more to the point of this book, the alienation that separates us from our Earth is also being healed. We proclaim that Eden is reestablished in resurrection glory. But we are slow to

recognize this fact. God's Covenant in Noah's time with post-flood Earth does not deny suffering at the hands of human wrongdoing, but it shows divinity's faithful word —Earth will never again be destroyed because of human sin. The Earth was now in God's care, and promised to us (the Promised Land) when we turn wholeheartedly to God. In the New Covenant this total turning to God has been accomplished, and Earth and all creation is being given to Jesus as Lord, God's instrument of mercy and healing. Suffering Earth is the primary revelation of our human destructiveness, but healed Earth is the primary revelation of Emmanuel, God with us. It is in healing and being healed that we truly reveal in our weak way the power of God that is working in us -- and this is a healing power interacting among all creation. All the more reason the poor, the women and the weak must not be excluded. "God's power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

Over the past two millennia believers have been reluctant to realize God's healing power at work hi us. Rather, we have bickered about extraneous matters, excluded certain races or women from the decision-making process, and sequestered the generous resources of the Earth for personal squandering and greed — and very often justifying these with Scriptural texts. The resurrection is preached so often as word alone and lacking in deed. The call is clear: Eden is created; Eden is redeemed; Eden is resurrected. Eden awaits with us the gentle touch of God's healing grace.

### **Words Inspiring Deeds: Al Fritsch**

This joint venture has allowed each author to learn from the other, while still retaining a certain individuality in the Earth healing art. The moments we have discussed these matters have been high points in my Appalachian struggles. Bob's writings help me clarify my connection with the poor, with power structures and with the ever-deepening Earth healing process. These five-step processes are enhanced and verified through Bob's five stages of Faith. In the course of the two years we have discussed these matters my understanding of the male-female roles in ecological action has advanced mightily thanks to his continual concern. His constant focus on the goodness and power of God working in our world checks and counterbalances my impulse to rely too much on human effort. Through his kindness Bob softens my tendency to harshness to those who differ in aspects of eco-spirituality. I think he brings a deep sense of the power of prayer as the way to initiate Earth-healing. Without each of these valuable contributions in his four sections my treatment could not have continued to develop. Having said these kind things let's now discuss my goals for the book's audience, recognizing even here respected differences from Bob's expectations.

Resurrection is never without the fluttering feathers and flickering tongues of Pentecost fire. In the grand rush of the Spirit's breath giving life to the Church, we find that Paradise is not in distant exotic places, the quest of the false eco-tourist, or the vision of the other-worldly; rather, Eden is within us, a good place, a wounded place and a redeemed and restored place. We each model in our own healing process the entire healing of our planet. That is why it is so important to think AND start to act locally — right where we are. Resurrection surges within us, God's imminent containment which mysteriously transcends any containing. Thus we need to rise and spread the good news -- The Lord is risen.



But even God's magnificent and powerful indwelling casts a shadow for those thinking that contemplation of this event is sufficient. Why do we need to do more than look within? The Lord's own words say clearly: "Go tell the others what you see - and feel." We are restored, reborn, recast but cannot cast even this in stone lest we become fundamentalistic. To be restored is to restore, to be born anew is to give new birth to our tired Earth. I am being born again but that act is not yet complete. The mystery of our Earth being born anew is part of the total unfolding of that resurrection mystery. By God's grace I am being healed, we are being healed, Earth is being healed, all occurring through mutual cooperation.

But healing involves deeds. What is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven, or get up and walk." At the very heart of the environmental crisis is the believers' reluctance to extend a healing hand — a lack of the will to act. Earth healing is more than diagnosis and preventative warnings; it involves staying at the scene of the accident, picking up the broken, and making the needed repairs. It is to be sensitive enough to see a need, to face up to the sacrifices demanded, to make those sacrifices, and to realize that we do not have perfect solutions at any time. And it is to do all this inspired by the Mystery of the creating, redeeming and enlivening Trinity in our midst.

Authentic Earth healers avoid getting lost in cosmic visions and keep their focus on this world, bioregion, locality, home. They instill courage and bring peace by establishing eco-justice on some small part of the total environmental landscape. If they but heal a chemically addicted garden and organically grow their vegetables, if they construct then-dwelling with local materials in a simple but comfortable fashion, if they use solar energy, if they do concrete things, healing will result. Note that I am developing a sequel to this work, "The Earth Healing Guide," which will discuss a host of concrete deeds for local communities. If we face concrete reality with the use of our hands, we can touch a bigger world — for healing power is coursing out from us. We need to touch Earth, dig rock, plant and harvest in order to liberate God's healing power bound up by human wrongdoing in this wounded Earth.

Our healing cannot stay merely individualistic or local, even though it begins there. Resurrection draws us up and moves us out. A strong unified action on the part of a world body of conscious peoples goes beyond vague and half-hearted protestations of togetherness. The first chapter of Genesis sounds a rhythmic drumbeat that all creatures are good. However, the goodness of Creation does not check or negate the power of evil; creation's inherent relatedness does not, unfortunately, abolish tendencies towards disunity. What Iraq, a land of have-nots next to the artificial boundary of Kuwait, a land of haves, taught the world during the Gulf War was that sophisticated deadly weapons find their equal in the massive ecotage by a have-not country. If Iraq's leadership did not have, neither would Kuwait's. Few of us are willing to admit Iraq's stalemate, which ironically was not the first act of ecotage - remember the salting of Carthage and numerous other examples.

The shrewd tactics of "have-nots," even against overwhelming odds, can reduce others -- even the powerful — to a more common level of misery. To paraphrase Lincoln, a land of haves and have nots cannot long endure. A world of super rich and destitute is very bad ecology and, if silent, we too are to blame. Ignoring the have-nots in an ever-shrinking world is inviting trouble, big trouble. The have-nots are poor and increasingly destitute but not stupid. These

destitute people realize that a well-placed monkey wrench can do havoc to highly sophisticated technologies, and this is a form of power albeit an imperfect variety.

Authentic Earth healing requires us to focus on our planet's problems, but focusing is the weakness of an ecology that extends to everything. We need to hear all the poor as they cry for justice and redistribution of resources. The upcoming twenty-first century must promise more than a multiplication of unneeded consumer products. Such are the affluent's aspirations, while the destitute champion a different agenda. The poor say clearly "give us this day our daily bread", i.e., basic foods, decent clothing, comfortable shelter, sufficient education, adequate health, leisure opportunities, and dignity. Eden can be reestablished when the lush but limited resources of the world become accessible, affordable and available to all Earth's residents, and when black and white, young and old, and women and men are truly partners in this grand distribution. This goal is as valid today as when the first books of Scripture were compiled.

The amazing message from and for both oppressed and oppressor is that all can be made right, if we are willing to sacrifice our overloaded and burdensome agendas. The resurrection, by giving us trust and a ground of hope amidst the world's anxieties, empowers us to do this and to keep profoundly attuned to basic human needs, simple, acceptable by the great majority, and attainable in our age. We extend compassion, and forgive lovingly. Life follows dying to self and extends outward to the whole planet. It includes a sense of love and forgiveness for past faults with peace as both result and pre-condition for eco-justice to flourish. For believer and believing community Christ's resurrection becomes the prime analog of what the New Earth will be. Resurrection becomes a transforming opportunity, a model and actual empowerment for establishing eco-justice (Eden) on this planet.

But how can we make up for lost time? Through God's power all is possible. God calls each individual and social unit to enter into the mystery of creation and the divine handiwork — but not rest there. Each must also accept the *metanoia* (change of heart) required to see the hurt of our Earth, to be compassionate with those still hurting, and willing to do something about it. Each of us need to find healing by accepting our finitude, rediscover our individual talents and be bold enough to use them now. In so doing we take on the creating, redeeming and enlivening role of the Trinity and participate more fully at that point of time and place where Trinity reveals itself so profoundly on Earth.

Our creativity will be enhanced if we regain control over our will power. On an individual level this includes responding to old fashioned methods of asceticism: discerning the way the Lord wants us to act; spiritual direction and conversation; repeated and consistent prayer; confession of our faults in humble recognition of our condition; fasting from luxuries not because they are bad but because these good things are so limited and not available to all; and equivalent twelve-step programs to acknowledge greater powers than ourselves to help us let go of our consumer addictions. When communities recognize their collective will power eroding, they need a group spiritual discernment, which may have to start within a base community and like yeast leaven the entire dough.

Our co-redeeming role is enhanced when we help make up what is wanting in the suffering of Christ by forgiving and asking forgiveness for past hostilities. What better than to

make the year 2000 a true Year of Jubilee, a time to forgive past debts and reestablish justice.<sup>1</sup> Individuals who have hurt our society should be invited to return as meaningful members through retraining and redirecting of their energies. The criminal records ought to be erased after a period of time if public safety is not at risk. Affluent nations need to forgive the debts of others so that the sins of affluence may be forgiven. These massive debts (often exceeding an annual GNP) make it impossible for financially strapped nations to develop their strained infrastructures properly. Their life blood is being withdrawn by the banks of resource rich lands -- a form of colonialism as ruthless as any in the past. Jubilee says "we forgive."

Individuals and groups enliven by supporting a universal ecological effort and accepting global concerns as part of a total political agenda. Why not convert military budgets, facilities and personnel from national boundary and political disputes to eco-defense — that is, to protect rain forests, clean up toxic waste sites, and halt ozone depletion? We cannot afford to do nothing! We must speak up and apply pressure, and become engaged and enraged at what is done to our Earth. This process of conversion or changeover from military to eco-defense could release a mind-boggling one trillion dollars from annual military budgets, a financial and ecological gold mine. Even tithing could realize an annual enormous sum of one hundred billion dollars a year, or enough to build decent homes for one percent of the world's people each year. With such potential financial resources the United Nations and national environmental development agencies could begin implementing many of the recommendations made at the Earth Summit Conference at Rio in June, 1992.

Sacrifice, loving forgiveness, and universal conversion of weaponry to ecological defense are some of the ingredients required for an authentic Trinitarian eco-spirituality. So are living simply, growing our own food, maintaining our community facilities and doing the things on the local level required for a decent life. If we can participate as sisters and brothers in this collective enterprise then Eden will truly be reestablished. Are we willing to die and rise?

### **Earth Healing as Process: Bob Sears**

What we have learned in the process of working on this book is that the process itself has been healing. It has activated each of our gifts in ways that we were not able to accomplish alone. It has pruned them by challenging each of us to remove certain blinders, and it has stimulated our creativity by the give and take of our discussions. We were gradually brought to see that the very dialogical process we were using in writing the book was a model for what we saw as needed in our pluralistic age. If we are going to marshal all the resources we need for healing the Earth, we will have to learn to work together despite our many differences. In fact, if diversity is good ecology, we will need to celebrate our differences instead of seeing them as obstacles to development and causes for division.

If family systems theory teaches us anything, it teaches us that divisions block development rather than furthering it. What could provide a melting pot for creativity becomes an indigestible collection of mutually antagonistic lumps. How long will it take us to see that respecting and working out differences is the only way to opening up a new future. And yet, we cannot do that unless we get deeper than mere theory to the ground of unity we actually share together. Al and I, despite our many differences, could work together because we shared the

same conviction about the deepest ground of unity—the resurrection Spirit of God. We also share the conviction that experience reveals that Spirit, especially the experience of new life springing from our wounds and poverty. It is not our efforts that are the ultimate source of healing, however necessary they are, but God's Spirit working through the giftedness of each of us. That is a reality we discover through interaction and seeing the limits of our individual positions. Then we can move beyond isolating differences to creative new syntheses.

For me, this has been a learning process that is still just beginning. I had been focused on individual and family healing with only a cursory interest in healing the Earth. My experience with Al began to change my perspective and continues to do so. We have done most of our writing in his Center in Appalachia, eating home grown vegetables: tomatoes, beans, okra, various squashes; living with the several dogs and close to the woods; and using the various appropriate technology devices that Al and his staff have built there: compost toilets, cisterns for water, solar systems to heat water and for some lighting, model gardens together with computers and video equipment used for their books, simple life calendars, instructional videos, etc. In that environment close to nature, I could work long days and stay concentrated on the Earth. Back in my Chicago city environment, with the rush and many distractions, I made almost no progress on the writing. That itself began to tell me something about Earth healing. If my experience is any indication, unless we simplify our lives and get closer to the rhythms of the Earth, we will not be motivated enough really to work for healing the Earth.

Besides the locale, Al's activist personality and infectious urgency complemented my more detached and academic approach to Earth healing. His intuitive sense of what was needed focused my research and writing, and his hands-on experience and scientific knowledge filled out what I had learned from individual and family systems healing. Yet we also had our differences. We would differ on how to deal with positions that opposed ours or that had proved divisive to Al in the past. We had to agree to differ on the amount of footnotes we included and what other positions to include in our dialogue. Gradually, with the help of one of our readers, we began to see our differences not as a hindrance but as a way of modeling pluralistic interaction needed for healing our Earth. In the process we learned more about what's involved in such a "democratic" method, that it can actually increase creativity rather than reduce it to a common minimum.

The occasion that stimulated writing this book was a Symposium at Xavier University on the resurrection approach to spirituality. I presented the resurrection approach, Al gave his stages of eco-involvement and responses were given from a creation-centered approach, another from an historical approach building on Thomas Berry, and another by a Hildegard of Bingen scholar. We initially thought of putting all these papers in a single volume, but then realized that the particular resurrection approach Al and I were partial to needed further development in itself in order to constructively interact with these other approaches. Our intuition, I now see, was accurate. Dialogue in the way we see as necessary does not mean letting go of one's deepest convictions for the sake of finding a "lowest common denominator" that we can all agree on. That is "democratic" in a collectivist (or my "familial faith") point of view. Rather, pluralistic dialogue actually helps each develop their own position more thoroughly at the same time as respecting and being challenged by the others. It increases awareness of difference at the same time as uncovering a new common ground. As in family systems, one cannot remain bonded

and differentiated unless one has a good sense of one's own identity. The more secure each participant is in the data of their position, the more they can be enriched by others. We did need to clarify the resurrection approach itself before interacting with the other approaches. The more we gained clarity about our approach, the more could profit from the other perspectives while remaining clear also about how we differed. This led to a more pluralistic or "communitarian" form of integration. Isn't a similar method needed for ecumenical work (to respect each unique tradition while bringing them into creative interaction) and for all cross-cultural work?

It also became clear that to interact creatively, each position had ultimately to be grounded in real experience, not just a verbal expression of theory. We were most helped by proponents who had solid data behind their positions, for that allowed us to dialogue and view the same material from different perspectives. Some positions do not want to deviate from their founder or from a particular literal interpretation of their founding books. Others may have limiting presuppositions for whatever reasons. Some may be closed to transcendent experience or the possibility of revelation or the uniqueness of Jesus as Son of God, or vice versa, closed to the possibility of God's Spirit working in creation in an immediate way. Such positions are a priori closed to opposing views such that real dialogue is impossible. One only gets parallel monologues. Such are fundamentalisms of whatever sort. It seems that just as communitarian faith is not possible if one has not let the "mysterious God" break open one's preconceptions (as in "individuating faith" and its "Job-like" experience), so also creative dialogue needs that seed of self-questioning and ability to see experience from various points of view. The ultimate ground is reality, and each participant needs to let their position open to that common source and to see it from the perspective of the various participants. Some may be closed to certain aspects of reality, but will open our eyes to perspectives we might otherwise overlook. We offer our own position as grounded in our faith and experience of reality and invite the perspectives of other people's experience. If Christ as truly risen, then that reality will manifest itself for all who open to it. It is only by opening to our inner poverty and inability to fully understand that we can be surprised by that sort of confirmation.

Another discovery we made is that healing is a process rather than a fixed set of concepts or content. It releases the creative process of life and development. Thus, every step of the way we have been aware of development as well as pluralism. Just as there are individual stages in this process, so there are social and even global stages. Much as we might like, we cannot jump stages to get to the end. We cannot pull plants up to their full development by wrenching them out of the ground! We simply have to dig around, water them, let the sun (or light) shine on them, and then they grow at their own pace! So also there are stages of opening to value the Earth, stages of "conversion" to getting beyond "self-interest" to the global context that makes anyone's (and everyone's) life worth living, or getting beyond mere observation to action and then committed solidarity. A similar shift has occurred in the methodology of theology.<sup>2</sup> The real "foundation" of theology is now seen in the process of conversion itself rather than in content. The more our eyes are opened to the plight of the poor, the more we will find themes of liberation in written sources and our personal experience. The more we focus only on the particular way of understanding of our tradition (whether that be a religious or an academic tradition!), the less we will even see any data that contradicts that position. Since healing (to make whole) opens us to the totality of experience (including the negative experience of illness and dying and its possible creative implications), it implies that we get "converted" to ever more

inclusive perspectives. These inclusive perspectives will open our eyes to see reality anew, and hopefully to find God (and indeed the resurrection Spirit) at the heart of the world and every creature.

If we see with new eyes we will act in new ways; If we see God in all things, we will begin to activate the sacred character of all things and create structures to preserve what is sacred. Thus, we do not give "step by step procedures" on how to heal the Earth (that is the book AI is now preparing). What we offer is a new way of seeing, and growing into each aspect of creation, especially the poor and vulnerable, in order to find the key to new creation there. Conversion itself is a process. We need to get at the root experience behind each of our positions if we are to be free to open to a broader vision. The more we understand our tradition and the real history behind it, the freer we will be to see it in new light for our present day needs. Fundamentalism really implies a lack of nuanced historical knowledge or personal experience so that one holds on to formulas rather than real evidence. Conversion presupposes real experience and data such that one is unafraid of new perspectives. It also involves a detachment and willingness to let go of preconceptions and live out the consequences. If one is unwilling to live a simple lifestyle no matter what demonstrations of its necessity are offered, then one will be closed to any evidence offered. On the other hand, if we are convinced that God's resurrection Spirit is better than anything we now have, then that very security should make us open to whatever we need to let go. Not fearing death, we can live fully! We need somehow to experience that divine recreation in "letting go" if we really are to be open to a resurrection approach to spirituality. In our various chapters, we are inviting people to discover that experience of "divine new birth" for themselves and to see and experience its developing implications. It is our hope that that itself will be healing and lead to healing actions for the Earth.

Thus, finally, we find ourselves wanting to "build bridges," by developing a perspective open to input from many sources. We initially began more aware of countering different positions than of profiting from constructive insights of others. That approach did not feel right. As we gradually became clearer about our own approach and its implications, we saw the contributions other approaches could make, whether theoretically or practically. We are not international ethicists, and we need an international ethics of the environment.<sup>3</sup> Were that developed, we are convinced it would enrich our resurrection approach, and vice versa, the resurrection approach would bring challenging perspectives to such an ethics. Nor can we speak for women. We explained in chapter 6 why we decided not to invite a woman to write that chapter, but we realize a fully developed response by a woman would be very challenging and expanding. Nor even are we the poor themselves. They might have very different needs from the one's we have treated, and we believe their voice really is key to hearing the call of the Earth. And I for one am not an expert in any particular field of ecology and have had to rely on people who are. What we do offer comes from our expertise, and we hope it also brings challenging insights for others.

One of the visions that inspired Teilhard de Chardin was of the Eucharist spreading out, penetrating and enlivening the whole Universe.<sup>4</sup> That is the gift Jesus chose as his farewell to his disciples and his promise of abiding presence. It comes to me now as summing up what we have written, for it embodies the essence of what is needed for Earth-healing. John's Gospel has no

Eucharistic words of consecration, but interprets the essence of Eucharist in Jesus' washing his disciples' feet! (Jn 13:1-15) John begins the passage with a deep affirmation of Jesus' union with God: "Jesus, knowing...that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments...and began to wash the disciples' feet." (Jn 13:3-5 passim) His action reveals God at the same time as revealing the essence of healed humanity. What does this entail?

First of all, it is a sacrifice, a letting-go of personal prestige and ego-centered life, to serve the needs of others. I was struck once, when someone suggested we needed to apply the 12-step program to social justice! It seemed obvious. We have to admit we "are powerless over the ecological evil we have brought on this Earth." Our very efforts at solutions only seem to heighten conflict and make things worse. Eucharist begins by sacrificing our self-sufficiency and letting ourselves be "washed" by our "higher power," (what we have called "resurrection power").

Secondly, Eucharist is "a sacrifice of thanksgiving." What we find is that the real poor are grateful and generous. They give from the little they have, as a friend of mine experienced when visiting a Native American family and having them give her a sand painting she admired! When we do experience the breakthrough of God and accept that our "Higher Power" is acting to heal us and the Earth, our heart expands with thanksgiving. We see the Earth in a new way as gift restored, and we want to respond by giving in return.

Thirdly, then, Eucharist means "self-emptying service." The Biblical "dominion" is now turned to "service." "If I your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." (Jn 13:14) This service is not just human, but in God's intention, every creature is to "serve" the good of every other creature.<sup>5</sup> We are all interconnected, One Body in Christ, and our gifts are given to serve the whole.

And finally, this thankful service is itself a revelation of God's Glory and the fulness of Earth-healing. God is, self-emptying and serving love. That is what Jesus' action reveals to our amazement! Yet, when we are told that it seems obvious! That is why there is more joy in giving than in receiving, why the 12-steps end by handing on to others what we have learned, why our hearts expand when someone receives with gratitude what we have to give. Our deepest truth is that we are "empty" of self, that we are made "for others," and that as we empty ourselves for others we truly "find ourselves."<sup>6</sup> The resurrection is the emergence of Christ "with us" through "self-emptying love" such that we are all "One Body" of mutual service—one Eucharist. To become what "from the Beginning" we have been called to be, and through the resurrection have been gifted to be—an Earth community of mutual loving service—would truly be Earth-healing.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Jubilee concept in Israel shows the limits put on human "dominion" over the Earth. They were to use the goods of the Earth for God's purposes and release them into the fulness of their development. See Richard Cartwright Austin, *Hope for the Land: Nature in the Bible* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), esp. Ch 12: "Rights for Life" and Ch. 13: "Jubilee."

<sup>2</sup> See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1972)

<sup>3</sup> See Drew Christiansen, "Ecology, Justice, and Development: Notes on Moral Theology," in *Theological Studies*, vol 51, no. 1 (1990), 64-81, for a survey of recent environmental ethics positions. Rosemary Ruether, *Gaia and God*, pp. 218-228, also reviews some environmental ethics positions in light of covenant theology. Fred Kammer, S.J. in his *Doing Faithjustice* (N.Y.: Paulist, 1991) notes how a discovery of a tablet from Ebla, written before 2250 B.C.E., indicated how the "elected" king was "responsible for the welfare of widows, the orphaned, and the poor. If derelict, a king could be ousted by a group of elders" (p. 18). Justice and care for the poor is a mark of God and of God's representative in the time of Israel. How many of our "kings" would remain if the same criterion were used today?

<sup>4</sup> This original poetic vision of Teilhard's (from 1919) published in *The Hymn of the Universe* (N.Y.: Collins and Harper, 1965) was later developed in many of his writings. A section from *The Divine Milieu* (N.Y.: Collins, Fontana Books, 1965) can serve as an example: "As our humanity assimilates the material world, and as the Host assimilates our humanity, the eucharistic transformation goes beyond and complete the transubstantiation of the bread on the altar. Step by step it irresistibly invades the universe...in a true sense, the sacramental Species are formed by the totality of the world, and the duration of the creation is the time needed for its consecration. In Christo vivimus, movemur et sumus (In Christ we live, move and have our being)." (pp. 125-6) Jesus' own words are similar: "the bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:5\\

<sup>5</sup> In the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the retreatant is to consider in light of their sin: "And the heavens, sun, moon, stars, and the elements; the fruits, birds, fishes, and other animals-why have they all been at my service!" (*SpEx*, #60, Louis J. Puhl's translation). All creation is called to mutual service, to Eucharist.

<sup>6</sup> See the beautiful article of Beatrice Bruteau, "Apprenticing to Jesus the Healer," *Journal of Christian Healing*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 19-28 where she develops this theme of God's self-emptying as our true being. She also has three books: *As We Are One* (Pfafttown, N.C.: Philosopher's Exchange, 1991) and *Radical Optimism: Rooting Ourselves in Reality* (N.Y.: Crossroad, 1993), and a detailed scientific reflection on Trinity in evolution, *God's Ecstasy* (N.Y.: Crossroad, 1997).