

Catholic Bishops of Appalachia Present



**This Land Is Home to Me (1975)
& At Home in the Web of Life
(1995)**

Appalachian Pastoral Letters
with Photos by Warren Brunner, Berea, KY

John A. Baker
Archbishop of Baltimore

+ Gene E. Pierce
Archbishop of Cincinnati

+ W. R. Johnson
Bishop of Jackson

+ Howard J. Falkenberg
Bishop of Albany

+ O'Leary St. Pius
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+ Philip J. Haggerty
Bishop of Charlotte

+ Don van der Meer
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Bishop of Tallahassee

+ William J. Paul
Bishop of Rochester

+ Denis B. Thayer
Bishop of Charleston

Original signers of This Land is Home to Me in 1975

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Alfred M. Watson

This Land Is Home to Me (1975)

A Pastoral Letter on Powerlessness in Appalachia by the
Catholic Bishops of the Region

&

At Home in the Web of Life (1995)

A Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia
Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of *This Land Is Home to Me*
from the Catholic Bishops of Appalachia

Published by the Catholic Committee of Appalachia
Photos by Warren Brunner, Berea, Kentucky
Design by Flying High Design Marketing + Creative Resources

This Land Is Home to Me

First edition, 1975
Second edition, 1980
Third edition, 1985
Fourth edition, 2000

At Home in the Web of Life

First edition, 1995
Second edition, 2000

Combined edition, 2007

Additional copies may be obtained from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia;
phone (304) 927-5798, email: ccappal@citynet.net or 150 Mt. Tabor Road,
Martin, Kentucky 41649; (606) 886-9624, email janibosb@hotmail.com.



**Most Reverend Walter F. Sullivan
Bishop Emeritus**

811 Cathedral Place • Richmond, Virginia 23220 • (804) 399-8881

To Friends of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia:

I am very happy to write words of introduction on two of the finest pastoral letters issued by Catholic bishops here in the United States. I am now happy to be only one of two living bishops for the original pastoral, "This Land is Home to Me". I had a direct involvement in the writing of the second pastoral, "At Home in the Web of Life".

The pastorals bring to our attention the plight of the Appalachian people. They live in dehumanizing circumstances, often oppressed by the greed for profit through coalmining. The challenge before those involved in the Appalachian region is the formation of sustainable communities where people can live together in harmony and dignity. At the present time there are new threats to the environment of the mountain area because of mountaintop removal.

These two pastoral letters are certainly an inspiration. They are written in a poetic style which is most memorable.

I'm happy to bring these pastorals to your attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter F. Sullivan".

Walter F. Sullivan
Bishop Emeritus of Richmond

ml



THE DIOCESE OF STEUBENVILLE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

I grew up on the fringes of Appalachia, in Cincinnati. This Land Is Home to Me caught my attention during my seminary years. It struck me as a creative and bold initiative. Even though I have had many opportunities to backpack in various parts of Appalachia and enjoy the natural beauty, the vibrancy of the region's people and the Church there was impressed on me by the bishops' pastoral letter.

Now, as the bishop of a diocese completely within Appalachia, and as the episcopal advisor to the Catholic Committee for Appalachia, the concerns of the region are truly mine. I welcome the opportunity to learn more and to become more engaged with those concerns.

The re-publication of This Land Is Home to Me and its companion, At Home in the Web of Life, is certainly welcome. Circumstances in Appalachia and the issues before us continue to change. Yet, the two pastoral letters provide an indispensable foundation for our future work. It will always be important to refer to them.

Behind the letters themselves is the remarkable fact that the region's bishops wrote them in a spirit of collaboration, both among themselves and with many other people. The letters gave clear evidence that the bishops were truly concerned and prepared to lead. My greatest hope is that the current corps of Appalachian bishops will fulfill faithfully the role of our predecessors.

This land is our home. It is also God's dwelling place. May the Lord bless all his children in Appalachia, bringing them his light and life.

+Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Steubenville

CATHOLIC COMMITTEE OF APPALACHIA

The Promise of Reprinting

This reprinting of the two Appalachian pastoral letters, “This Land Is Home To Me” (1975), and “At Home In the Web of Life” (1995), continues the challenge for the church and people of ministry to hear the cries of the powerless.

Just as the first pastoral called forth the founding of the only monastery in eastern Kentucky at Mt. Tabor and sparked creative ministries in health care, addiction counseling, education, economic development, family violence assistance and environmental work, so today more than 35 years later it reissues the call for justice. Just as the second pastoral questioned frivolous consumption in society and challenged the church to emphasize sustainable values, so today readers must face the urgency of global warming, poor air quality and threatened water sources.

Since the mid ‘70s, Appalachia has both changed and remained the same. In these three decades local folks have welcomed the improvements to secondary roads and the wiring of schools to the Internet. Some have prospered from small bursts of tourism.

Yet, the powerlessness of community people continues. Mountaintop removal, dubbed strip mining on steroids, steals the serenity and security of local folks subjected to blasts that take down mountains while giant earth movers bury streams in the valleys below. The process means home foundations crack from vibrations, water supplies run orange with acid and flood waters threaten whole communities.

Prisons, promoted as job creation schemes, spring up like mushrooms frequently locking away the drug and alcohol addicted and those mentally unstable to face life without help. Marketing prisons for their economic benefits supports a cycle of violence in the guards and inmates alike that eventually spills into the family and community.

Methamphetamine production now surpasses marijuana as Appalachia’s most valuable illegal crop. Prescription drug abuse has become a cottage industry for many on Medicare and Medicaid eager to supplement their small fixed incomes by selling their meds. The abuse of OxyContin, a drug especially valuable on the street, turns the time released pain pills into explosions of instant euphoria, while shackling the user with addiction.

The forces of the global economy continue to subtract manufacturing jobs in garment, light fabrication and component parts plants out of the region to China and other low wage areas. Fast food and service jobs, often without insurance or benefits, offer the only meager wages for most of the population without advanced technical skills.

Appalachia has lost the cache that once drew national attention and initiated ventures to enhance community life. For those left behind economically, the gap between the powerful and the poor widens. Perhaps those without means feel even a deeper hurt psychologically when they see themselves as losers, drowning in a wealthy country with fewer people willing to help them.

Many religious women who originally responded to the call to serve in Appalachia during the 1970s, are turning grey and entering their senior years. Their ministries that brought the compassion of Christ up the hollows and into the small communities face an uncertain future, until the power of the Holy Spirit calls forth a renewed commitment to the powerless of the region from the church, both inside and beyond Appalachia.

We in the Catholic Committee of Appalachia reissue these pastorals to help reinvigorate the sense of mission and ministry to the mountains. We continue to identify with the words of the bishops' pastorals:

“The dream of the mountains’ struggle,
and the dream of simplicity
and of justice,
like so many other repressed visions
is, we believe,
the voice of the Lord among us.”

Fr. John S. Rausch

Director, Catholic Committee of Appalachia



Brunner-Berea

This Land Is Home to Me

Originally published in 1975

A Pastoral Letter on Powerlessness in Appalachia
by the Catholic Bishops of the Region



Brunner-Berea

Part I: The land and its people

"Yes, the poor of the mountains have been wounded, but they are not crushed. The Spirit still lives. The sound of music still ripples through the hills. Continually the tears of song burn in outrage and outrage lives in struggle." Page 11

THIS LAND IS HOME TO ME, 1975

Catholic Bishops of Appalachia

Many of our Catholic people especially church workers, have asked us to respond to the cries of powerlessness from the region called Appalachia.¹ We have listened to these cries and now we lend our own voice.²

The cries come now from Appalachia, but they are echoed

- across the land
- across the earth

in the suffering of too many people. Together these many sufferings form a single cry.³

The Living God hears this cry and tells us, what long ago on a different mountain, was told the servant Moses that,

- God had heard the cry of a people.
- God would deliver them out of the hands of oppression.
- God would give them a rich and broad land.⁴

But before we turn to this message from God, we must hear first the cry of Appalachia's poor.

Their cry is a strong message, not because we have made it that way, but because the truth of Appalachia is harsh.⁵

In repeating this message we do not put ourselves in judgment of others.⁶

The truth of Appalachia is judgment upon us all, making hard demands on us bishops, as well as on others.⁷

We know that there will be other opinions about the truth of Appalachia, other views than those of the poor.

But we must remind ourselves that the poor are special in the eyes of God,⁸ for we have been told, in the voice of Mary,

God has pulled down princes from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. The hungry have been filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.
(Luke 1:52-53)

Even so, we know that our words are not perfect. For that reason, this letter is but one part of an unfinished conversation

- with our people
- with the truth of Appalachia
- with the Living God.

Yet we still dare to speak, and speak strongly, first, because we trust our people and we know that those who belong to The Lord truly wish to do God's will; and second, because we believe that the cry of the poor is also a message of hope,⁹ a promise from Jesus, that there can be a better way, for Jesus has told us,

The Truth will make you free.
(John 8:32)

Appalachia makes us think
of people who live in the hills,
who love nature's freedom
and beauty,
who are alive with song and poetry.¹⁰
But many of these people are also poor
and suffer oppression.

Once they went to the mountains
fighting to build a dream
different from the injustice
they knew before.
Until this day,
their struggle continues,
a bitter fight
whose sound still rumbles
across the hills.

Yes, the poor of the mountains
have been wounded,
but they are not crushed.¹¹
The Spirit still lives.
The sound of music
still ripples through the hills.
Continually the tears of song
burn in outrage,
and outrage lives in struggle.

But the hillfolk of the mountains
are not the only ones who struggle.
Besides the struggle in hollows,
typical of the central region,
there are struggles in industrial centers,
grown grey with smoke and smog,
blaring with the clank and crash
of heavy machinery
and urban congestion,
where working people,
and those who wish there was work,
white and black,
native and immigrant,
speakers of one and many languages,
battle for dignity and security,
for themselves and for their children.

So too there is the struggle
in farmland,
typical of rolling hills
in the southern sector,
where little farmers and sharecroppers,
day laborers and migrant workers,
who help the earth
yield its food to the hungry,
battle for that same
dignity and security,
for themselves and their children.

In all three areas—

- the center
- the north
- the south

In every labor—

- the mine
 - the factory
 - the farm
- the struggle is different,
yet remains the same.
It is at once the struggle
- of all Appalachia
 - of the whole nation
 - of the human family.

The Appalachian mountains
form the spiny backbone
of the Eastern United States.¹²
This whole stretch,
which the Federal Government calls
“The Appalachian Region,”
runs from Southern New York
to Northern Georgia and Alabama.
It contains 397 counties
in 13 states,
parts of

- Alabama,
- Georgia,
- Kentucky,
- Maryland,
- Mississippi,
- New York,

- North Carolina,
- Ohio,
- Pennsylvania,
- South Carolina,
- Tennessee,
- Virginia,
- and all of West Virginia.

In the region there are:

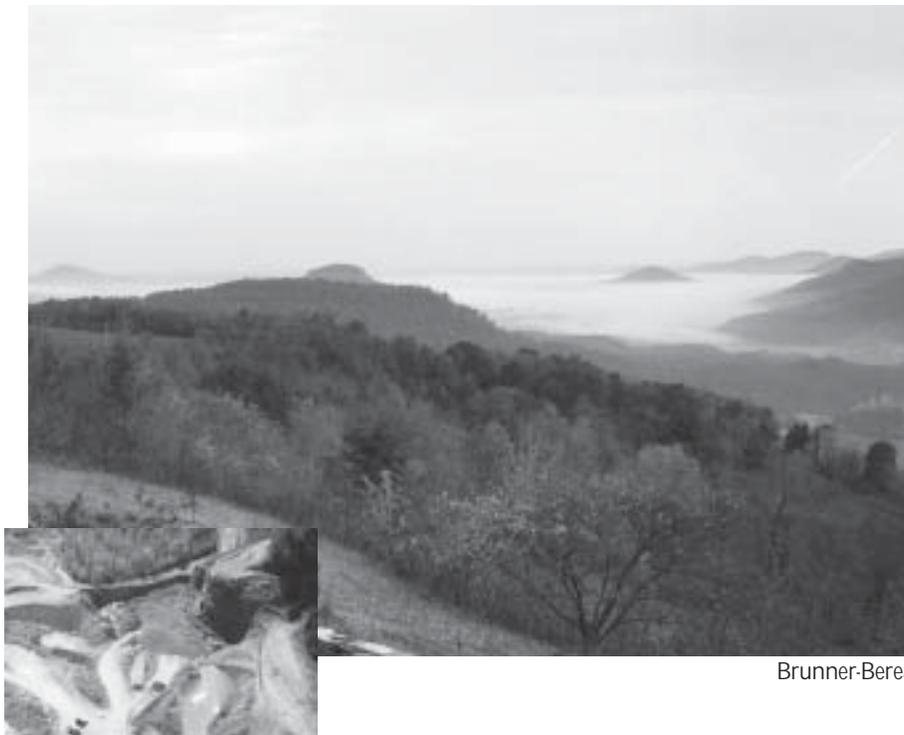
- mountain folk,
- city folk,
- country folk,
- coal miners and steel workers,
- union workers and non-union workers,
- industrial workers and service workers,
- farmers and farm laborers,
- housewives and children,
- teachers and health workers,
- ministers and rabbis and priests,
- artists and poets,
- professionals and technicians,
- lawyers and politicians,
- lobbyists and interest groups,
- executives and managers,
- little business people and big business people,
- coal companies and chemical companies,
- industrialists and bankers.

Of course, there is more than coal in the region.

There is

- gas,
- timber,
- oil,
- farms,
- steel mills,
- cheap labor,
- but coal is central.¹³

So, you see,
 Appalachia is not a simple place.
 There are rich and poor,
 big and little,
 new and old,
 and lots in between.
 But somehow,
 no matter how confusing it seems,
 it's all tied together
 by the mountain chain
 and by the coal in its Center,
 producing energy within it.



Brunner-Berea

"There are too few spaces of soul left in our lives. Once we all

- knew how to dance and sing
- sat in mystery before the poet's spell,
- felt our hearts rise to nature's cathedral.

Now an alien culture battles to shape us into plastic forms
Empty of Spirit, into beasts of burden without mystery."

Coal

There is a saying in the region
that coal is king.¹⁴
That's not exactly right.
The kings are those who
control big coal,
and the profit and power
which come with it.¹⁵
Many of these kings
don't live in the region.

A long time ago in this country
when big industry just got started,
Appalachian coal played a big role.¹⁶
It fed the furnaces of our first
industrial giants,
like Pittsburgh and Buffalo.
The coal-based industry
created many jobs,
and brought great progress
to our country,
but it brought other things, too,
among them oppression
for the mountains.

Soon the mountain people
were dependent on
the coal companies
and on the company towns
that came with them.¹⁷
An old song sings,
*Another day older
and deeper in debt.*¹⁸
That was life for many people
who lived in the shadow
of the mountain's coal.

Many of our Catholic people
lived under this suffering

- in the coal mines,
- in the steel mills,
- in the other harsh jobs that
surrounded coal and steel.

Then came the unions,
as men and women fought hard
to change their lot.
The unions did good work
and for that reason
they were bitterly attacked
by enemies of justice.

But seeds of injustice
were also sown
within the labor movement.

Sometimes criminal forces entered
to crush their democratic structure,
or to use one union base
to prevent union growth in other areas,
or to turn contracts
into documents of deceit,
both for labor and management,
thus encouraging their breach
from both sides.

Sometimes
workers allowed themselves
to be used for selfish ends,
like keeping out blacks,
or women,
or Indians,
or Spanish-speaking people.
Sometimes the labor movement
thought only of workers in the U.S.
and did not take seriously,
their membership in the
global human family.
Sometimes, too,
they used the unions
to protect the relative advantages
of a few workers
and little concern for
the great disadvantage of the many.

The real power of the labor
movement,
a power

which has not been totally crushed,
is the vision that
an injury to one is an injury to all,
whether to white or black,
whether to male or female,
whether to worker or consumer,
whether to union member
or non-member,
whether to U.S. citizen or to citizen
of any nation.

But later on for many people,
whose lives were tied to coal,
the unions didn't matter so much any
more.¹⁹
Coal gave way to oil,
and a different suffering
came across the mountains.

The mines in the hills
began to close.²⁰
The industrial thunder
of cities near the mines weakened.
The people from the mountains fled
to the cities looking for jobs.
But in the cities the jobs were few.
It is a strange system
which makes
people suffer
both when they have work
and when they don't have work.

The Wider Picture

The people had to fight one another
for the few jobs:

- mountain people against city people,
- white people against black people,
- Irish people against Polish and Italian people,
- skilled workers against unskilled workers,
- union workers against non-union

workers.

As the people were forced
to fight over jobs,
self-defense became a way of life,

- in wars,
- in sports,
- in movies,
- even sometimes at home.

Our country meanwhile
grew strong and powerful
because of

- exploding war-stimulated technology,
- cheap raw materials from abroad,
- lots of oil,
- and a large work force.

But many people stayed poor,
and suffered attacks on their dignity,
especially

- Native Americans,
- Blacks,
- Mexican Americans,
- immigrants,
- Puerto Ricans,
- and poor whites, like Appalachians.

Brothers and sisters in suffering,
these people were often forced to turn
against one another,
for some meager piece of a pie,
which, however big
(the biggest the world had ever
known),
refused to feed all its children.

As industrial production grew,
it brought blessings
to the human family,
but the more it grew
the more some felt it became
like a cancer
eating away its own foundation.

The system produced
for production's sake,
and it tried to train people to
consume
for consumption's sake.²¹

The ever growing
production and consumption
needed ever more energy,
more than domestic gas and
domestic oil can supply.²²

When foreign oil producing nations
suddenly became more demanding
on the world market,
giant U.S. business interests
(who before used to decide prices of
things like oil on the world market)
got frightened.²³
They began to plan for
U.S. "energy independence."
One way to do that
was to go back
to a half dead and forgotten past,
to coal.²⁴

Back to the Mountains

So the corporate giants
turn their eyes
to the mountains once again.
Slowly, but powerfully,
their presence rumbles in
the heavy tread
of the powerful among the powerful,
those who control:

- finance and credit,
- information systems,
- and energy resources.²⁵

Already voices from this camp have
spoken of Appalachia as
an "energy reservation,"
or "giant industrial park."²⁶

Appalachia, a field of powerlessness,
may soon become the seat
of economic power
in the United States.

But the new power,
which a return to coal
could bring to Appalachia,
would probably not make its
people any more powerful.
Instead, they would live
a different kind of powerlessness,
one common to the rest of our
society the powerlessness of
isolated little people
in the face of the most powerful
corporate giants on this earth.²⁷

The Worship of an Idol

The way of life
which these corporate giants
create is called by some
"technological rationalization."
Its forces contain the promise
of a world where

- poverty is eliminated,
- health is cared for,
- education is available for all,
- dignity is guaranteed,
- and old age is secure.

Too often, however,
its forces become perverted,
hostile to the dignity of the earth
and of its people.²⁸

Its destructive growth patterns

- pollute the air,
- foul the water,
- rape the land.²⁹

The driving force
behind this perversion is

“Maximization of Profit,”
a principle which too often
converts itself into an
idolatrous power.³⁰

This power
overwhelms the good intentions
of noble people.
It forces them to compete brutally
with one another.
It pushes people into
“conspicuous consumption”
and “planned obsolescence.”³¹
It delivers up control
to a tiny minority
whose values then shape
our social structures.
Of course, technological rationalization
and the profit principle
have served important functions
in human development.
It is not they themselves
that form an idol,
but the idol is formed
when they become absolutes
and fail to yield,
when the time has come,
to other principles.
Neither do we believe
that our people,
or the people of the nation,
have totally fallen prey
to the power of this idol.

But even without that happening,
“Maximization of profit”
in today’s world,
has become a crazy death wish,
every day using up more and more
of the earth’s riches
and our own dignity.
Like those who write spy thrillers,
its process is fascinated
with everything that can
“self-destruct,”

even if it is ourselves.

Without judging anyone,
it has become clear to us
that the present economic order
does not care for its people.
In fact,
profit and people frequently are
contradictory.
Profit over people
is an idol.
And it is not a new idol,
for Jesus long ago warned us,

*No one can be the slave of two
slave-drivers;
the first will be hated
and the second loved,
or the first treated with respect,
and the second with scorn.
You cannot be the slave both of
God and money. (Matthew 6:24)*

This is not a problem
only for mountain folk;
it is everybody’s problem.

Appalachia as a Symbol

In a country whose productive
force is greater than anything
the world has ever known,
the destructive idol
shows its ugly face
in places like Appalachia.

The suffering
of Appalachia’s poor
is a symbol
of so much other suffering

- in our land,
- in our world.

It is also a symbol of the suffering
which awaits the majority of plain

people in our society

- if they are laid off,
- if major illness occurs,
- if a wage earner dies,
- or if anything else goes wrong.

In this land of ours,
jobs are often scarce.³²
Too many people are forced
to accept unjust conditions or else
lose their jobs.

Human services for the poor,
and for the almost poor,
are inadequate.

Safety standards
are often too weak or ignored.
Workers are injured unnecessarily.
Legal and medical recourse
for claims against occupational injury
or occupational disease
are often too difficult or unavailable.
Sometimes those who should be
helping people in their claims
seem to stand in the way.
Black Lung and mine accidents
are the most famous examples,
but not the only ones.³³

On the other hand,
powerful reform movements
are underway

- in the union movement,
- in community organizing,
- in the consumer movement,
- in public interest lobbies,
- in religious circles.

To these must be added
even forces from within
the business community:

- managerial personnel who are
concerned not only with salaries
and promotion, but also with the
contribution of the economic order

to social well being, particularly
the bringing of jobs to poor
areas;

- small and medium size business
people, who wish to operate justly,
but who struggle under the
pressure of giant economic
competitors ruthlessly trying to
wipe them out;
- stockholders who rebel against
the impersonal structure of
ownership and try to make their
voices felt for justice within large
corporations.

Together these groups struggle
to achieve what must become
the foundation principle
of our common life,

- namely citizen involvement
- in our productive base,
 - in our political institutions,
 - in our cultural life.

The main task
for such citizen involvement
will be to build social structures
which provide full employment
and decent wages for all people.

Despite abuses,
we feel that a strong and broad
labor movement is basic,
one which can stabilize
the labor market
North and South,
East and West,
and prevent groups
from playing off different sectors
of working people
against each other.

Even so,
these movements are just
beginning
and reach too few people.

We know also that
as they grow stronger,
they will be attacked;
that other forces
will try to crush them.

Unaccountable economic powers
will continue to use
democratic political institutions
for non-democratic purposes.
Sometimes this shows itself brutally,
when officers of the law act like
company enforcers.

At other times, it's more complicated
when lawyers and legislators
seem to get paid
to keep the people confused,
and to find loop-holes
for the benefit of the rich.

These same massive economic forces,
still accountable to no one,
will even use vehicles of our cultural life,
like communications media
and advertising,
and even the educational system,
to justify their ways, and to pass their
values as our national values.

This happens
when news that's important to people
can't get time or space,
or when school programs
are designed by experts
without incorporating
the voice of the people.

We know that there are many

- sincere business people,
- zealous reporters,
- truthful teachers,
- honest law enforcement officers,
- dedicated public officials,
- hard working lawyers and legislators

who try to do a good job.³⁴
But we know too that,
the way things are set up,
it's hard for good people
to do a good job.

It's strange, for instance,
that despite earlier reforms,
a country which took such
richness from Appalachia
left so little for the people.³⁵
Great fortunes were built
on the exploitation of
Appalachian workers
and Appalachian resources;
yet the land was left
without revenues to care for
its social needs, like

- education,
- welfare,
- old age,
- and illness.

Some may say,
"That's economics,"
but we say that
economics is made by people.
Its principles don't fall down
from the sky
and remain for all eternity.
Those who claim they are
prisoners of the laws of economics
only testify that they are prisoners
of the idol.³⁶

The same thing which is so
obvious in Appalachia goes on
outside the mountains.
Plain people work hard
all their life, and their parents
worked hard before them,
yet they can't make ends meet.

- Food is too expensive.
- Taxes are too high for most.
(Too low for the rich.)

- Sickness puts people into debt.
 - College is out of reach for their children.
 - Paychecks keep shrinking.
- And it's worse still for those who can't work, especially the elderly.

Meanwhile, corporate profits for the giant conglomerates, who control our energy resources, keep on skyrocketing.

But now there is some promise of fresh "economic development" in the Appalachian region, at least if our industry returns to a substantial coal base.³⁷

From the rest of the world, however, we know now, after hard experiences, that "development" often brings little to the poor or to the workers,³⁸ often the reverse.

Yet even if it were to bring prosperity, there is a question we must ask about the new energy resources. It is, "How will we use our energy?" as well as, "Where will we get it from?"³⁹

If our present system keeps on growing and growing, it will burn up us and our world.

The present pattern of energy use, a great deal of which goes for military production or else for the production of discardable junk, is barbaric.

This nation, containing about 6 percent of the earth's population, consumes over one-third of the earth's energy and causes 40 percent of the earth's industrial pollution.⁴⁰

But even that doesn't tell the whole truth, because, at least by 1962 figures, 1.6 percent of the population of this country owned 80 percent of the corporate wealth, so that averages or per capita statistics really mislead us about the ordinary people's situation.⁴¹

Some talk about a population problem among the poor. There's an even bigger consumption problem among the rich—consumption not just of luxuries, but of power, of the power to shape

- economic structures,
- political structures,
- cultural structures

all in the service of

- more waste,
- more profit,
- more power.⁴²

Even worse, U.S. energy consumption is expected to double in the next decade.⁴³

What kind of a world would it be, where "Maximization of Profit" destroys life for so many today, and for future generations?

Ironically,
most people in this country
are not satisfied with the consumer
society.

It makes life a rat race,
where nobody feels they belong,
where all are pushed around,
where roots disappear.
With so much busy-ness
and clutter of things,
• things that don't work,
• things you have to keep fixing,
• no time to play or sing
like folks used to.

We get lost in our busy-ness
and grow to hate and abuse
all our things.
Worse still,
swallowing us up in things
is the power of the idol
which eats away at our openness to the
Living God.

But the children of the mountains have
fought for a different way.⁴⁴
Their struggles and their poetry
together keep alive
• a dream,
• a tradition,
• a longing,
• a promise
which is not just their dream,
but the voiceless vision
buried beneath life's bitterness
wherever it is found.
They sing of a life free and simple,
with time for one another,
and for people's needs,
based on the dignity of the human person,
at one with nature's beauty,
crowned by poetry.
If that dream dies,
all our struggles die with it.

Defending the Struggle's Dream

Many times before,
outside forces have
attacked the mountain's dream.⁴⁵
But never before
was the attack so strong.
Now it comes with
• cable TV,
• satellite communications,
• giant ribbons of highway driving
into the guts of the land.

The attack wants to teach people
that happiness is what you buy
• soaps and drinks,
• in gimmicks and gadgets,
and that all of life is
one big commodity market.

It would be bad enough if the attack
only tried to take the land,
but it wants the soul, too.
When it has its way,
the poet is silent.
Instead comes
noisy blare and din,
the chatter of a language
empty of meaning,
but filled with violence.

This struggle of resistance
is a struggle against violence—
against institutional violence—
which sometimes subtly,
sometimes brutally,
attacks human dignity and life.

Therefore,
although the Catholic tradition
fully acknowledges the legitimacy
of self-defense and force as the final
recourse against injustice,
we must beware of the temptation

of a too easy violence—
of a bitterness which can poison
that for which we struggle,
or which
still worse,
can provoke from forces of injustice
an even more brutal and repressive
institutional violence
whose first victim
is always the poor.

It is the mountain's spirit
of resistance which
must be defended at any cost,
for at stake is the spirit
of all our humanity.

There are too few spaces of soul
left in our lives.

Once we all

- knew how to dance and sing,
- sat in mystery before the poet's
spell,
- felt our hearts rise to nature's
cathedral.

Now an alien culture
battles to shape us
into plastic forms
empty of Spirit,
into beasts of burden without
mystery.

If the struggle's dream
can be defended,
and we believe it can,
then perhaps the great
instruments of attack,

- cable TV,
- satellite communications,
- ribbons of highway,

can become like so many arms,
which instead of crushing life,
reach out to make it fuller,

to bring to others
beyond the mountains,
the promise of their vision.



Brunner-Berea

Part II: The answer of Jesus & his church

"The Spirit of God has been given to me, for The Lord has anointed me. God has sent me to bring the good news of the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, so set the downtrodden free, to proclaim The Lord's year of favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

The God of the Poor

The living God,
the Lord whom we worship,
is the God of the poor.⁴⁶

*In Israel,
God's very self
was revealed to a people
in their liberation from oppression
under the bondage of Egypt:⁴⁷
I have seen the miserable state
of my people in Egypt.
I have heard their appeal to be free
of their slave-drivers . . .*

*I mean to deliver them
out of the hands of the Egyptians . . .
And now the cry of the children of Israel
has come to me.
That day, The Lord rescued Israel
from the Egyptians . . .
and the people venerated The Lord . . .
(Exodus 3:7-9, 30-31)*

Not only in the liberation of a people
is God revealed
as the Living God,
but also within Israel
by defending all those
who are victims of injustice.

*God will free the people who call out,
and those who need help,
God will have pity on the poor
and feeble . . .
God will redeem their lives
from exploitation and outrage.
(Psalms 72:12-14)*

Thus, the God of Israel,
who is also our God,
is the God of the poor,
because he frees the oppressed.

The Messiah & His Reign

But Israel's mission
was to the whole world,
not just to its own nation.⁴⁸
As injustice against Israel
and throughout the world
seemed to mount higher,
The Lord promised
to send a liberator.
This one was to be a great leader,
whose reign would bring justice.
For this Messiah Israel prayed:

*God, give judgement
to your Anointed,
to those who follow your justice,
that your people may be
judged in justice
and your poor in right judgement.
May the mountains bring forth
peace for the people
and the hills, justice.
May your Anointed defend
the poor of the people,
save the children of the needy,
and crush the oppressor.
(Psalm 72:1-4, 12-13)*

And there came among us,
a man from Israel,
whom we confess to be
God-with-us,
the messiah long promised.
And when he rose up
to speak in his native Nazareth,
he chose the words
from the prophet Isaiah:

*The Spirit of God has been
given to me,
for The Lord has anointed me.
God has sent me to bring
the good news to the poor,*

*to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim The Lord's year of favor.
(Luke 4:18-19)*

And when, like Moses of old,
this Jesus climbed a mount
to tell the people his Father's law,
he left no doubt that he was indeed
the messiah of the poor:

*How happy are you who are poor:
yours is the kingdom of God.
Happy you who are hungry now:
you shall be satisfied.
Happy you who weep now:
you shall laugh . . .
But alas for you who are rich:
you are having your consolation
now. Alas for you who have your fill
now:
you shall go hungry.
Alas for you who laugh now:
you shall mourn and weep. (Luke
6:21, 24-25)*

The Messiah, the Creator and their
Spirit are the Living God.
They are different from the dead
idols which clutter history,
because they,
and not the idols,
act for justice.
The dead idols prove
to be gods of oppression.

*I am The Lord your God who brought
you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the land of slavery.
You shall have no gods except me.
(Exodus 20:1-3)*

The choice between the Living God
and inert idols

is not only a choice between justice
and injustice;
it is also a choice
between life and death.

*Today,
I set before you life or death,
blessings or curse.
Choose life, then,
so that you and your descendants
may live,
in the love of The Lord your God,
obeying God's voice,
clinging to God;
for in this your life consists, and on
this depends your long stay
in the land which The Lord swore to
your ancestors . . .
(Deuteronomy 30:19-20)*

The Church's Mission

Out of faith in the risen Jesus a new
community of people is born,
seeking to be united
in one mind and spirit
with him.⁴⁹
Upon this community
Jesus pours forth his Spirit,
the Spirit of truth,
who teaches us everything and
reminds us of all he said to us.

*The whole group of believers
was united, heart and soul;
no one claimed for personal use
anything that was owned,
as everything they had was held in
common . . .
None of their members
was ever in want,
as all those who owned land or
houses would sell them,
and bring the money for them,*

*to present it to the apostles;
it was then distributed to any
members who might be in need.
(Acts 4:32-35)*

Still the church is not perfect.
Its early bishop James
had to remind the people:
. . . *it was those who are poor
according to the world
that The Lord chose, to be rich in
faith and to be heirs to all that was
promised to those who love God.*

*In spite of this,
you have no respect for anybody
who is poor.
Isn't it always the rich
who are against you?
Isn't it always their doing
when you are dragged before the
court?
Aren't they the ones who insult
the honorable name to which you
have been dedicated?
(James 2:5-7)*

Yet the church continues,
despite its sins,
working for the poor,
insisting on practical love,
and not just prayers
and good intentions:

*In this way we distinguish
the children of God
from the children of the devil . . .
we are to love one another,
not to be like Cain
who cut his brother's throat . . .
If you refuse to love,
you must remain dead;
to hate your brother or sister
is to be a murderer . . .
This has taught us love—*

*that Jesus gave up his life for us;
and we, too,
ought to give up our lives
for our brothers and sisters.*

*If those who were rich enough
in this world's goods
saw that a sister or brother
was in need,
but closed their hearts,
how could the love of God
be living in them?
My children,
our love is not to be just words
or mere talk,
but something real and active; only
by this can we be certain
that we are children of the truth . . .
(1 John 3:10-12, 15-19)*

Through the ages,
the church tries to be faithful
to this message.
At times it begins to stray from it,
but always
the Spirit is alive within it,
stirring up new voices
to call it back
to its mission for Justice.

The Church's Social Teaching

For a long time now,
our Church has been restless
with what many call
"The Modern World."

There is much in this modern world
which is good and beautiful:

- the sense of freedom,
- the progress of science and technology,
- the personal creativity unleashed

- from under stifling traditions,
- the growing unity of the human family.

God has challenged us to take up as holy whatever is good and beautiful in the modern world as in all of creation. But has also challenged us to resist what is evil, especially injustice.

Since the industrial age, we have been active, speaking and acting on behalf of the casualties of the new economic spirit. At the end of the last Century, Pope Leo XIII, wrote a great letter, "On the Condition of the Working Classes"⁵⁰ (*Rerum Novarum*)

Our own past brother, Archbishop Gibbons of Baltimore, made a great plea that this letter reflect the views of the common people. He told the pope,

*To lose the heart of the people would be a misfortune for which the friendship of the few rich and powerful would be no compensation.*⁵¹

In the wake of Leo's letter, as the destructiveness of the new economic order continued unchecked, the U.S. Catholic bishops felt compelled themselves to draft a letter to their people on the question of social

reconstruction.

While acknowledging that the American people were not ready for major reconstruction, and that the present industrial system is destined to last for a long time . . .the bishops condemned three grievous abuses:

- enormous inefficiency and waste in the production and distribution of commodities;
- insufficient incomes for the great majority of wage earners;
- and unnecessarily large incomes for a small minority of privileged capitalists.⁵²

Further, they argued for an industrialism based on cooperation rather than on competition: *The majority must somehow become owners, or at least in part, of the instruments of production.*⁵³

Finally, in discussing remedies, they laid down the following principle: . . . *human beings cannot be trusted with the immense opportunities for oppression and extortion that go with the possession of monopoly power.*⁵⁴

Still the injustices continued, so much so that Pope Pius XI felt obliged to publish another letter, forty years after Leo's letter, "On Reconstructing the Social Order and Perfecting It Comfortably to the Precepts of the Gospel." Pius XI pointed out that, . . . *in our days not alone is wealth accumulated,*

but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few . . .

*This concentration of power has led to a threefold struggle for domination. First, . . . the struggle for dictatorship in the economic sphere itself; then, the fierce battle to acquire control of the state, so that its resources and authority may be abused in the economic struggles; finally, the clash between states themselves.*⁵⁵

The Catholic bishops of the United States again responded with their own letter, "The Church and Social Order," in 1940. They lamented that an unjust society had caused many working people to become alienated from religion and to have lost faith and hope.⁵⁶

Reminding economic powers that *the earth is God's and the fullness thereof*, (Psalm 23:1) they especially denounced

- concentration of ownership and control,
- the anonymous character of economic interests.

The social system at that time, at the end of the great depression, was generating great economic insecurity for many people. The bishops judged then that, *an important factor making for insecurity is the immense power and despotic domination which is concentrated in the hands of those few who frequently are not the owners,*

but only the trustees and directors of invested funds.

They single out one group in this attack: *Those who, because they hold and control money, are able also to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life-blood to the entire economy, and grasping as it were in their hands the very soul of production.*

They called for a more just social order, where property would be broadly distributed and people would be truly responsible for one another.

Now, close to our own day, the popes have continued to speak on the social question. Many will remember the warm letters of Pope John XXIII, "Peace on Earth" (*Pacem in Terris*) and "Mother and Teacher" (*Mater et Magistra*), and Pope Paul's letters "On the Development of Peoples" (*Populorum Progressio*) and "A Call to Action."⁵⁷

In a more contemporary context, with a view to the poor across the globe, the popes have called us back to the message of Jesus and to The Lord, the God of Justice.

We bishops have not been silent either. At the Vatican Council we spoke strongly for justice and the poor in "The Pastoral Constitution on the

Church in the Modern World"—
*The joys and the hopes,
the griefs and the anxieties . . .
of this age,
especially those who are poor
or in any way afflicted.*⁵⁸

And finally, when we gathered in Synod
with all our fellow bishops of the world,
scrutinizing the signs of the times and
listening to the Word of God, we were
*able to perceive the serious injustices
which are building around the world—
a network of domination, oppression,
and abuse . . .*⁵⁹

But we also noted
*A new awareness
which shakes (people) out of any
fatalistic resignation
and which spurs them on
to liberate themselves . . .*

*Action on behalf of justice and
participation in the transformation of the
world fully appear to us as a constitutive
dimension of the preaching of the
Gospel, or, in other words, of the
Church's mission for the redemption of
the human race and its liberation from
every oppressive situation.*⁶⁰

Thus,
there must be no doubt,
that we, who must speak
the message of God
who summoned Moses,
and whose mouth was opened
in Jesus of Nazareth,
and who keeps the Spirit alive
on behalf of justice
for so many centuries,
can only become advocates
of the poor.

This is not to be simplistic,
to see all in black and white,
to be ignorant of economics
and the contributions of
other human sciences,
but in a profound sense
the choices are simple and stark:

- death or life;
- injustice or justice;
- idolatry or the Living God.

We must choose life.
We must choose justice.
We must choose the Living God.⁶¹



Brunner-Berea

Part III: Facing the future

"For it is they who, out of their frustrations, dreams and struggles, must lead the way for all of us." Page 32

A Process of Dialogue and Testing

More and more people recognize that a new social order is being born.

Indeed, the Spirit of God presses us to this recognition.

We do not understand it all, but we know we are part of it,

- in Appalachia,
- in our nation,
- across the world.

In what follows, we hope to give some guidance to our Catholic people for sharing in that birth struggle.⁶³

We have no easy answers, so this is but a first step.

It must not be the last step.

Hopefully, this letter, itself a product of dialogue, will start a process, wherein the Catholic community can join together with people of good will throughout the region to reflect on and act for a more just society.

While we have no answers, we have some principles to guide the process. Our searching must carefully balance the following three elements:

- closeness to the people;
- careful use of scientific resources;
- a steeping in the presence of the Spirit.

In regard to the first element, we must continually take time and invest creativity into listening to our people, especially the poor.⁶⁴

For it is they who, out of their frustrations, dreams, and struggles, must lead the way for all of us.

Next we must listen to the vast majority of plain people who would not be called poor, but who are not rich, and who increasingly share in the powerlessness of the poor.

Finally, strange as it may seem, we must also challenge the rich. For although Jesus himself has told us that . . . *It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for the rich to enter heaven,* (Matthew 19:24)

and although *one rich young man went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth,* (Luke 19:22)

there is also the story of Zacchaeus who accepted the demands of justice, who returned his property to the poor and paid back four fold whatever was stolen. That day salvation came to his house, *The Messiah has come to seek out and save what was lost.* (Luke 19:10)

Throughout this whole process of listening to the people, the goal which underlies our concern is fundamental in the justice struggle, namely, citizen control, or community control.

The people themselves must shape their own destiny.

Despite the theme of powerlessness, we know that Appalachia is already rich here in the cooperative power of its own people.

In regard to the second element, we must be careful with science, because scientific models are not value free.⁶⁵ So much of science has been used, in the contemporary world, to oppress rather than liberate, but science is not itself evil. Rather it is our task to take it up, and to infuse it with wisdom and humility, in the service of justice.

In regard to the third, we note with joy the renewed zeal for the presence of the Spirit in prayer and meditation among our Catholic people. We know that if this renewed presence can mature into a convergence with the thirst for justice, a new Pentecost will truly be upon us.⁶⁶

To begin this process of dialogue and testing we invite the Catholic Committee of Appalachia to draft for us and with us, as well as for and with all people of good will, a *comprehensive plan of action*. Together we may begin to test it throughout the region. This plan would constitute our first tool which, hopefully, each year could be brought up to date, in the light of fresh experience.

There are several specific points which now we would like to recommend for inclusion in the action plan.

First, and most important, in accord with our recommendation from the Synod document, "Justice in the World," we would like to commend where they exist and recommend where they do not, *Centers of Reflection and Prayer*, in the service of action, throughout the region.⁶⁷

Such centers could integrate the analytical social science skills and the profound spirituality necessary for persevering creativity in the struggle for justice.

They could also link fragmented struggles from different parts of the region, and even outside the region, thus supporting healthy localism with the richness of a wider national and international network.

In addition, we would like to know in what way the Church might cooperate with other major institutions of the region, provided they are open to the voice of the poor.

Especially we welcome the opportunity to share with

- university people,
- people skilled in economic life,
- artists and poets,
- government people.

Also, as suggested by the letter of Paul VI, "A Call to Action," we commend where they exist, and recommend where they do not, *Centers of Popular Culture*, in every parish,

or in areas where there are no parishes, as a sign of the Church's concern, linked to the broader action centers, places where the poor feel welcome, spaces for people to come and share at all levels, so that if a new society is to be born, it will emerge from the grass roots.⁶⁸

Especially we stress emphasis on the *economic questions*, for these are the first and most basic questions for all people. We call attention to the presence of powerful multinational corporations now within our region.⁶⁹

The fate and role of these institutions is a major question not only for Appalachia, but for the whole world. Pope Paul VI has warned us that,

*The multinational enterprises . . . largely independent of the national political powers and therefore not subject to control from the viewpoint of the common good . . . can lead to a new and abusive form of economic domination of the social, cultural, and even political level. The excessive concentration of means and powers that Pope Pius XI already condemned on the fortieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum is taking on a new and very real image.*⁷⁰

As a counter-force to the unaccountable power of these multinational corporations, there must arise a corresponding multinational labor movement, rooted in a vision of justice, rising above corruption

and narrowness, with a universal concern

- for all workers,
- for all consumers,
- for all people.

We are happy to note that some voices at least are raising up such a vision within the ranks of labor.

Finally, there are a number of issues which we hope the Committee will take up in its investigations. We simply list them here, knowing that there may be many more:

- role of coal in the life of the region & nation;
- energy consumption patterns and lifestyle;
- strip mining and deep mining;
- land acquisition;
- retribution and redistribution;
- tourism and recreation industries;
- exploitation of cheap labor;
- occupational health and safety;
- union reform and extension;
- community unions;
- community organizing and citizen control;
- public voice in local, state and national politics;
- church investments as seed money;
- cooperatives;
- education;
- health systems;
- family life;
- the elderly;
- arts and crafts;
- music and poetry;
- prayer.



Brunner-Berea

"...we note with joy the renewed zeal for the presence of the Spirit. . . We know that if this renewed presence can mature into a convergence with the thirst for justice, a new Pentecost will truly be upon us." Page 33

Conclusion

As this letter closes,
sisters and brothers,
we wish you and all people
throughout the region
the gift of peace in Jesus.
We know that all those who love Jesus
will struggle to follow his path,
no matter how confusing that may be
during these times.

We ask you to weigh seriously
with the Spirit
the matters we have put before you,

- in your own silence;
- in your families;
- in your work;
- in your parishes.

We ask you to share
in dialogue and testing
with the leaders of your local church
and with us bishops
what we have presented here.

There will be different views,
but let us test them together

- with the people,
- with one another,
- and with the Spirit.

We wish to thank the many Spirit-filled
and dedicated people of our Church,
who all along have been struggling
in hidden or dramatic ways,
for justice and unity among people.

We thank the youth
who have not given up hope,
and who continue to
believe in freshness
in human experience.
We thank parents,

whose lives have been such
that our youth have reason to hope.

We thank the elderly,
who despite great hardship,
continue to survive
with spirit and grace,
and whose quiet wisdom
inspires us all.

We thank the volunteers,
not of this region,
the countless sisters and brothers,
priests and lay people,
who have come to work at our side.

We especially thank women
in the region,
for we cannot but note
the great role women have played
here in the struggle for justice.
In the contemporary mission
of the Church,
the voice and action of women
bring a special charism to the
struggle for justice.

Dear sisters and brothers,
we urge all of you not to stop living,
to be a part of the rebirth of utopias,
to recover and defend
the struggling dream
of Appalachia itself.

For it is the weak things
of this world
which seem like folly,
that the Spirit takes up
and makes its own.

The dream
of the mountains' struggle,
the dream
of simplicity and of justice,
like so many other repressed visions

is, we believe,
the voice of The Lord among us.⁷¹

In taking them up,
hopefully the Church
might once again
be known as

- a center of the Spirit,
- a place where poetry dares to speak,
- where the song reigns unchallenged,
- where art flourishes,
- where nature is welcome,
- where little people and little needs come first,
- where justice speaks loudly,
- where in a wilderness of idolatrous destruction the great voice of God still cries out for Life.

**Signed by twenty-five bishops
serving the Appalachian region**

At Home in the Web of Life

*Greetings to our sisters and brothers in Appalachia:
to Catholic Christian laity, religious, and ordained ministers;
to Christian believers of every denomination,
and particularly to Christians of the mountain churches;
to people of all faiths,
to all people of good will;
and especially to all who are sick, lonely, handicapped,
or suffering from injustice.
May God's love fill you always with hope and joy!*

**The mountains shall yield peace
for the people,
and the hills justice
(Psalm 72:3)**



Brunner-Berea

At Home in the Web of Life

Originally published in 1995

A Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia
Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of *This Land Is Home to Me*
from the Catholic Bishops of Appalachia

Introduction

Twenty Years Ago

Some 20 years ago,
with the help of the people of Appalachia,
the Catholic bishops of the region
issued a pastoral letter called
This Land Is Home to Me.²
Since that time
more than 200,000 copies
have gone all over the planet.
Now, 20 years later,
we offer an anniversary message.³

In the original pastoral letter,
after listening to voices of the region,
we wrote about

- the mountain people,
- their suffering,
- their strength,
- their oneness with the rest of nature,
- their hunger for justice,
- their poetry and music,
- their precious mountain spirit,
- and their deep love for God.⁴

Now, 20 years later,
we praise all the wonderful things
that so many good folks have done
to defend the Appalachian land
as their home.

In particular we praise
the work of many Catholic sisters,
as well as many lay church workers,
who heard the call of our first pastoral letter
and came to the region
to learn from the local people
and to share their own gifts.

We also praise the strong leadership
of so many heroic Appalachian people,

"Four Sisters of Mercy came to a rural Virginia town to work with local people. Soon after they came, the local exhibition coal mine closed. In response, the sisters started working with the local townspeople and with the local Catholic parish. Together they established the Center for Christian Action to revitalize the town. They soon turned the abandoned exhibition mine into a tourist center. They also established a library, a literacy program, a training program for home nurses, a craft shop, programs for youth and elderly folks, and began a series of community celebrations on major holidays. When the town's only pharmacy closed, they opened a medical bank. A full-length feature movie and a television commercial were filmed in the town. The local townspeople are still expressing their creative leadership."

Carolyn Brink, RSM ⁵

especially women,
who have struggled to defend
those precious people and places
which they call kin and home.⁶

All across the region,
so many have worked so hard:

- community organizers,
- union members,
- church ministers and congregations,
- members of women's groups,
- local business people,
- and whole families.

We also wish to thank
the Campaign for Human Development,
a foundation funded by the U.S. Catholic people.

In the past twenty years,
this body has contributed
more than four million dollars
to more than
one hundred projects
to help Appalachian communities
in their struggles to protect
their families, their homes, and their land.⁷

Sustainable Communities

In this letter we wish to explore
the new tasks which lie before us,
particularly the task of creating or defending
what are called
"sustainable communities."

These are communities where people and the rest
of nature can live together in harmony
and not rob future generations.⁹

Creating such communities is important,
because it now seems that
the industrial age of Appalachia,
so marked by coal mines and steel mills,
is coming to an end.

"Mountain women are
surviving regardless of
the tremendous odds
stacked against us. We are
realizing the importance
of an education . . . to
further enhance our job
opportunities, for our
own personal satisfaction,
but most importantly,
survival . . . We felt the
pain coming from the
women suffering from
the abuse of domestic
violence and from the
wives of alcoholics and
from women depressed
who feel lost, alone, like
no one on this earth
cares. Imagine what
courage it took to speak
up and tell their fears,
the strength it takes to
continue on."

Gayle Combs, from
*In Praise of
Mountain Women*⁸

Many giant industrial corporations have left the region.

As the industrial age ends, a new “post-industrial age” is beginning. This new economic age, caused by the electronic revolution with its computers and satellites and faxes, brings its own new fears.

Many thoughtful people worry that in the post-industrial age Appalachia will no longer be sustainable. They fear that Appalachia may become a place only for

- large scale unemployment,
- the death of small local business,
- clear-cutting the forests,
- destructive strip-mining,
- dumping out-of-state garbage,
- even dumping toxic radioactive materials,
- and warehousing prisoners from the cities.

In this unsustainable path for the future, Appalachia would become a waste-land. If this path were to be followed, the local ecology including the people would be devastated.

Yet on the hopeful side, we have also heard many creative Appalachian voices, who have proposed an alternative future for the people and the land.

These creative people speak of

- sustainable forests,
- sustainable agriculture,
- sustainable families,
- sustainable livelihoods,
- sustainable spirituality,
- sustainable communities.

In this alternative and sustainable path, the land and its people flourish together.

“One rural Appalachia county was so broke that it faced imminent closure of its entire school system. The county needed \$300,000 to keep the schools open. At the same time an out-of-state garbage firm was courting county officials by projecting revenues to the county of \$350,000, if they allowed them to haul in garbage from around the country. Local citizens organized, stopped the out-of-state garbage proposal, and managed to convince the state to keep their schools solvent through the year. But they didn’t just say no to the dump. Citizens from a grassroots organization in the county led a three-state empowerment zone planning process, and are now building a business incubator focused on food products. Additionally, they’ve helped two local farmers start subscription organic farms, and are in the process of developing business training materials adapted for lower income rural people.”

Anthony Flaccavento¹⁰

If this path were to be followed,
then God's sacred Appalachia
would remain a precious and beautiful home.

A Culture of Death or Life?

The unsustainable and fearful path
was well described, we believe,
by Pope John Paul II,
when he criticized modern Western culture
as spawning "a culture of death."¹¹

This culture of death
sees Appalachia
just as a deposit of "resources,"
to be measured only in terms of money:

- its mountain forests
like lifeless piles of "raw material"
to be stripped and shipped off elsewhere
to feed the consumer society,
- its empty coal mines
like forgotten and meaningless pits
to be filled with endless garbage
from the consumer society,
- its unemployed people
available as cheap labor
to guard the countless imprisoned people,
themselves cast off
by the consumer society.

By contrast,
the sustainable and hopeful path
sees Appalachia as a community of life,
in which people and land are woven together
as part of Earth's vibrant creativity,
in turn revealing God's own creativity.

In the vision of this path,

- the mountain forests are sacred cathedrals,
the holy dwelling of abundant life-forms
which all need each other,
including us humans,

"We are confronted by
an even larger reality,
which can be described
as a veritable structure
of sin. This reality is
characterized by the
emergence of a culture
which denies solidarity
and in many cases takes
the form of a veritable
'culture of death.' This
culture is actively fostered
by powerful cultural,
economic, and political
currents which encourage
the idea of society
excessively concerned with
efficiency In this
way a kind of 'conspiracy
against life' is unleashed."

Pope John Paul II
The Gospel of Life¹²

with all revealing God's awesome majesty
and tender embrace;

- empty mines are sacred wombs of Earth,
opening pathways to underground rivers
and to life-giving aquifers,
in turn running beneath many states,
and needing to be kept pure and clean
as God's holy waters;
- and the people are God's co-creators,
called to form sustainable communities,
and to develop sustainable livelihoods,
all in sacred creative communion
with land and forest and water and air,
indeed with all Earth's holy creatures.

It is this alternative path, we believe,
which John Paul II described
as the true path of the future,
and rightly called "a culture of life."¹³

Broader Implications

We do not see this conflict
between a culture of death and a culture of life
as simply an Appalachian crisis.
Rather we see the Appalachia crisis
as a window into a larger crisis
which now threatens the entire society,
including the middle class,
and indeed the full ecosystem
across the entire planet.

The conflict between
a culture of death and a culture of life
is a profoundly moral crisis.
Pope John Paul II warned us of
". . . a moral and spiritual poverty
caused by 'overdevelopment.'"
The Pope declared that
". . . a sense of religion
as well as human values
are in danger of being overwhelmed
by a wave of consumerism."¹⁴

Further, this same struggle of all society
between a culture of death and a culture of life
is also played out at the intimate level
in personal relationships.
Here the culture of death
invades our very souls
through addictions and codependencies,
often leading to abuse and violence,
especially against women and children.¹⁵

But the culture of life,
rooted in the power of the Spirit of Jesus who
“*was raised from the dead . . .*
(so) we too might live in newness of life,”
(Romans 7:4)
also touches our very souls
and leads us to new life where

- despairing persons can begin recovery,
- wounded relationships can be healed,
- families can be strengthened,
- whole communities can be renewed,
- and the web of life can again flourish.¹⁶

Natural and Social Ecology

Amidst this whole crisis,
we believe it is important to stress
both natural ecology and social ecology,
that is, a sustainable community
which embraces humans and all other creatures.

This way of sustainable community,
both for people and the rest of nature,
has long been cherished by women
and indeed has largely been
a gift from women.

Recalling an ancient women’s phrase,
the U.S. Catholic bishops
have recently described this way of community
as “the web of life.”¹⁸

We too do not see the crisis of nature
as separate from the crisis of the poor,
but see both as a single crisis of community.

“Faced with the widespread
destruction of the
environment, people
everywhere are coming to
understand that we cannot
continue to use the goods of
the earth as we have in the
past [A] new ecological
awareness is beginning to
emerge The ecological
crisis is a moral issue.”

Pope John Paul II
*The Ecological Crisis*¹⁷

For the land and the poor people
are victims together
of the same materialistic consumer society,
which promotes the culture of death.
It does this by undermining all community,
by frequently treating people
and the rest of nature
as if they were useless waste
from the throw-away consumer society.

“Above all, we seek to explore
the links between concern for
the person and for the earth,
between natural and social
ecology. The web of life is one.”

Over against this culture of death,
and in the name of the culture of life,
we insist that all people and the rest of nature
form but a single and precious ecosystem,
created by the God in whom
“we live and move and have our being.”
(Acts 17:28)

U.S. Catholic Conference
*Renewing the Earth*¹⁹

The Gift of Appalachia

Here the tradition of Appalachia is a gift to us.
For, from time immemorial,
the original native peoples of Appalachia
and later the settlers who learned from them
have not been enemies of the land,
nor of poor folk.

Rather they have been friends of the web of life,

- who loved the hills and hollows,
- who treaded gently on the soil,
- who cherished clean running streams,
- who breathed deeply fresh mountain air,
- who cared for humble kin and friends,
- and who worshipped the God of creation.

So the humble people of Appalachia
are teachers to the rest of us,
who see ourselves as technologically efficient,
but often know so little
about how to be truly at home
in God's holy web of life.

In this regard,
we remember how Jesus taught us
that it is the humble and poor

who best understand the word of God.

Thus we read in the Epistle of James:
*“Did not God choose those
who are poor in the world
to be rich in faith and
heirs of the kingdom
that he promised to those who love him?”*
(James 2:5)

Choose Life

Our reflection will again have three parts:

- the land and its people,
- the Bible and the Church’s teachings,
- the present call of the Spirit.

In all of this,
we are haunted by the message from God
which Moses set before the children of Israel
to choose life rather than death:
*I have set before you life and death,
the blessing and the curse.
Choose life, then, that you
and your descendants may live.*
(Deuteronomy 30:19)

In response to this ancient message,
we believe that we are still called

- to defend Earth and the poor together,
- to learn from the wisdom of both,
- to care for God’s single web of life.

In these tasks
the land and the people of Appalachia
are once again
a precious gift to us all.



Brunner-Berea

Part I: The Web of Life

"To dwell within these mountains is to experience

- in their height, God's majesty
- in their weight, God's strength,
- in their hollows, God's embrace,
- in their waters, God's cleansing,
- in their haze, God's mystery." Page 54

At Home in the Web of Life 51

Creation is God's Word

As we seek the path of sustainable community
based on the oneness of land and people,
it is helpful to remember that
all creation is itself creative,
for it reveals the creative word of God.
It is not itself the incarnate word like Jesus,
and it is not itself God.
But all creation is nonetheless
a revelation of God to us.
Thus the Bible declares:

*The heavens proclaim your wonders, O Lord,
and your faithfulness,
in the assembly of the holy ones
Yours are the heavens, and yours is the earth:
the world and its fullness you have founded
Justice and judgment are
the foundation of your throne;
kindness and truth go before you.
(Psalm 89: 6, 12, 15)*

As Chapter 1 of Genesis tells us,
God "said" that the water and the land,
and the plants and the animals,
and finally we humans,
should all appear,
and so we did.

Thus the water and the land,
and the plants and the animals,
and we humans too,
are all expressions and revelations
of God's word of creation.

All creation, including ourselves,
truly speaks the beauty and goodness of God.
All creation truly shows
the loving face of the Creator.

Further, within this creation,
we humans, both women and men,
are a special revelation,

for we are created in God's own image.²⁰

To be created in God's own image means that we are called to care in love for our precious Earth, as if Earth were God's own garden, just as God cares in love for all creation.

In seeking a culture of life rather than death, let us take a moment to reflect more on God's revelation in creation.

Let us reflect on the story of Appalachia, of its mountains and forests in relation to our own human presence.

"To me the mountains are very beautiful. I just love to climb a mountain and get up there and see the facing, and go over and over again, and every time see something different. It's got a different look, and it's all beautiful except where man has destroyed it."

Piercy Carter
from *Mountain Voices*²¹

Revelation of the Mountains ²²

To say that creation is revelation means that the splendor of the Appalachian mountains,

- their valleys and coves,
- their ridges and hollows,
- their skies and forests,
- their rocks and soils,
- their rivers and streams and springs,
- their plants and animals,

all show us God's glory,
all tell us of God's beautiful presence.

These Appalachian mountains are among the oldest on Earth. They first emerged perhaps a billion years ago, when all the continents were still one, and when Africa was still connected to North America's east coast.

Perhaps 600 million years ago, after the continents separated, seas covered much of these mountains. Then some 300 million years ago

the mountains again rose
to form the present Appalachian Range.
Stretching from Newfoundland in Canada
to Alabama in the American South,
these mountains make up the spiny backbone
of the east coast of North America.

Over millions of years,
where the Ice Age never reached,
winds and rains softened these mountains,
made them more round and gentle,
and carved within them
so many valleys and coves,
and ridges and hollows.

To dwell within these mountains
is to experience

- in their height, God's majesty,
- in their weight, God's strength,
- in their hollows, God's embrace,
- in their waters, God's cleansing,
- in their haze, God's mystery.

These mountains are truly a holy place.

Revelation of the Forests²⁴

Also beginning millions of years ago,
as Earth brought forth mountain forests,
God became present in the abundance of life.
Particularly in the Southern Appalachian Range,
we find great North American hardwoods:

- oaks and hickories and maples,
- locusts and poplar and cherry,
- and once an abundance of chestnut.

Overall there dwell here
more than one hundred species of trees.²⁵

So too with the other plants of this forest.
Here flourishes
one of the richest biosystems in the world.
Indeed the woods are full of food,

"I like to get out and walk. I'd prefer
walking and going to
the mountains. I've been studying
strong of goin' back up there
on the mountain to Face Rock
again; I haven't been up there in
years. I really like the mountains
myself. And the further back in
the mountain I can get to live, the
better I like it."

Ruth Settles from
*Mountain Voices*²³

medicinal plants and glorious flowers.
We recall especially

- berries and nuts,
- mountain laurel and rhododendron,
- azaleas and mountain magnolias,
- blossoms on tulip poplars and black locusts,
- ginseng and yellow root.

Then there is the boundless animal life.
Once these mountains were home to
elk and wolf and bison and mountain lion.
They are mostly gone now,
wiped out by hunting and loss of habitat.
Though some species are even now threatened,
we still find here

- white-tailed deer and black bear,
- rabbit and raccoon,
- possum and squirrel,
- wild turkey and countless song-birds.

To live in these mountains and forests,
and with their trees and plants and animals,
is truly to dwell in Earth's community of life,
as one of God's awesome cathedrals.
In this magnificent work of God's creation,

- misty mountain haze is holy incense,
- tall tree trunks are temple pillars,
- sun-splashed leaves are stained glass,
- and song-birds are angelic choirs.

The Native Peoples²⁷

We humans too reveal the glory of God.²⁸
Together with the mountains and forests,
and with the plants and animals,
we humans join creation's praise of God
in the choral song of the web of life.

Perhaps 10,000 years ago,
the first humans came to these mountains.
These earliest native peoples

" When I was growing
up, it seemed to me that
the fern on the mountain
was there just for that
purpose; and the fern
was beautiful. And it
was there through the
woods, beautiful woods,
big timber over it and
undergrowth, big trees
everywhere, and this
beautiful fern just grew
like a paradise, almost,
you know, naturally
without any help. You
couldn't raise anything
that beautiful if you
undertook it, to save your
life you couldn't."

Raymond Presnell
from *Mountain Voices*²⁶

lived in the flatlands near the mountains,
and used the mountains only seasonally
for hunting and for gathering.
These ancient peoples had a deep spirituality
of the web of life.

Perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 years ago,
the native peoples developed agriculture.
They grew corn and beans
and pumpkins and other squash.
But they still journeyed to the mountains
for hunting and trade.

In the mountains,
they also gathered nuts and plants
for food and medicine.
They quarried stone for tools.
They even cleared small meadows,
through controlled fires,
to create open space for animals and plants.
Indeed these native peoples
helped nature to flourish even more.²⁹

Later great native tribes developed.
To the south there dwelt
a powerful tribe, the Cherokee.
To the east, the Catawba,
as well as the Monacans and Manohoacs.
And to the north,
the Delaware and the Shawnee,
and the great Iroquois confederation.
Indeed the very name Appalachia
is a native word.³⁰

The Colonial Settlers

Then, in the modern era,
there came Europeans and Africans.
After the American Revolutionary War,
some former soldiers went to the mountains,
where they received land in place of pay.
So too did escaping slaves.³²

Many of the soldiers and freed male slaves

Now Talking God . . .
Beauty is before me
And beauty is behind me.
Above and below me
hovers the beautiful.
I am surrounded by it.
I am immersed in it. In my
youth I am aware of it.
And in my old age I shall
walk quietly
The beautiful trail.

Native American Prayer
*Earth Prayers*³¹

The only time I ever
remember being alone
with Aunt Bertha was the
time we squatted together
in her strawberry patch,
poking through the many
green leaves looking for
the few red, juicy berries.
Her laughter and delight
when we found a cluster
of berries! I was too much
in awe of her square, high-
cheeked Indian face so
close to mine to pay much
attention to the berries.

Patsy L. Creech
from *In Praise of
Mountain Women
Gathering*³³

married native women.
These indigenous women were strong figures.
For example, among the Cherokee,
women had many rights and great power.
This native root is one source
of Appalachia's valiant mountain women.

The original European settlers,
often Scots-Irish,
brought their own gifts to the mountains.
We still love their Celtic melodies,

as well as folk instruments like the fiddle
And we still admire their crafts,
particularly their stunning quilts.
These early settlers carried
an ancient "green" Celtic spirituality,
rooted in the living spirit and splendid beauty
of God's holy creation.

The freed African slaves
also brought their rich spirituality:

- echoing in the rhythm of the drum
the maternal heartbeat of all creation,
- singing great songs of faith and praise
to celebrate the wonder of all creation,
- sharing also in song their harsh suffering
and valiant resistance,
- and proclaiming in magnificent preaching
God's own majestic word.

These Native, Celtic, and African spiritualities
are all important roots of mountain religion.

In the 1700s,
more colonists came across the mountains
or down the valley from Pennsylvania.
Often they had roots in the British Isles
or in Germany.
These settlers brought firearms and steel tools,
which they traded with the native peoples.

In the 1800s,
with tragic injustice,

Mountain people are
religious. This does not
necessarily mean that we
all go to church regularly,
but we are religious in the
sense that most of our
values and the meaning
we see in life spring from
religious sources. Formally
organized churches that
the early settlers were
a part of required an
educated clergy and
centralized organization,
impractical requirements
in the wilderness, and so
autonomous sects sprang
up. These individualistic
churches stressed the
fundamentals of the faith
and depended on local
resources and leadership.

Loyal Jones
*Appalachian Values*³⁴

the federal government drove
many of the native peoples westward,
often at the cost of their lives.
The most infamous story was
the Cherokee "Trail of Tears."³⁵

At this time,
many black and white settlers
adopted native babies left with them
so the infants would not starve.

Still, the mountain people loved freedom.
Indeed the Underground Railroad,
the secret route for escaping slaves,
ran through these mountains.
For everyone knew that in general
the mountain people were no friends
of tyranny or of slavery.

The mountaineers tried to farm the land,
but the soil was thin and erosion heavy.
As the soil wore out,
they moved higher into the hills.
There they lived in great poverty,
but also in creative simplicity.
And they lived in isolation from outside society,
but they became close to land and kin,
and with a strong sense of independence,
yet with a rich sense of family and roots.

Possessing seeds, tools, and often a Bible,
the women gathered and preserved,
the men hunted and timbered,
and both gardened.
Though they owned few goods,
many were works of art,
like lovely quilts,
or ever present musical instruments.³⁶

They made the most of natural gifts
from the material of the forests,
and from the fruit of their gardens.
They learned well from the native peoples,
including the ways of natural medicine.

"Great pride was taken
in the past in good
craftsmanship—in the
design, quality and beauty
of wood in a chair, the inlay
and carving on a rifle, the
stitchery, design and variety
in a quilt, the vegetable
dyes in a woven piece.
Much time was put into
making household utensils
attractive. There was fine
exceptional craftsmanship
in items which were
beyond necessities, such
as in the banjos, fiddles,
and dulcimers which were
played with great skill.
Appalachian people have
perpetuated or created some
of the most beautiful songs
in the field of folk music."

Loyal Jones
*Appalachian Values*³⁷



Brunner-Berea

"Because across so many Appalachian counties this unsustainable economics threatens the community of life across both natural and social ecology, the region now stands at an historic crossroads." Page 63

The Industrial Age³⁸

In the modern industrial age,
beginning in the late 1800s,
giant corporations came to the mountains,
especially with the railroad.
First they came for timber,
and then even more for coal.

These corporations recruited outside labor,
both from the South and from other countries,
especially to work in the mines:

- Italians and Slavs,
- Germans and Irish,
- Lebanese and Hungarians,
- and more African Americans.

Sadly, in rejection of God's teaching
that all humans make up only one family,
the coal camps were divided,
with most white European Americans
separated from African and Native Americans,
and also with Italian American immigrants
initially set apart from both groups.

But together these workers built a new unity
in our country's labor movement.
In this new industrial age, however,
Appalachia lost its economic independence.
The land, its timber, and rights to its minerals
came under the control of outside corporations.

Late in the industrial age,
as the coal mines began to automate,
machines replaced human workers,
whole coal towns were left without jobs,
and the land was often left devastated.
Then new industries came to Appalachia
in search of cheap labor.

They brought textile and clothing factories.
But the new jobs were not enough.
Millions of unemployed people

"My dad worked for 42 years
for the same coal company
. . . . When he retired, they
never even said thank you,
and then they fought him
on his black lung (disease
benefits) until he almost had
to die to get it They say,
'Men in McDowell County
don't work, they're unionized,
they don't believe in working.'
That's not the men I grew up
with. They worked day and
night. If that mine worked
24 hours per day, 7 days per
week, they worked. They went
for additional training. They
were some of the most highly-
skilled industrialized laborers
in the world. (Then) they
mechanized The coal
mines had destroyed faith.
There's no work. There's no
safe haven for our families
any more because houses are
falling apart. Even if they have
the skill, they don't have the
money to get the materials to
repair them."

from hearing sponsored by
the Diocese of Wheeling-
Charleston³⁹

migrated out of Appalachia,
especially to cities like Detroit and Chicago,
in search of work.

The Post-Industrial Crisis

Starting in the 1960s
the industrial age of blue-collar workers,
like miners and factory-workers,
began to end.

In its place there began to arise
a new electronic era,
oriented especially to information workers,
but also exporting labor-intensive work
to distant countries where labor was cheap
and often brutally oppressed.

At the same time new developments
in communications and transportation
began to spread the urban consumer way of life
even to remote towns of Appalachia.
The federal Appalachian Regional Commission
promoted roads and highways
to connect the region on the inside
and to open it up to the outside.

With the new developments,
still more people came to Appalachia:

- older people seeking retirement,
- middle-class managers and professionals,
- Hispanic-American workers,
- Asian-American workers.

These new folks expanded
the richness of Appalachia's people.

With new highways it was hoped that
"development" would come to the region.
By and large "development" did not come.
And now so many good people
found themselves without work.
The post-industrial crisis was already starting.⁴⁰

Yet large super-stores did come to Appalachia.
They brought new consumer goods,
but unfortunately they also often

- undermined local businesses,
- drained capital from the region,
- weakened local government,
- bled resources from smaller rural towns.

They also fostered the modern consumer society,
the very opposite of Appalachia's old traditions
of artistic simplicity and creative crafts.

At the same time
coal companies increased strip-mining,
again highly mechanized,
and often destructive of natural ecology.
Then, too, giant machines
began to clear-cut the forests
and to send the lumber elsewhere.
The new damage was greatest
in the precious rural areas.

Meanwhile, in remote rural areas,
other outside companies
began to try to turn Appalachia
into a place to dump out-of-state garbage
—the waste of the consumer society.⁴¹

These same remote rural areas
have also been identified
as places for countless new prisons,
where human beings from distant cities,
often victims of inner-city unemployment,
are being dumped off,
as if they were social waste.

Meanwhile local governments,
especially in remote rural counties,
are being tempted to depend for revenues
on the dumping of out-of-state waste,
or else on new prisons,
as the only way of creating jobs.

In sum, the new economic system appears to be trying to turn Appalachia into a social and natural dumping ground, exploited in a post-industrial way which threatens the very web of life. Such an economic path is not the way of sustainable community.⁴²

At a Crossroads

Because across so many Appalachian counties this unsustainable economics threatens the community of life across both natural and social ecology, the region now stands at an historic crossroads.

The very idea that economics should threaten both natural and social ecology is a contradiction.

For the word “economics,” comes from the Greek *oikos* and *nomos*, which together mean “ordering of the home.” Similarly the word “ecology” comes from the Greek *oikos* and *logos*, which together mean “logic of the home.” How can economics and ecology, as the logic and order of the home, be mutually opposed? For the “home” is only one place.

In our regional hearings, we could not help but feel people’s deep anxiety, as they face this crossroads.⁴⁴

Countless folks told us about their worries:

- lack of good jobs,
- smaller paychecks in remaining jobs,
- large amounts of unemployment,
- a harder time making ends meet,
- young people having to leave the region,

“Our criminal justice system is failing. Too often, it does not offer security to our society, just penalties and rehabilitation to offenders, or respect and restitution to victims. Clearly, those who commit crimes must be swiftly apprehended, justly tried, appropriately punished, and held to proper restitution. However, correctional facilities must do more than confine criminals; they must rehabilitate persons and help rebuild lives. The vast majority of those in prison return to society. We must ensure that incarceration does not simply warehouse those who commit crimes but helps them overcome the behaviors, attitudes, and actions that led to criminal activity. The answer is not simply constructing more and more prisons but also constructing a society where every person has the opportunity to participate in economic and social life with dignity and responsibility.”

U.S. Catholic Bishops
*Confronting a Culture
of Violence*⁴³

- people in their prime despairing,
- lack of health care,
- local businesses closing,
- whole towns dying,
- great pressures on families,
- increased drug and alcohol abuse,
- violence against women and children,
- more crime, murder, and suicide,
- abandonment of families,
- the elderly being left alone,
- contamination of the waters,
- clear-cutting of the forests,
- destructive strip-mining,
- pollution in the mountain haze,
- flooding in the hollows after erosion,
- acid rain in the high altitudes,
- and so much more.

And, at the intimate level, tragically those who are so victimized sometimes fall prey to rage and despair, and sometimes wrongly express their anger in crimes against themselves and others, even in violence against women and children.⁴⁵

To all this we add our own worries that, as the social and ecological crises increase, a new selfishness spreads across the land, and not only in Appalachia.

We see this more broadly in

- abandonment of the poor,
- increase of racism and scape-goating,
- demands for more and more guns,
- growing use of the death-penalty,
- campaigns for abortion and euthanasia,
- regional wars across the planet.

One main reason for these worries is that we are now struggling between:

- the death of the modern industrial age, and
- the birth of a postmodern electronic age.⁴⁶

As we enter this dangerous transition,
it is now clear that the industrial working class
and much of the corporate middle class are,
as they say, “downwardly mobile.”
Jobs are disappearing and income is falling.⁴⁷

It is also clear that in American society,
in terms of wealth as well as income,
the top has been gaining
and the bottom has been losing.⁴⁸

Which Path to Choose?

In this new context
is the special place of Appalachia
now to be reduced to a dumping ground?
Are we to forget and even obliterate:

- the ancient struggle of Earth to birth these mountains?
- the long evolutionary journey of life which burst forth from them?
- the gifts of the ancient Native Peoples, whose presence still graces this region?
- the simple and spiritual colonial culture which grew out of the meeting here of Native, European, and African peoples?
- the sacrifices and struggles of generations of farming and mining families?
- the gift of God which is this precious region called Appalachia?

Increasingly it seems that
the deepest conflict across Appalachia,
and indeed around the world,
is at every level between

- those who support sustainable community,
- and those who undermine it.

In this anxiety-laden moment,
we believe that the people of Appalachia,
like the whole nation and all the world,
now face two alternative paths.

- In one path, which is not sustainable, Appalachia would be devastated by uprooted outside capital and by uprooted inappropriate technologies, unaccountable to local communities and converting people and the rest of nature into waste from the consumer society.
- In the other path, which is sustainable, the people and land of Appalachia, using their own rich gifts in social and ecological cooperation, and taking advantage of the new tools of the electronic age, would form authentic local communities rooted in God's sacred web of life.⁵⁰

Standing now at this crossroads,
along with the people of Appalachia,
we do not immediately turn to action,
but first stop to listen
to the life-giving Word of God.



Brunner-Berea

Part II: The Bible and the Church's Teaching

"I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings ..."
(Genesis 9:13-15)

Choose Life!

Today, in the face of a culture of death,
we search for a path of life.
In the face of an unsustainable society,
we seek sustainable communities.

To guide us in this search,
the Holy Spirit urges us to remember
that God gave us two revelations:

- the revelation of creation,
expressed in the whole universe; and
- the revelation of redemption,
expressed in Jesus and his grace.

But there is only one world,
both created and redeemed,
and only one God,
both Creator and Redeemer.

Those who seek only the God of redemption,
and forget the God of creation,
are not serving Jesus, the life of the world.
Thus the Gospel of John teaches us that

*“All things came to be through him
and without him nothing came to be . . .
he was in the world,
and the world came to be through him.”*
(John 1:3, 10)

Love for Creation

As the book of Genesis tells us,
God made a rainbow covenant
not simply with humans,
but with all living creatures.
In this covenant,
we humans are not separate from Earth.
*“I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign
of the covenant between me and the earth.
When I bring clouds over the earth,
and the bow appears in the clouds,*

I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings . . . ”
(Genesis 9:13–15)

In the book of Genesis
the Hebrew word for “Earth” is *adamah*,
while the Hebrew word for “human” is *adam*.
So we humans are Earth-creatures.
Thus, using a literal translation,
we read in Genesis 2:8 that
The Lord God planted a garden in Eden,
in the east,
and God planted there the Earth-creature
whom God had formed.

So too in English the word “human”
is related to the word “humus,”
and also to the word “humble.”

When we humans are humble,
we are faithful to who we are,
children of our mother Earth.
With her we are all creatures
of the one Creator and Redeemer.

One Catholic Christian who celebrated
God as Creator and Redeemer
was the famous Italian, Francis of Assisi,
so devoted to the poor,
and recently proclaimed by Pope John Paul II
as the patron saint of ecology.⁵¹

Another medieval Catholic Christian mystic,
Hildegard von Bingen,
a Benedictine abbess in Germany,
whom Pope John Paul II called
“a light to her people and her time
(who) shines out more brightly today,”
also poetically praised
the God of creation and redemption⁵²

Praise be to Thee my Lord
With all thy creatures,
Especially for Master Brother Sun,
Who illuminates the day for us,
And Thee Most High he manifests.

Praise be to Thee my Lord
For Sister Moon and for the Stars.
In Heaven Thou has formed them,
Shining, precious, fair.

Praise be to Thee my Lord for
Brother Wind,
For air and clouds,
Clear sky and all the weathers,
Through which Thou sustainest
All creatures.

Praise be to Thee my Lord for
Sister Water.
She is useful and humble,
Precious and pure.

Praise be to Thee my Lord for
Brother Fire,
Through him our night
Thou dost enlighten,
And he is fair and merry,
Boisterous and strong.

Praise be to Thee my Lord
For our sister Mother Earth,
Who nourishes and sustains us all,
Bringing forth diverse fruits
And many-colored flowers and herbs

Francis of Assisi
Canticles of the Creatures

Sin and its Healing

Yet by our sin we humans
have attacked God's beloved creation,
both socially and ecologically.
The evil power of our sins
has spilled over into human institutions,
and has also wounded God's holy creation.⁵⁴
*"We know that all creation is groaning
in labor pains even until now . . ."*
(Romans 8:22)

Thus, the deep root of the social crisis,
that is, the wounding of the poor,
and the deep root of the ecological crisis,
that is, the wounding of the Earth,
can be found in human sin.

For what is the oppression of the poor,
or still worse their abandonment,
but a rejection of the God of love?
And what is the destruction of the Earth
but another rejection of the same God of love?

According to the Bible,
the breaking of living communion
between humans and the land
is linked to the sins of idolatry and injustice,
which the prophets constantly denounced.⁵⁵

The healing of social and ecological sin
requires, therefore,
both our reconciliation with the land
and our reconciliation with the poor.
Gratefully this reconciliation is already given to us
in the person of Jesus.

Jesus is the healing revelation
of God's abiding love for creation.
the Gospel of John again teaches us,
*For God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son . . .*
(John 3:16)

The fire has its flames and
Praises God.
The wind blows the flame
and Praises God.
In the voice
we hear the word
Which praises God.
And the word, when heard,
Praises God.
So all creation is a song of
Praise to God.

Hildegard of Bingen
*Letters*⁵³

We will not see the completion of this healing
until Jesus comes again in glory.
But while we wait,
we are called in the power of the Spirit
to announce Jesus' coming
by working for justice and peace,
and for the integrity of creation.⁵⁶

*Fortunate are those
who have the spirit of the poor,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*
*Fortunate are the gentle,
they shall own the earth.*
*Fortunate are those
who hunger and thirst for justice,
for they shall be satisfied.*
(Matthew 5:3-6)⁵⁷

Catholic Social Teaching

Just as the God of love is the God of community,
so we as a community need to try together
to understand God's teaching
about how creation should be honored.

We try to do this through the tradition
called "Catholic social teaching,"
frequently expressed in papal encyclicals.⁵⁸
In this tradition,
asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
and in dialogue with the community of faith,
we try to interpret God's word for today's society.
This tradition, we believe,
is a rich resource for us
as we seek to find a path of life
based on sustainable communities.

Here we offer a brief summary
of the present state of this teaching,
in the form of ethical principles,
particularly as they apply to Appalachia.



Brunner-Berea

"The healing of social and ecological sin requires therefore, both our reconciliation with the land and our reconciliation with the poor. Gratefully this reconciliation is already given to us in the person of Jesus." Page 70

Human Dignity

A first principle is *human dignity*.
This principle reflects the biblical teaching
that we humans are made in the image of God.⁵⁹

Human dignity is a key ethical foundation
for sustainable community.
Because of God's image within us,
every human person has the right
to all that is needed to guarantee human dignity.

Also all persons have the duty
to defend human dignity
for themselves and for others,
and to bring to fulfillment
by their own gifts and efforts
all that the image of God implies.

The deepest meaning
of the image of God within us
is that we are co-creators with God,
that we share in God's own creativity.⁶⁰
Yet the consumer society rejects this teaching.⁶²
It tries to convince us

- that we are what we buy and consume
- that our joy is not from our creative power,
- that we need what others say we need.

The consumer society is a direct attack
upon the image of God within us,
and an attack on justice, peace, and ecology.

Community

The second principle is *community*,
sometimes referred to as "the common good,"
expressed at every level from the family
to the whole human race,
including Earth's whole community of life.⁶³
The principle of community flows from
the revelation that God is a community,
a Trinity of three persons in one:

"The honest acceptance
of people is the most
durable, the most easily
recognized characteristic
(of mountain people).
I would account for it
solely on the basis of
Calvinistic theology,
which emphasized the
good in the presence of
the human personality.
That had to be respected
in the face of the man
and in the face of the
woman."

Cratis Williams
from *Mountain Voices*⁶⁰

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our human dignity can never be separated from community with our sisters and brothers, nor from our community with the rest of creation. We are never solely individuals, devoted only to competition and selfishness. Rather we are always members of community, truly responsible for our sisters and brothers, and also for God's sacred Earth.

*Then the righteous will ask him:
"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you
or thirsty and give you drink?
When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,
or naked and clothe you?
When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?"
And the king will say in reply,*

*"Amen. I say to you,
whatever you did for one of the least of mine . . .
you did for me."
(Matthew 25:37–40)*

It is from this principle of community that Catholic social teaching derives its strong support for the rights of workers to form unions and to bargain collectively.⁶⁴

The deepest place of this community, and the model for all communities, is the family, the first and fundamental cell of society and church. It is from family that all society grows, and in which all society needs to remain rooted.⁶⁵

Economics

The principles of human dignity and community represent a prophetic challenge to the two modern industrial ideologies:

- materialistic socialism, and
- materialistic capitalism.

Both tend to substitute economic determinism for human and ecological values, and even for spiritual values.⁶⁷

Catholic social teaching does not reject the important role of business in society. But it does insist on a third principle, *individualistic competition should not undermine community solidarity, nor should collectivist bureaucracy smother individual creativity.*⁶⁸

The market needs to be rooted in the creative community of the local web of life. Its rooted place should not be eroded by governmental or corporate bureaucracies. Similarly the market needs to be guided by human dignity and by social and ecological community.⁶⁹

An economy which fails to remain rooted in these values does not reflect the plan of the Creator, who, after all, is the great economist.⁷⁰

Subsidiarity

A fourth principle in Catholic social teaching, is called *subsidiarity*.⁷²

The word comes from the Latin *subsidium*, which means “help.” According to this principle, big organizations should help smaller ones and not undermine them.

While this principle has been applied to politics, in the age of giant multinational corporations it also needs to be applied to economics. Just as political bureaucracies should not undermine local government,

Mountain people, you couldn't tell them from lowland people except by their friendliness, their desire to help one another. They're mighty good at that . . . Neighborliness I guess you'd call it.

Horton Cooper
from *Mountain Voices*⁶⁶

Superdevelopment, which consists in an excessive availability of every kind of material goods for the benefit of certain social groups, easily makes people slaves of “possession” and of immediate gratification . . . This is the so-called civilization of “consumption” or “consumerism,” which involves so much “throwing-away” and “waste.”

John Paul II
*On Social Concern*⁷¹

so business bureaucracies should not undermine local economics. The role of large organizations should only be to assist the local web of life.

If outside giant businesses or large governmental bureaucracies were to undermine the local web of life, they would be like a cancer which invaded its host organism only to drain off the life. Yet in many counties of Appalachia, financial capital is being drained from rooted communities, while local social and ecological capital is being undermined.⁷⁴

Ownership

A fifth principle, corresponding to human dignity and community, carries two themes, *the right to property and the universal destination of all created goods.*⁷⁵

Individuals have a right to private property, as usually the best way to do work, to serve oneself and family. But private property also needs to show that it truly serves the community.

No one truly owns any part of creation. Rather all creation belongs only to God. We may be assigned to care for parts of it, but only if we serve the needs of others, along with our own needs.

*The Lord said to Moses
"The land shall not be sold in perpetuity;
for the land is mine,
and you are but aliens
who have become my tenants."
(Leviticus 25:1, 23)*

The region is part of an increased internationalization of the economy. Wood from the Appalachian region is exported overseas, and furniture made from the wood is imported to the United States. Department stores sell . . . (Appalachian) boots made in Romania. Pittsburgh banks invest in steel-exporting countries like Brazil and Japan. American coal companies develop the coal reserves of their multinational parent companies in Colombia and China and compete with Appalachian coal for the European steam coal market.

Richard A. Couto
*An American Challenge*⁷³

Should property owners become self-centered, and not use God's creation for community, then, according to Catholic teaching, its possession can violate God's law. Where that happens there is need for responsible and legal land reform.

For the people and the land go together, by the very design of God.⁷⁶ Again, in the message of God to Moses,

"In this year of jubilee . . . when one of your countrymen is reduced to poverty and . . . does not acquire sufficient means to buy back the land, . . . it must be released and returned to its original owner."
(Leviticus 25:1, 13, 25, 28)

"(Land reform would) free Appalachia from the grip of absentee corporations that own 80 per cent of the land in the coal-producing mountains where a working family cannot find a house site, much less a farm or woodlot to make its own."

Richard C. Austin
*Reclaiming America*⁷⁷

Ecology

Human dignity and community are linked with the wider dignity and community of nature in the single web of life. We may describe this reality as a sixth principle, *the natural order of creation*.

To follow the natural order of creation, economics should not undermine human dignity and community, nor the dignity and community of nature. It needs to remain rooted in the web of life, according to natural and social ecology.⁷⁸

If we fail to care for our precious Earth, and for the poor, then creation itself will rebel against us.⁷⁹ Further, to undermine nature and the poor is to reject the word of God in creation.

Deep within the ecological crisis lies the spiritual error called materialism. Materialism does not reverence God's creation. Instead it abuses creation

Catholics look to nature, in natural theology, for indications of God's existence and purpose. In elaborating a natural moral law, we look to natural processes themselves for norms for human behavior.

U.S. Catholic Bishops
*Renewing the Earth*⁸⁰

in the name of mammon.

Cut off from God's presence in creation,
the materialistic spirit grows destructive.
Jesus told us clearly

No servant can serve two masters.
He will either hate one and love the other
or be devoted to one and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and mammon.
(Luke 16:13)

Sustainability

A seventh principle is *sustainability*.⁸¹
Our economic life must put back
into the social and ecological community
as much as it takes out,
so that our communities will be sustainable
for future generations.⁸²

To violate the principle of sustainability
is to steal from our own children,
and, like an addict,
to walk slowly down the path of destruction.

Sustainability now becomes a central criterion
for all human endeavors.
We can no longer take for granted
that all technological interventions into nature
are signs of true progress.⁸⁴

Government

In the search for a path of life,
and for sustainable communities,
an eighth principle
from Catholic social teaching tells us that
it is *the role of government to
serve the common good*.⁸⁵

Government needs to help to create conditions
which support human dignity and community,
as well as natural dignity and community,

The increasing devastation
of the world of nature is
apparent to all. It results
from the behavior of people
who show a callous disregard
for the hidden, yet perceivable
requirements of the order and
harmony which governs nature
itself . . . It is manifestly unjust
that a privileged few should
continue to accumulate excess
goods, squandering available
resources, while masses of
people are living in conditions
of misery at the very lowest
level of subsistence. Today, the
dramatic threat of ecological
breakdown is teaching us the
extent to which greed and
selfishness—both individual
and collective—are contrary
to the order of creation, an
order which is characterized by
mutual interdependence.

John Paul II
*The Ecological Crisis*⁸³

The concepts of an ordered
universe and a common
heritage both point to
the necessity of a more
internationally coordinated
approach to the management
of the earth's goods. In many
cases the effects of ecological
(and social) problems
transcend the borders of
individual states; hence their
solution cannot be found solely
on the national level.

John Paul II
*The Ecological Crisis*⁸⁶

in service of sustainable communities
across the whole web of life.

Further, our concern with the common good
cannot be limited to our own nation.
Rather we need a planetary concern
for Earth's whole web of life.

Facing the Future

Now, at the end of the industrial age
and at the birth of the electronic age,
we need to discern how to follow these principles
in the journey before us.

Amidst this revolutionary transformation,
we need to find a path which

- reverences God in all of nature and the poor,
- defends human dignity and community,
- reroots business in the web of life,
- respects the principle of subsidiarity,
- promotes land reform,
- supports natural and social ecology,
- recreates sustainable communities,
- uses government for the common good,
- and regenerates the web of life.

In sum, we need to find a path

- out of a culture of death,
- into a culture of life.

It is to such a path that we now turn.



Brunner-Berea

Part III: The Call of the Spirit

"The Spirit of God is always active in history bringing forth from emptiness and emptiness and chaos ever fresh creativity." Page 82

Sustainable Communities

The Spirit of God is always active in history bringing forth from emptiness and chaos ever fresh creativity.

Thus we read in the Book of Genesis,
*In the beginning,
when God created the heavens and the earth,
the earth was a formless wasteland
and darkness covered the abyss,
while a mighty wind swept over the waters.*
(Genesis 1:1)

In our present times, we believe,
the mighty wind of God's Spirit is stirring up
people's imaginations
to find new ways of living together,
based especially on the full community
of all life, including

- love of all nature, and
- love of the poor.

We call these new ways
the rooted path of *sustainable communities*.

These sustainable communities will

- conserve and not waste,
- be simpler but better,
- keep most resources circulating locally,
- create sustainable livelihoods,
- support family life,
- protect the richness of nature,
- develop people spiritually,
- and follow God's values.

So we urge the people of Appalachia,
and indeed people everywhere,
to deepen their search for new ways
to regenerate natural and social ecology,
and thus to care for the poor and all of the Earth
across the web of life.

I believe societies need
some rootedness in earth
as a primary place. Family
and place are integral
to each other. Mothers
all over the world know
this. Social systems need
to reflect that we are
part of earth life. We are
intimately connected to
earth as the source of our
life.

Marie Cirillo
*The Power of Hope*⁸⁷

In offering our gift to this search, we propose some strategic recommendations, and share some creative examples for the path of sustainability.⁸⁸ These ideas and experiments are not the full nor final answer to all the problems of Appalachia. But we do see them as creative seeds of a new civilization.

Though this civilization would not be the final Reign of God, we are reminded about Jesus' parable of how great things grow from small seeds. *The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest seed of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush and the birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.* (Matthew 13:31-32)

Sustainable Development

Sustainable communities need to be part of a wider strategy of what is called "sustainable development."

As we have seen, the present development is not working. Following the logic of the consumer society, it offers a frightening scenario for the future of Appalachia:

- mining of coal by machines not people,
- clear-cutting of forests to export timber,
- rural dumping of out-of-state waste,
- rural warehousing of urban prisoners,
- extensive unemployment and poverty,
- devastation of the region's ecology.

In response, there has emerged the notion of "sustainable development," and also of "sustainable livelihoods."⁹⁰

The Catholic staff of a county adult reading program found a new way to contribute to grass-roots education. When students who lived near a surface mining site complained that they didn't know enough about government regulations to question mining practices, the staff took action. Working with people from state and federal agencies, they "translated" the highly technical information into pamphlets at about the fourth grade reading level. The topics ranged from "What is a Pre-Blast Survey?" to "How can I use my land after it has been mined?" These were so successful and widely accepted that the program turned its attention to other types of information students wanted. The program collected a series of oral histories, recording and transcribing the stories of various people in the area. These stories were brought out in booklet form for the use of adult education programs, and are being used throughout Appalachia. The staff continues these projects, believing that the people should have what they need to protect their land and homes, and to preserve their culture.

Carol Warren⁸⁹

In 1983 the United Nations set up
The World Commission on
Environment and Development
to explore a sustainable society.⁹¹

In the judgment of many people,
a sustainable society would build primarily
on the rooted local informal economy,
all in communion with the local ecosystem.
Often this is called the “social economy,”
in contrast to the global “market economy,”
though the local economy is itself a market.
Traditionally in most cultures,
this local social market has been rooted
in women’s economic activities.⁹²

A central concept in sustainable development
is support for “micro-enterprises;”
that is, small, often home-based businesses,
typically run by women.
Small amounts of capital
often go a long way with such women.⁹³

There is need, we believe,
for various regions within Appalachia,
perhaps on the county level,
to begin exploring the alternative development
of sustainable communities,
with emphasis on
the social economy of women.

In sustainable development,
all businesses new or old,
local or from the outside,
need to respect the divine order
of social and natural ecology.

Now we will summarize
what appear to us as
guidelines for sustainable development.
These guidelines apply
especially to basic necessities,
like energy, food, water and housing.
If these guidelines are followed,
then it seems that costs will be reduced,

The Mountain Women’s
Exchange moved from
respecting all that grass-
roots women could learn
from each other with
experience rich and varied,
to all that Mountain people
could learn through formal
learning. Regular meetings
plus a two-year specially
designed college course
in rural community
development grounded
the women of this valley
as creative, intelligent and
committed people.

Marie Cirillo⁹⁴

resources will serve the full community,
and the web of life will grow stronger.

Sustainable Agriculture

An important first step,
it seems to us,
is for a community to grow its own food,
or at least as much as possible,
and to do so in a way
which does not harm the land or the people.
Here we need to turn to
what is called “sustainable agriculture.”⁹⁵

While agriculture should protect nature,
it also should protect humans.
We believe that agriculture needs
to follow social ecology as well.
So agriculture needs to be

- not only ecologically sustainable,
- but also socially sustainable.

One creative way of doing this
is by means of what is called
“Community-Supported Agriculture” (CSA),
brought to this country from Japan.⁹⁶

The concept is simple.
Local families and individuals
pay part of the farmer’s budget,
in exchange for a share of the farm’s produce.
Today the movement is growing,
and there are hundreds of CSAs
across the country.

A next step would be to carry out,
right at the local level,
the processing and retailing
of secondary food products,
so that this business activity
stays within the local web of life.⁹⁷

In this regard, we are reminded

Sustainable agriculture
begins with three central
principles of the natural
world. Diversity makes
the farm healthier,
more resilient, and less
dependent on synthetic
pesticides. Understanding
and supporting the
interconnections among
all different species and
elements in the farm
ecosystem saves energy and
creates opportunities for
symbiosis, as for example
when corn plants provide
shade and support for late
spring peas, while the peas
provide a small amount
of nitrogen for the corn.
Respecting and utilizing
natural regeneration
processes by composting,
cropcovering, and mulching
reduces waste, improves the
soil, and decreases the need
for off-farm fertilizers.

Anthony Flaccavento
*Sustainable Agriculture*⁹⁹

of the creative work
of the African American scientist,
George Washington Carver.
Using science and imagination,
he showed how the poorest farmers
could restore eroded soil
and create countless products
from local plants and minerals.
And then he showed how
to build new regional industries
using these same local gifts.
Carver was a true pioneer
in sustainable development.⁹⁸

Sustainable Forestry

Since Appalachia is basically forest,
one of the most precious gifts
which God has given to the Appalachian people
is the forest itself.
Here it seems that we have
an ecological model of forestry
with what may be called
“Sustainable Forestry.”¹⁰⁰

In this model, there is no clear cutting.
Mature timber is selectively harvested,
while the forest itself is sustained
in all its biodiversity.
In addition, there is great care
in the felling of cut trees,
so as not to damage the remaining ones.

The logger cuts the tree into logs
while still in the forest,
and even uses draft horses
to pull the logs out,
so as not to damage the forest.
Ideally the logs are dried locally,
by means of a solar kiln.

In this model of forestry,
the crop lasts forever,
and the forest’s biodiversity remains intact.

In 1988, a waferboard
factory moved to town. A
local woman, who’d lived
in another town where the
same company did business,
organized citizens to try to
force the company to install
pollution control equipment,
and to improve in-plant safety
procedures. The company
threatened to leave town if
forced into these measures.
For the next two years, a
terrible and divisive battle
was waged in this town, with
loggers and company folks on
one side, environmentalists
and the union on the other.
It was the classic struggle
which plagued Appalachian
communities for decades.
Jobs or the environment?
Seven years later the 20-year
old son of this woman is now
one of several horse-logging
entrepreneurs to start a
business in the region. The
environmentally sensitive
logging they’re doing is part
of a larger Sustainable Wood
Products effort now underway.

Anthony Flaccavento¹⁰¹

It is important to remember
that the forest is more than the trees.
It is a whole biosystem,
with countless life-forms,
all of which form a community of life.

Sustainable Ownership

One great problem
in some counties of Appalachia,
particularly in Central Appalachia,
is that often the local people
do not own the land,
nor the minerals,
nor the timber.¹⁰²

So serious is this problem,
at least in some areas,
that once again with others we believe
that it is now time for
just and legal land reform.¹⁰³

We base this concern
on the principle of Catholic teaching
that property is for the common good,
and also on the principle of subsidiarity.
So we believe that most property
should be rooted in the local community.

One important step
toward giving people control over land
is what is called a "land trust."
Here land is held in perpetual trust
and then made available to local people
for housing and gardening
at low cost and with community support.¹⁰⁴

Sustainable Technologies

Sometimes people talk as if
technology were the problem.
We don't think that's the case,
for we see the creation of technologies
as part of humanity's

There is a new sense that
the private, individual thing
isn't working. Before, there
was enough for everyone;
now people have to plan
and manage for the future.
The land trust is an effort
for fairness in distribution
of land. Land trusts have
common lands. And the
people have a commitment
to care for the land and
to care for one another. It
is a growing movement in
Appalachia for poor people.

from a 1994 hearing
sponsored by the
Office of Justice-Peace-
Integrity of Creation,
Diocese of Knoxville.¹⁰⁵

co-creativity with the Creator.

The real question, we believe, is
“Which technologies?”
Does a particular technology
help people or hurt them?
Does it help Earth or hurt it?

The answer to this question is
“appropriate technologies.”

Technologies are only instruments.
They need to be appropriately guided,
not only in their use,
but also in their very design,
according to humanity’s ultimate goals
which they are to serve.¹⁰⁶

The authentic goals of all technologies
need to serve the human community,
cherish the ecosystem,
and give glory to the Creator.

So we encourage creative experiments
in technologies which will be
appropriate for Appalachia,
particularly for its poorer families,
and for its air, soil, water, and vegetation.

And we praise the many such experiments
already underway in Appalachia.¹⁰⁷
Here pioneers are developing
appropriate technologies
which

- can be replicated by local people,
- cost very little,
- will make people self-reliant,
- will improve the quality of life,
- will build up the local community,
- will protect the local ecology.

These experiments include:

- solar heating for space and water,

The divine on-going
creation story invites
us to participate as co-
creators making use
of our unique talents
and the tools that are
available and discerned
to be appropriate . . .
. God works through
us and we are effective
through properly chosen
tools that can be used
for harm or good
Through respectful use,
technologies may be
means to . . . liberation
from scourges of famine
and disease or, when
improperly used, (they
become) the scourge itself
that denudes the land,
fouls rivers and air, and
strips Earth of its valuable
resources.

Al Fritsch, SJ
Appalachia Science in
the Public Interest¹⁰⁸



Brunner-Berea

"The authentic goals of all technologies need to serve the human community, cherish the ecosystem, and give glory to the Creator." Page 88

- affordable houses,
- composting toilets,
- water cisterns,
- very productive gardens.

In their gardening experiments, one group has found that by using creative techniques, they can grow enough food to feed one person for a full year on only 1/16th of an acre.¹⁰⁹

Sustainable Cultures

In this new age of global electronic media, where commercial programming fosters the shallow and degrading values of the consumer society, it is also important that we learn how to sustain our traditional cultures, with their roots in human community and in the community of Earth.

Therefore we encourage visual artists and musicians, story-tellers and historians, as well as family members and churches to pass on to the next generation the heritage of all the peoples of Appalachia.

Just as economics and politics should not be taken over by uprooted global or national bureaucracies, so too culture should not be taken over by global or national media enterprises. Rather all culture should remain rooted in the local web of life.

Sustainable Families

Sometimes our local communities are devastated from the outside, but sometimes they are also devastated from the inside—in the very soul.

In one county, folks created the African-American Historical Cultural Center in the building which was formerly the one room school-house for Blacks. In 1993 the Center promoted the first annual Race Unity Day, which continues to attract hundreds of people from many parts of the region. Most importantly the Center has accumulated photographs, records, documents, artifacts, and video-taped stories from the local African-American community . . . The Center has been the focal point of many articles, television shows, and inspirational pieces regarding rural African Americans in Central Appalachia. Under the guidance of Roadside Theatre the Center initiated story-telling gatherings and collection of oral histories of many local people.

Beth Davies, CND¹¹⁰

Perhaps the worst internal devastation of local families and communities comes from domestic violence. This is not simply an Appalachian problem, but a problem of the whole world.¹¹¹

Families often become unsustainable when people lose their sense of self-worth, particularly when they are out of work, or under great hardship.

Clearly the present economic crisis, not only in Appalachia but around the world, is for many individuals and families one of those moments of great hardship.

In this difficult social context, there arises the terrible temptation for family members to take it out on each other, often with husbands battering wives, and often with parents abusing children.

Often driving such violence are destructive addictions to

- the abuse of alcohol,
- the abuse of drugs,
- the abuse of sex.

Through an addiction, a person tries to gain power, but it is not a life-giving power. Rather all addictions reveal the destructive face of sin.¹¹²

Addictions block a person's creativity, by repressing the image of God. They make the person serve an idol and then point the addicted individuals, and sometimes those around them, slowly toward death.

We also know that addictions are often accompanied by what are called "codependencies." While the addict seeks abusive power,

the codependent rejects good self-power,
claiming to be completely helpless.
Here too there is
a disfiguration of the image of God
deep within the soul.¹¹³

But we trust in Jesus' healing love.
And so we know that
these great wounds can be healed.
To help wounded families to find healing,
and to become emotionally sustainable,
we need prayer and forgiveness,
but not a false forgiveness
which covers up the problem.

For loving forgiveness
must always be based on truth.
To live the truth in love,
we need personal and family supports,
rooted in the local community.

We also need to encourage women
to find their true personal power
in family and public life.
Often women's power has been stifled.
Women's support groups and centers,
including centers for battered women,
as well as centers for addiction recovery,
are very important here.¹¹⁵

At the same time,
we need to encourage men to find
the spiritual depth of their inner souls.
Often men's spirituality
has been repressed in our society.
Here we encourage groups seeking
a new, but really old, men's spirituality,
and we also encourage older men
to mentor younger men and boys.

If men can grow in inner power,
we believe that their outer power
will become more balanced,
and find harmony with women's power.

Women in one coal
camp, where the mines
had closed, started
what they called the
Alcoholism Counseling
and Education Center,
and later the Addiction
Education Center. It's
a grassroots center for
women and men and
children struggling with
addictions themselves
and/or in the family.
The center also provides
space for women's self-
help groups, and for
community organizations,
including those
working on ecology,
and opportunities
for participation in
empowerment and direct
action projects. Much of
the Center's work focuses
on sexual abuse, child-
abuse, and violence. It
explores the relationship
between drugs and
poverty, child-abuse and
violence.

Beth Davies, CND¹¹⁴

This is the way it should be,
for women and men both carry
the mutual power of God's image.
*"The Spirit . . . bears witness with our spirit
that we are children of God,
and if children, then heirs,
heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."*
(Romans 8:16–17)

Therefore we also encourage groups
which help women and men to work together,
particularly to begin creative marriages,
to sustain flourishing ones,
and to heal wounded ones.

Sustainable Churches

One special challenge
for the churches in Appalachia
is for parishes and congregations
to begin themselves to model these ideas.

In ancient times,
after European civilization collapsed,
Benedictine monasteries became
centers for regeneration—
ecologically, socially, and spiritually.
Now might not our own Christian communities
themselves become

- small centers of a sustainable path,
- small islands of creativity,
- proclaimers of a culture of life?¹¹⁷

This would mean, we believe,
experimenting with solar energy,
and organic gardening,
and other appropriate technologies,
right in the local churches.
Perhaps local churches
might even sponsor land trusts,
and encourage local businesses.¹¹⁸
Local churches might also consider providing
"micro-financing," that is, small loans
to local poor people, and often to women,

One of the nice things about
the transitional counseling
program is that it is going
to work to reestablish the
family. We're gonna work with
the mom on an educational
level, provide her some skills
training, help her with her
social service needs, so then
she and her children go out
of that housing program.
She is capable of supporting
herself and her family because
one of the biggest reasons
women choose to go back into
domestic violence situations
is that they have no other
financial alternative. The only
alternative they have is living
with their children on the
streets.

from a West Virginia
hearing in the Diocese of
Wheeling-Charleston¹¹⁶

who would like to start small businesses which would be locally rooted and ecologically responsible.¹¹⁹

In addition, local parishes and congregations could become centers of communications, using electronic technologies, on behalf of the local community.

As Pope John Paul II tells us, we are called to a new evangelization, this time based on electronic technologies, which can make all the world one family.¹²¹ A special gift in this new evangelization is what is popularly called the basic Christian community.

“These are groups of Christians who, at the level of the family or in a similarly restricted setting, come together for prayer, scripture reading, catechesis, and discussion of human and ecclesial problems with a view to a common commitment.”¹²²

We urge all our parishes to make such small communities, so often rooted in the family, the foundation of the new evangelization, and then to invite these small communities to reflect on how they can serve the local and global web of life.

We need a renewed evangelization that converts hearts and transforms society. Pope Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation on evangelization, which was issued in 1975—almost at the same time as our original Appalachian pastoral—defined evangelization in these words: “For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the good news into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence

We invite religious communities to put their newly acquired environmental consciousness into action by converting their landholdings and other property into models of what larger communities can become— healthy ecosystems which revitalize their own neighborhoods. Religious communities can become prophetic models of sustainable resource use. New ways of using property, food, space, and energy can result in lifestyle changes which improve health, cut costs, and enrich the spirit.

Al Fritsch, SJ
*Earth Healing*¹²⁰

transforming humanity from within and making it new."¹²³
Our national bishops conference rephrased this definition noting that "evangelizing means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself."¹²⁴
We must work for personal conversion that is linked to social transformation.

Much More to Say

These are only some of the experiments and ideas presently being explored in Appalachia. Once again we praise them as creative seeds of a new civilization, serving the web of life.

There are other great needs too, and no doubt other important experiments also responding to these needs.

Here we think of the many young people who have been forced to emigrate out of the mountains to the cities. We wish to point out the need for church organizations to serve migrants in the cities where they have gone.¹²⁶
We also think of holistic health care, and in addition of creative education, as pressing needs of local communities.

While there is not space here adequately to address all these issues, we have great hope that the people of Appalachia, in the power of the Spirit, will tap their great spiritual depth to respond to the many challenges which face us all.

New life is already flowing beneath the surface in strong faith-based communities here in the mountains—made up of people who care, "who devote their lives to nurture sanity and the world's poor and the diversity of life on this planet"—communities with strong feminist consciousness which is essential to the creation of an alternative future. It's my conviction that what is going to save us is the building of strong base communities that are stepping "out of the lie into the truth," calling for a new vision of wholeness that begins with lifting up what has been disparaged.

Beth Davies CND¹²⁵

In Conclusion

In conclusion, we wish to thank the many groups across Appalachia who are struggling with these issues. We think here especially of

- the Catholic Committee of Appalachia,
- the Commission on Religion in Appalachia,
- the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center,
- the Highlander Center.

We think too of local parishes and congregations, and particularly of the mountain churches, with such a long history of sustaining the Gospel among humble folk. We praise them all for their service and hope ourselves to learn from them.

And again we thank and praise all the Christian individuals and families, who witness daily in their lives to God's creative and redeeming love.

We also thank and praise all church ministers, be they lay, religious, or ordained, who serve this evangelical energy of God's holy people, *"bearing witness to the kingdom of God"* (Acts 28:23)

We particularly thank all those who took part in the listening sessions in preparation for this pastoral, and in turn made important contributions to its content, as well as the team which guided the drafting of this document.

And we celebrate the many rich cultures of the peoples of Appalachia:

- Native Americans,
the region's original peoples;
- European Americans,
from colonial and industrial immigrations,
as well as recent arrivals;
- African Americans,
with old and rich roots in the region;
- Hispanic Americans,
now moving into the region
in large numbers;
- and Asian Americans,
also now coming to the region.

May the work of all these good people,
show forth the glory of God
revealed across the web of life.

As we noted at the start of this message,
twenty years ago we issued
the Appalachian pastoral letter
from the Catholic bishops of the region.
At that time our focus was mainly on
the economic and political plight of the poor
in the midst of a flourishing industrial system.
Now, twenty years later,
we see people being abandoned
and the region's ecology being attacked
by a postindustrial system
with little or no accountability
to local human communities
nor to the wider web of life.

Therefore, the need for transformation
is even greater than before.
To some, such transformation
may seem impossible.
But we continue to believe
in the spiritual depth and creativity
of the people of Appalachia.
We believe that they can find a way
to remain at home in the web of life.

Such a path would turn away
from the selfish and destructive individualism
which so plagues late modern life.

Instead it would return
to the traditional Catholic teaching
about the common good:

- the common good of all people,
- the common good of the entire ecosystem,
- the common good of the whole web of life.

And so we end now
with the words of our earlier pastoral
from 20 years ago:

*“Dear sisters and brothers,
we urge all of you
not to stop living,
to be a part of the rebirth of utopias,
to recover and defend the struggling dream
of Appalachia itself.*

For it is the weak things of this world
which seem like folly
that the Spirit takes up
and makes its own.
The dream of the mountains’ struggle,
and the dream of simplicity
and of justice,
like so many other repressed visions
is, we believe,
the voice of the Lord among us.¹²⁷

In taking them up again,
hopefully the church
might once again
be known as

- *a center of the Spirit,*
- *a place where poetry dares to speak,*
- *where the song reigns unchallenged,*
- *where art flourishes,*
- *where nature is welcome,*
- *where humble people and humble needs come first,*
- *where justice speaks loudly,*
- *where in a wilderness of idolatrous
destruction the great voice of God
still cries out for Life.”*

(This Land Is Home to Me, 1975,¹²⁸ Catholic Bishops of Appalachia)

Endnotes This Land Is Home to Me

- ¹ Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *PatchQuilt*, March 1974, p.1.
- ² Vatican Council 11, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.
- ³ Second General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*.
- ⁴ Exodus 3:7-8
- ⁵ PatchQuilt, September 1973, p.2; Isaiah 58; 61:1-9; Luke 4:18; Second General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, Introduction.
- ⁶ I John 1 :8-10; *Decree on Bishops pastoral Office in the Church*, Vatican Council II
- ⁷ John 8:45; 15:26-16:15
- ⁸ Juan Alfaro, S.J., *Pontifical Commission on Justice World Peace*, a biblical study on justice.
- ⁹ Exodus 2:23-24; 3:7-10; Isaiah 40:3-5; Luke 3:4-6
- ¹⁰ PatchQuilt, September 1973, p.2.
- ¹¹ *Growing Up Country*, Jim Axelrodi, editor.
- ¹² Annual Report of the Appalachia Region Commission, 1972.
- ¹³ Bureau of Mines Bulletin IC 8531, US Coal Reserves Map, 1971.
- ¹⁴ Commission on Religion in Appalachia, *Vantage Point*.
- ¹⁵ *John Barry, Appalachia Strip mining and the Church*.
- ¹⁶ Officers Report to the United Mine Workers of America 40th Annual Convention, *The Year of the Rank and File*, 1973.
- ¹⁷ *ibid*; Boyer and Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*.
- ¹⁸ Merle Travis, *Sixteen Tons*, Hill and Range Songs, Inc., 1974. 19 The Year of the Rank and File, UMWA.
- ²⁰ Walls and Stephenson, *Appalachia in the Sixties*
- ²¹ *Vance Packard, The Hidden Persuaders*. Donella H. Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth*. *Vance Packard, The Waste Makers*.
- 100 *Endnotes This Land Is Home to Me*

- ²² Jerome Hansen, "Coal-One Answer to Energy Problems," Detroit News, March
²⁵ 1974, pp1 a, 10a
- ²³ *The Year of the Rank and File, UMWA*
- ²⁴ Jerome Hansen, "Coal-One Answer to Energy Problems," Detroit News, March 25,
1974.
- ²⁵ International Documentation on the Contemporary Church.
- ²⁶ Southern Exposure, Summer, 1973.
- ²⁷ International Documentation of the Church.
- ²⁸ Al Fritsch, SJ, *A Theology of the Earth; Pope Paul VI, A Call to Action*, 21; Second
General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Justice in
the World*.
- ²⁹ Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth; Pope Paul VI, A Call to Action*, 44. Second
General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the
World*, 1, Crisis.
- ³⁰ Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*.
- ³¹ 2nd General Assembly of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 111 .
- ³² Area dialogues conducted by the Catholic Committee of Appalachia.
- ³³ *ibid.*
- ³⁴ *ibid.*
- ³⁵ *ibid.*
- ³⁶ Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 6:24. Pope Paul VI, *A Call to Action*, 41.
- ³⁷ Annual Report of the Appalachia Region Commission, 1972.
- ³⁸ Second Development Decade Message of Maurice Cardinal Roy, President
Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace.
- ³⁹ Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth*.
- ⁴⁰ Al Fritsch, SJ, *Towards a Christian Response to the Energy Crisis*.
- ⁴¹ Robert Lampman, *The Share of Top Wealth Holders in Personal Wealth*.
- ⁴² *Center of Concern, population reports*.
- ⁴³ Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth*.

- ⁴⁴ Area dialogues conducted by the Catholic Committee of Appalachia.
- ⁴⁵ Commission on Religion in Appalachia, *Vantage Point*. ‘
- ⁴⁶ Juan Alfaro, SJ, *Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace*, a biblical study on justice, pp.12-15.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 20-31.
- ⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 31-38.
- ⁵⁰ Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*.
- ⁵¹ Richard Camp, *The Papal Ideology of Social Reform*.
- ⁵² National Catholic War Council, *Bishops Program of Social Reconstruction*, 27, 1919.
- ⁵³ National Catholic War Council, *Bishops Program of Social Reconstruction*, 28, 1919.
- ⁵⁴ National Catholic War Council, *Bishops Program of Social Reconstruction*, 29, 1919.
- ⁵⁵ Pope Pius XI, *Quadregesimo Anno*.
- ⁵⁶ National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1940, *The Church and Social Order*.
- ⁵⁷ *Pope John XXIII, Mater et Magistra*.
- ⁵⁸ *Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Teris*. Pope Paul VI, *A Call to Action*, 41. Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*.
- ⁵⁹ Vatican Council II, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Second Development Decade Message of Maurice Cardinal Roy, President Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, Introduction.
- ⁶⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁶¹ Pope Paul VI *Call to Action*, 41. Deuteronomy 30: 19-30.
- ⁶² Vatican Council II, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.
- ⁶³ Pope Paul VI *Call to Action*, 40.
- ⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 25.
- ⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 38-40.
- ⁶⁶ Second General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, IV.

⁶⁷ *ibid*, 111.

⁶⁸ Pope Paul VI, *A Call to Action*, 11.

⁶⁹ Department of Social Development and World Peace, USCC, *Development Dependency: The Role of the Multinational Corporations*, August, 1974.

⁷⁰ Pope Paul VI, *A Call to Action*, 44.

⁷¹ The phrase "the Lord" replaces the original wording in light of Jewish sensitivity to the use of the name of God.

Endnotes At Home in the Web of Life

- ¹ All biblical citations are taken from the *New American Bible* with revised New Testament, 1986, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, except for the citation from Matthew 5:36 on page 20, which is taken from *The Christian Community Bible* (see note 57).
- ² *The most recent edition of This Land Is Home to Me* was published in 1990, on the 15th anniversary of the original, by the Catholic Committee of Appalachia, P.O. Box 652, Webster Springs, West Virginia 26288, phone (304) 847-7215. This edition was revised from the viewpoint of inclusive language. We would also like to note the other important pastoral letter, *God's Face is Turned Toward the Mountains: A Pastoral Letter of Hope from the Bishops of Appalachia of the United Methodist Church, published in December, 1992, and distributed by The Appalachian Development Committee of the United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 2231, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741-2231, phone (301) 791-7335.*
- ³ *The drafting of this 20th anniversary document was creatively guided by a team made up of Carolyn Brink, RSM; Marie Cirillo; Stephen Colecchi; Beth Davies, CND; Evelyn Dettling, OSB; Anthony Flaccavento; Todd Garland; Joe Holland; Glenda Keyes; Marcus Keyes; Joe Peschel; John Rausch; Les Schmidt; Walter F. Sullivan; Michael Vincent; Carol Warren; and Tena Willemsma.*
- ⁴ *On the deeply religious values of the people of Appalachia, see Loyal Jones, Appalachian Values* (Ashland, Kentucky: Jesse Stuart Foundation), reprinted from Robert J. Higgs and Ambrose Manning, eds. *Voices from the Hills* (New York: Edward Unger Publishing, 1975), as well as Deborah Vansau McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).
- ⁵ *This story is from Pocahontas, Virginia.*
- ⁶ *See the 1988 Women's Task Force Report by Beth Spence, In Praise of Mountain Women, available from Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (address above). The 10th anniversary of the pastoral letter *This Land Is Home to Me* inspired this task force, as well as a series of gatherings titled *In Praise of Mountain Women*. These gatherings were held in 1991 in Virginia, in 1993 in West Virginia, and in 1995 in Kentucky.

- ⁷ Stephen M. Colecchi, D. Min. and his staff at the Justice and Peace Office of the Diocese of Richmond did the research for this information.
- ⁸ Spence, *In Praise of Mountain Women*, p.13, taken from MIHOW Networker (Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Project), Center for Health Services, Vanderbilt University, Spring, 1991.
- ⁹ On the concept of sustainable communities, and the related concept of sustainable livelihoods, see David C. Korten, "Sustainable Livelihoods: Redefining the Global Social Crisis," in *Earth Ethics*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Fall 1994), pp. 8-13. *Earth Ethics* is published by the Center for the Respect of Life and the Environment, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.
- ¹⁰ This happened in Hancock County, Tennessee.
- ¹¹ On the denouncing of a culture of death and the call for a culture of life, see the 1995 encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* (The Gospel of Life), especially section 12 (p.22). John Paul's reflections here are directed primarily against attacks on the human person, but in his 1991 World Peace Day Message, *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*, the pope extends the defense of life to include all creation. The English version of both documents is available from the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), Office for Publishing and Promotion Services, 3211 Fourth Street NE, Washington DC 20017, phone (800) 235-8722.
- ¹² John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, p.141 (title preceding section 78).
- ¹³ John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, p.22 (section 12).
- ¹⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer), 1990, section 59.
- ¹⁵ On the battering of women, see Kathleen Kenney, "Some thoughts for Churches about Domestic Violence," *The Catholic Virginian*, October 10, 1994, p.9.
- ¹⁶ See Patrick McCormick, CM, *Sin as Addiction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), and Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988).
- ¹⁷ John Paul II, *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*, nos. 1, 15, December 8, 1989; cited in the USCC's *Renewing the Earth*, p.1, and available from the USCC (see endnote #11 for address).
- ¹⁸ On the notion of "the web of life," see *Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection on Environment in the Light of Catholic Social Teaching*, a pastoral statement of the United States Catholic Conference, November 14, 1991, p.2. This landmark document is available from the USCC (see endnote #11 for address).

- ¹⁹ *USCC, Renewing the Earth, p.2.*
- ²⁰ *See Genesis 1:27.*
- ²¹ *Cited from Warren Moore, Mountain Voices: A Legacy of the Blue Ridge and Great Smokies, (Chester, Connecticut: The Globe Pequot Press), p.8.*
- ²² *For the story of the Appalachian Mountains, see Maurice Brooks, The Appalachians (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965); Roderick Peattie, ed., The Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge: The Story of the Southern Appalachians (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1943); Hugh Crandall, Shenandoah: The Story Behind the Scenery and Margaret Rose Rives, Blue Ridge Parkway: The Story Behind the Scenery (Las Vegas, Nevada: KC Publications, 1990 and 1993 respectively); George Wuerthner, Southern Appalachian Country (Helena, Montana: American Geographic Publishing, 1990); and Scott Weidensaul, Mountains of the Heart: A Natural History of the Appalachians (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994).*
- ²³ *Moore, Mountain Voices, p.11*
- ²⁴ *See the preceding references, as well as the following: Oscar Gupton and Fred Swope, Trees and Shrubs of Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1981); Peter M. Mazzeo, Ferns and Fern Allies of Shenandoah National Park and Trees of Shenandoah National Park (Luray, Virginia: Shenandoah Natural History Association, 1981 and 1967 respectively).*
- ²⁵ *One author notes: "Unlike the northern forests that the glacier scraped bare less than 12,000 years ago, the southern Appalachians were never touched by ice. They were, in fact, a refugium for northern species that were forced to retreat to southern climes. When the glacier finally melted, the Appalachians served as the 'ark' of the plant world, providing the restocking supply for the newly uncovered lands." See Janine Benyus, Field Guide to Wildlife Habitats of the Eastern United States, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p.251.*
- ²⁶ *Moore, Mountain Voices, p.6.*
- ²⁷ *See the preceding references, as well as the following: Tom Floyd, Lost Trails and Forgotten People (Vienna, VA: Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1981); Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976).*
- ²⁸ *See Genesis 1:27.*
- ²⁹ *It is often assumed that humans must of necessity damage the ecosystem, but that was not the experience of the North American native peoples. Rather they enhanced its animal and plant life. See J. Baird Callicott, "Genesis and John Muir," in Carol S. Robb and Carl J. Casebolt, Covenant for a New Creation: Ethics, Religion, and Public Policy (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), p.133.*

- ³⁰ *We have been told that the early Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca used the name to refer to an indigenous province, that over time it was used to cover the interior mountain region, and that Appalachee is the name of several indigenous tribes in Alabama.*
- ³¹ *Cited from Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, eds., Earth Prayers from around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring the Earth (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), p.32.*
- ³² *On the history of African Americans in the region, see William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell, Blacks in Appalachia (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 1985).*
- ³³ *Inspired by the In Praise of Mountain Women Gathering, 1993. Patsy Creech is a native of Harlan County, Kentucky.*
- ³⁴ *Jones, Appalachian Values, p.2*
- ³⁵ *John Ehle, Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation (New York: Doubleday, 1988).*
- ³⁶ *On the richly artistic women's tradition of Appalachian quilting, see John Rice Irwin, A People and Their Quilts (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1984).*
- ³⁷ *Jones, Appalachian Values, p.4.*
- ³⁸ *Ronald D Eller, Looking to the Future: The Problems and Promise of Regional Life.* A reprint of this paper on the history and projections of industrialization in Appalachia is available from the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, 864 Weisgarber Road, NW, Knoxville, Tennessee 37909, phone (615) 584-6133. See also Eller's *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982).
- ⁹ For more information analysis, as well as on outmigration by unemployed Appalachians, contact Michael Vincent of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. This event was sponsored by Big Creek People in Action, P.O. Box 313, Caretta, West Virginia 24821.
- ⁴⁰ On the crisis of the dominant "development" model and the search for an alternative model, see the following papers available as reprints from the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA) (see note #37 for address): John G. McNutt, *An Alternative Development Strategy for Appalachia's Future: Applications of "Another Development" and "Sustainable Society" to a Region in Crisis*, reprinted from *Proceedings of the Conference on Land and Economy in Appalachia*, Appalachian Center, University of Kentucky (1987); CORA Report on Economic Trends and Social Issues, *Beyond Distress: New Measures of Economic Need in Appalachia* (1992); James H. Smylie, *Appalachian Spring* (1985)—a text prepared for publication in *Theology Today*, CORA Report of the Working Group on the Appalachian Economic Crisis, *Economic Transformation:*

The Appalachian Challenge (1986); Ronald D Eller, *Poverty and Justice in Appalachia: Twenty Years after the War on Poverty* (no date).

- ⁴¹ *On the issue of waste disposal, see the report of Appalachia Science in the Public Interest (ASPI), "Waste Watch" project directed by Al Fritsch: Andy McDonald, Overcoming the Waste Crisis: A Deeper View* (Livingston, Kentucky: ASPI, 1993). According to the ASPI report, "Our wastefulness reveals our separation from and misunderstanding of the natural world. An ecosystem is a whole in which there is no waste. All materials flow in cycles between the great number of organisms that make up the whole. All living creatures (including humans) depend upon one another in the extremely complex web of life We humans have ignored our interdependence with the rest of creation; we have forgotten that we are strands in the web of life." (p.1)
- ⁴² On the new economic crisis in Appalachia, see again the references cited in endnote #31.
- ⁴³ United States Catholic Bishops, *Confronting a Culture of Violence* (Washington, DC: USCC, 1994), p.14. One pioneering alternative program at work in Appalachia is the Victim Offender Reconciliation Project (VORP), a mediation program offering victims and offenders—in cases referred by the county juvenile or criminal justice system—the opportunity to meet face to face to make restitution for the crime. Through the negotiation of restitution mutually agreed to, the intent is to provide a process which is restorative to both parties. The majority of referrals are of juveniles who have committed property offenses (vandalism, burglary, theft). All offenders have acknowledged responsibility for the crime. Community members are trained to be the volunteer mediators. For more information, contact P.O. Box 4081, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831-4081, phone (615) 457-5400. Other efforts include the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) at P.O. Box 5204, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831, phone (615) 482-2680 or (615) 483-4399, and the Community Mediation Center, Inc. (CMC), at P.O. Box 17766, Knoxville, Tennessee 37901-1766. For more on the explosion of prisons, see Alexander C. Lichtenstein and Michael A. Kroll (Rachel Karmel, ed.), *The Fortress Economy: The Economic Role of the U.S. Prison System* (Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, no date).
- ⁴⁴ *We are very grateful to the many people who worked hard to organize these hearings, and to the thoughtful people who shared their experiences in them.*
- ⁴⁵ *See again U.S. Catholic Bishops, Confronting a Culture of Violence, as well as the earlier reference to the article by Kathleen Kenney.*
- ⁴⁶ *On the general advent of a new economic age, see Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973 & 1976); Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979); Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York: Bantam, 1980); and Joe Holland, *Religious Myth, Sexual Symbol, and Technological Function in the Postmodern Electronic Ecological Era* (Washington,

DC: Warwick Institute, 1992). For a fine analysis of the new economic stage's early and traumatic impact on Appalachia, see Richard A. Couto, *An American Challenge: A Report on Economic Trade and Social Issues in Appalachia* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing company, 1994).

- ⁴⁷ See Lester C. Thurow, "The Disappearance of the Middle Class," *New York Times Magazine*, February 5, 1984.
- ⁴⁸ See Frank Levy, Barry Bluestone, Lester Thurow, Ralph Whitehead, Jr., Jeff Faux, *Declining Incomes and Living Standards* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, no date); Stephen Rose and David Fastefest, *Family Incomes in the 1980s: New Pressure on Wives, Husbands, and Young Adults*, Working Paper No. 13 (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 1988); Kevin Phillips, *The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990).
- ⁴⁹ Wendell Berry, *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), p.68.
- ⁵⁰ For Catholic social teaching's critique of the mechanistic model of development, see the social encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (On Social Concern), sections 28-30. The English version is available from the USCC (see endnote #11 for address).
- ⁵¹ John Paul II named Francis of Assisi as the patron saint of ecology in 1979 in his apostolic letter *Inter Sanctos* (Acta Apostolis Sedis 71).
- ⁵² For the quotation from Pope John Paul II, see Matthew Fox, *Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bear & Company, 1985), p.9.
- ⁵³ Cited from Fox, *Illuminations*, p.116.
- ⁵⁴ On the concept of social sin, or structures of sin, see the 1987 encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, sections 36-39.
- ⁵⁵ For explorations of a theology of the land, see Walter Bruggeman, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); John Hart, *The Spirit of the Earth: A Theology of the Land* (Ramsey, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1984); and M. Douglas Meeks, *God and Land* (reprint available from CORA, see note #37 for address).

For explorations of a Christian ecological theology, see James A. Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological Responsibility and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1991); Albert J. LaChance & John E. Carroll, eds., *Embracing Earth: Catholic Approaches to Ecology and Christian Purpose* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1993); H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Dieter T. Hessel, ed., *After Nature's Revolt: Eco-Justice and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress

Press, 1992); Sean McDonagh, *To Care for the Earth: A Call to a New Theology* and *The Greening of the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995 and 1990 respectively); and Carol S. Robb and Carl J. Casebolt, eds., *Covenant for a New Creation: Ethics, Religion, and Public Policy* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991).

For explorations in what might be called a broader natural theology of creation, see Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988); Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Age—a Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992); Rubert Sheldrake, *The Rebirth of Nature: The Greening of Science and God* (New York: Bantam, 1991); Charlene Spretnak, *States of Grace: The Recovery of Meaning in the Postmodern Age* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991); David Ray Griffin, *God and Religion in the Postmodern World* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989); and Charles Birch and John B. Cobb, Jr., *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

- ⁵⁶ For the Catholic use of the phrase “the integrity of creation,” see again John Paul II’s 1991 World Peace Day statement, *The Ecological Crisis*, section 7, and the USCC statement, *Renewing the Earth*, p.9. The original use of the phrase comes, however, from the World Council of Churches. See Thomas F. Best and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Koinonia and Justice, Peace, and Creation: Costly Unity—Presentations and Reports from the World Council of Churches’ Consultation in Ronde, Denmark, February, 1993* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993).
- ⁵⁷ This translation is taken from *The Christian Community Bible*, a version published in 1988, with the approval of the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines, jointly by the Claretian Publications, Saint Paul Publications, and Divine Word Publications.
- ⁵⁸ For the most recent and fullest statements of the contemporary development of Catholic social teaching, see the encyclical letters of John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus annus* (On the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum novarum*) (1991), both available in English versions from the USCC (see endnote #11 for address).
- ⁵⁹ This principle of human dignity is also sometimes called the principle of the philosophy of “personalism.” See John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, section 11, and *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, section 29. See also *Genesis* 1:27.
- ⁶⁰ Moore, *Mountain Voices*, p. 113.
- ⁶¹ See the 1981 social encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Laborem exercens* (On Human Labor), section 13. An English translation of the document is available from the USCC (see endnote #11 for address).
- ⁶² On the spiritually destructive character of the consumer society, see John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, section 37.

- ⁶³ *This principle of human community, or of the common good, is also sometimes called the principle of "solidarity." See John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei socialis, sections 38-40.*
- ⁶⁴ *For the strongest defense ever in Catholic social teaching of the rights of workers to form unions and to bargain collectively, see again John Paul II's Laborem exercens, especially sections 94-103. The pope describes the positive and creative sense of union struggle as "the power to build a community" (section 96).*
- ⁶⁵ *On the centrality of family to society, see John Paul II's 1981 Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris consortio. The English edition is available from the USCC.*
- ⁶⁶ *Moore, Mountain Voices, p. 115.*
- ⁶⁷ *On Catholic social teaching's rejection of both modern materialistic ideologies, see John Paul II, Laborem exercens, sections 29-31, 49, & 58-69. Reporting from the seventh assembly of the World Council of Churches, on the theme "Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation," Pat Windsor noted in The National Catholic Reporter: this earth, this "little, watery spec in space" is 4.5 billion years old; life began about 4.5 billion years ago; humans came on the scene 80,000 years ago, reports the World Council of Churches. "It is shocking and frightening for us that the human species has been able to threaten the very foundation of life on our planet in only about 200 years since modern industrialization." (March 1, 1991, p.6).*
- ⁶⁸ *On recent papal social teaching favorable to business entrepreneurship, in contrast to the materialistic and economic ideology of capitalism, see Centesimus annus, section 32-43.*
- ⁶⁹ *Speaking of "a society of free work, of enterprise and participation," John Paul II writes: "Such a society is not directed against the market, but demands that the market be appropriately controlled by the forces of society and the State, so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole of society are satisfied." Centesimus annus, section 35.*
- ⁷⁰ *On the theme of God as the first and greatest economist, see M. Douglas Meeks, God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989). Meeks writes, "God's own economy is God's life, work, and suffering for the life of creation. As such it is meant as the ground of the human economy for life. God's 'law of the household' is the economy of life against death and cannot be disregarded by our economy with impunity" (p. 3).*
- ⁷¹ *John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei socialis, section 28.*
- ⁷² *Section 48 of Centesimus annus restates the principle of subsidiarity, originally introduced into Catholic social teaching by Pope Pius XI: "the principle of subsidiarity must be respected: a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower*

order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good." The principle is normally applied to the field of politics, but it also pertains to the field of economics.

⁷³ Couto, *An American Challenge*, p. 72.

⁷⁴ See again Eller, *Looking to the Future*; John McNutt, *An Alternative Development Strategy*, Couto, *An American Challenge*, and Marie Cirillo, *Pathways from Poverty: Presentation on Social Capital* (available from the author, RR 1, Box 146B, Clairfield, Tennessee 37715).

⁷⁵ See the long discussion of this theme in Chapter IV of John Paul II's *Centesimus annus*.

⁷⁶ On the need for and possibility of land reform, see Richard Cartwright Austin, *Reclaiming America: Restoring Nature to Culture* (Abingdon, Virginia: Creekside Press, 1990), pp.119-120, 141-155 & 194-220.

⁷⁷ Austin, *Reclaiming America*, p.148.

⁷⁸ See again John Paul II's *Centesimus annus*, sections 37-40, as well as his World Peace Day statement, *The Ecological Crisis*, section 10, which speaks of "a new solidarity" including "the promotion of a natural and social environment that is both peaceful and healthy," and USCC, *Renewing the Earth*, p.2. In the USCC statement, the bishops write: "We seek to explore the links between concern for the person and for the earth, between natural ecology and social ecology. The web of life is one."

⁷⁹ See John Paul II's *Centesimus annus*, section 30.

⁸⁰ *Renewing the Earth*, p. 2. In addition, we thank our brother bishops in the Philippines for the pioneering pastoral letter, *What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land*. This statement was published in the *CBC Monitor* (Manila), vol. 9, no. 1 (January-February 1988). We also thank our brother bishops in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Lombardy in Northern Italy for similar statements. The statements from the Dominican Republic and Haiti are noted in Stratford Caldecott, "On the 'Greenness' of Catholicism and its Further 'Greening,'" *New Oxford Review*, December 1989, p.11. The statement of the Lombardy bishops is noted in Donald B. Conroy, "The Church Awakens to the Global Environmental Crisis," *America*, February 17, 1990, p.150. And we thank the Nationwide Leadership Conference for Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant Seminaries for its landmark statement, *Religion's Role in Preserving the Environment*. See the 1994 report by Leslie Land, *Religion's Role in Preserving the Environment*, available from the American Jewish Committee, Skirball Institute on American Values, 635 S. Harvard Boulevard, Suite 214, Los Angeles, California 90005-2511.

⁸¹ *The USCC statement, Renewing the Face of the Earth*, speaks of "sustainable social and economic development" (p.9). While papal

statements do not use the term “sustainable,” they do warn of nature’s own rebellion against humanity when humans fail to follow the divine and cosmic order of creation. See John Paul II’s *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, section 30; *Centesimus annus*, section 37; and *The Ecological Crisis*, section 3.

⁸² *On the whole notion of sustainability in economics and society generally, see again Korten, “Sustainable Livelihoods,” as well as Lester R. Brown, Christopher Flavin, & Sandra Postel, Saving the Planet: How to Shape an Environmentally Sustainable Global Economy (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991); Lester R. Brown, Building a Sustainable Society (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981); World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) Jane Blewett, “Sustainability,” Center Focus (Center of Concern, Washington DC), March 1995, p.7; and Paul Hawken, The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).*

⁸³ *The English version of this statement is available from the USCC (see note #11 for address). The citations are from sections 5, 7-8.*

⁸⁴ *See Hawken, The Ecology of Commerce, p.3: “A hundred years ago, even fifty years ago, it did not seem urgent that we understand the relationship between business and a healthy environment, because natural resources seemed unlimited. But on the verge of a new millennium we know that we have decimated ninety-seven percent of the ancient forests in North America; every day our farmers and ranchers draw out 20 billion more gallons of water from the ground than are replaced by rainfall; the Ogalala Aquifer, an underground river beneath the Great Plains (and) larger than any body of fresh water on earth, will dry up within thirty years at present rates of extraction Quite simply, our business practices are destroying life on earth.”*

⁸⁵ *See John Paul II, Centesimus annus, sections 35, 40 & 44-52. Here the pope insists that “It is the task of the State to provide for the defense and preservation of the common goods such as the natural and human environments, which cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces.” Again arguing that “there are collective and qualitative needs which cannot be satisfied by market mechanisms,” he warns of “the risk of an ‘idolatry’ of the market, an idolatry which ignores the existence of goods which by their nature are not and cannot be mere commodities” (section 40). Yet he also insists, in the name of subsidiarity, that the state must not undermine the right of economic initiative by undermining the role of the local community (section 48).*

⁸⁶ *John Paul II, The Ecological Crisis, Section 9.*

⁸⁷ *A privately published essay dated October 1994. The citation is from p. 5.*

⁸⁸ *On the notion of sustainable development, see the references in note 82.*

⁸⁹ This story is from Harlan County, Kentucky. For more information about these publications, contact Harlan County Literacy, 301 North Main Street, Harlan, Kentucky 40831, phone: (606) 573-0039.

⁹⁰ See Korten, "Sustainable Livelihoods." The author points out: "In unregulated globalized markets, capital becomes rootless, impatient, and controlled by entities that have no commitment to place or people In the name of economic growth and job creation, livelihoods are being destroyed at an alarming rate as stable subsistence communities are evicted from their lands to make way for dams, mines, golf courses and luxury resorts, agricultural estates, and forest plantations—or their forests, water sources, and fisheries are mined for quick profits by powerful corporate interests." See p. 9.

⁹¹ See again the commission's ground breaking report, *Our Common Future*.

⁹² "Women have traditionally had the primary role in the productive and reproductive activities of the social economy, while men have had the dominant role in the monetized market economy Unlike market economies, which tend to join people in purely impersonal and instrumental relationships, social economies create a dense fabric of relationship based on long-term sharing and cooperation." See Korten, "Sustainable Livelihoods," p. 10.

⁹³ See Maria Otero & Elizabeth Rhyne, *The New World of Microenterprise Finance: Building Healthy Financial Institutions for the Poor* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Jumarian Press, 1994). The authors note: "For increasing numbers of poor people, microenterprises are a source of income and employment where no other alternatives are available In rural settings, most families combine microenterprise activity with farming, and many depend on it as the main source of family income Many, if not most, microenterprises are not autonomous economic units, but part of larger family or household units. The cash associated with one microenterprise is frequently mingled with that of other household activities, including other enterprises. Thus the financial needs of families, or at least of individual entrepreneurs, are often not separable from the financial needs of enterprises themselves. This is particularly true for enterprises owned by women." pp. 1, 13.

⁹⁴ Testimony submitted at a 1994 hearing sponsored by the Office of Justice-Peace-Integrity of Creation of the Diocese of Knoxville.

⁹⁵ On the notion of sustainable agriculture, see John P. Reganold, Robert I. Papendick, and James F. Parr, "Sustainable Agriculture," *Sustainable Agriculture*, June 1990, pp. 112-120.

⁹⁶ On community supported agriculture, see Robyn Van En, "Community Supported Agriculture," and Tom Lyson, "Agriculture Supported Communities," in *Farming Alternatives for Sustainable Agriculture for New York State* (Cornell Univ. Farming Alternatives Program), vol. 2, no.1 (Fall 1993), respectively pp. 1-2, 12, and pp.1, 3-4; Eric Gibson, "Community Supported Agriculture," *Small Farm News* (Small Farm

Center, Univ. of California, Davis), November/ December 1993, pp. 1, 3–4. One Appalachian example of this model of sustainable agriculture is the Highlands Bioproduct Network. It sells to households and restaurants in the Abingdon/Bristol area of Virginia. This example is cited in Flaccavento, "Sustainable Agriculture," p.5.

⁹⁷ Anthony Flaccavento, "Sustainable Agriculture," p. 5.

⁹⁸ See John S. Ferrell, *Fruits of Creation: A Look at Global Sustainability as Seen Through the Eyes of George Washington Carver (Shakopee, Minnesota: Macalester Park, 1995)*

⁹⁹ Anthony Flaccavento, "Sustainable Agriculture," *CJE News*, vol. 5, no. 5 (January/February 1995), pp. 4–5.

¹⁰⁰ See Liz McGeachy, "Sustainable Forestry," *CJE News*, vol. 5, no. 5 (January/February 1995) pp. 6–7.

¹⁰¹ This story was reported by Anthony Flaccavento from his own personal knowledge.

¹⁰² See again the report of the Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force, *Who Owns Appalachia?* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 1983). The study was initiated in 1979 by the Land Task Force of the Appalachian Alliance, a coalition of community groups, scholars, and individuals. For a summary of this seven-volume, 1,800 page study, see Joe Hacala, SJ, *The Appalachian Land Ownership Study, available as a reprint from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (see note #2 for address). So central is this issue of land ownership, that we cite here the main points of Hacala's summary:*

"Overall the study pointed to one overwhelming fact: Appalachia's valuable land and mineral resources are largely controlled by absentee and corporate ownership. Only one percent of the local population, along with absentee holders, corporations, and government agencies, control at least 53% of the total land surface in the eighty county survey."

"Furthermore, the study clearly points to the impact this outside ownership and control has on the lives of the people: 'these ownership patterns are a crucial underlying element in explaining patterns of inadequate local tax revenues and services, lack of economic development, loss of agricultural lands, lack of sufficient housing, the development of energy and land use.'"

"A clear picture of the Appalachian paradox emerges: an impoverished area perched atop enormous wealth—a rural culture violently transformed by foreign landlords . . . According to John Gaventa (a recent national MacArthur Fellowship winner), of the Highlander Education and Research Center, who acted as overall coordinator of the study:

"Taken together, the failure to tax minerals adequately, the

underassessment of surface lands, and the revenue loss from concentrated federal holdings, has a marked impact on local governments in Appalachia. The effect, essentially, is to produce a situation in which: a) the small owners carry a disproportionate share of the tax burden; b) counties depend upon federal and state funds to provide revenues while the large corporate and absentee owners of the region's resources go relatively tax free; c) citizens face a poverty of needed services despite the presence in their counties of taxable property wealth, especially in the form of coal and other natural resources."

Hacala, *Land Ownership Study*, pp. 1 & 3.

- ¹⁰³ See again Austin, *Reclaiming America*, pp. 119-120, 141-155. Hacala in his summary, *Land Ownership Study*, notes the need for land reform and points out that the National Campaign for Human Development funded one such attempt, the Southern West Virginia Land Reform Project (p. 10). In a privately published essay called "The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Agriculture," dated April 19, 1994, Austin also addressed the theme of land reform: "In my book, *Reclaiming America*, I have proposed a scheme for land reform consonant with American traditions. I call it 'reopening the frontier.' It is an orderly program, within our constitutional system, to acquire corporate lands and distribute them to any landless American who is willing, after training, to settle land and tend it with care I suggest that our churches have a role in pioneering such land reform strategies." See p. 8.
- ¹⁰⁴ For more information on the land trust concept, contact the Institute for Community Economics, 57 School Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01105-1331, or the Community Land Trust Headquarters, RR 3, Box 75, Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230.
- ¹⁰⁵ Testimony submitted at a December 1994 hearing sponsored by the Office of Justice-Peace-Integrity of Creation, of the Diocese of Knoxville. One important example of the land-trust concept is the Woodland Community Land Trust. Contact Marie Cirillo at Route 1, Box 146B, Clairfield, Tennessee 37715, phone: (615) 784-6832.
- ¹⁰⁶ An inspirer of the concept of appropriate technology was the late E. F. Schumacher. See his pioneering work, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (New York: Harper Row, 1973). For a subsequent report on attempts to implement his ideas, see George McRobie, *Small is Possible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).
- ¹⁰⁷ An important example of this ecologically oriented technological creativity is the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center in Washburn, Tennessee. Founded and led by Methodist minister Bill Nickle, this center is an important experiment in both alternative technology and the land-trust idea.
- ¹⁰⁸ Cited from an undated publication of *Appalachia Science in the Public Interest*, titled *Appropriate Technology and Healing the Earth*, p.5.

A recent report from the Center concerns a project using straw-bale construction: "Like the other structures on the site, the structure is an experiment in itself. Generating electricity from the sun, passive solar design, composting toilet and cellulose insulation are but a few of the experiments in sustainability. The most notable experiment is the straw bale kitchen on the north side of the building . . . the bales of straw are used as both load-bearing walls and insulation. The insulation value ranges from R-40 to R-50, as opposed to R-11 of a normal 2x4 stud wall with fiberglass insulation. Straw is an annually renewable resource and can be purchased locally The bales are stacked like bricks on top of the flooring, then covered with stucco, which deters rodents and keeps the straw (dry). The walls themselves hold the weight of the roof without additional support." See article by Matthew Ordonez, *in Renewal*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Summer 1995), p.1. For information, contact Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, RR 2, Box 125, Washburn, Tennessee 37888.

¹⁰⁹ Here we commend the work of Appalachia Science in the Public Interest (ASPI). Founded and directed by Jesuit priest, Al Fritsch, ASPI is a goldmine of ideas and experiments in Livingston, Kentucky 40445.

Another example is the center founded by Paula Gonzalez, SC. It has become an important place for interreligious dialogue on spirituality and ecology, as well as on alternative technologies. Contact EarthConnection, 370 Neeb Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45223-5101. "Sister Paula Gonzalez is an amazing woman—she has been envisioning alternative futures for life on this planet for twenty years. After transforming an abandoned chicken barn into a passive solar, energy efficient residence built by an all volunteer crew and paid for by the proceeds of recycling, she expanded her vision, determined to build an organization and meeting facility that would serve as a center for learning about living lightly on the Earth." The citation is from *EcoLetter* (Winter/Spring) 1995), p. 19. *EcoLetter* is published by the North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology, 5 Thomas Circle NW, Washington DC 20005, phone: (202) 462-2591. See also information from the John Henry Foundation, PO Box 1172, Morgantown, West Virginia 26507, ph: (304) 292-0767

¹¹⁰ The center is in Lee County, Virginia.

¹¹¹ See again Kathleen Kenney, "Some Thoughts for Churches about Domestic Violence."

¹¹² On addictions in relation to sin and grace, see Patrick McCormick, CM, *Sin as Addiction* (New York: Paulist, 1989), and Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

¹¹³ On the concept of codependency, see Melody Beattie, *Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), as well as her *Beyond Codependency and Getting Better All the Time* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

¹¹⁴ The Center is in Pennington Gap, Virginia.

¹¹⁵ Another center of creative experiments with women's healing and power, as well as with problems of addiction and with sustainable community development is the Addiction Center in Pennington Gap, Virginia. The Center works in conjunction with the St. Charles Community Center, the St. Charles Development Authority, and the African American Cultural Center. Led by Beth Davies, CND and Elizabeth Vines, CDP this center is another example of the rooted creativity of local communities, supported by church workers with long-term commitments to grassroots folks. For more information, contact the Addiction Education Center, PO Box 688, Pennington Gap, Virginia 24277 or Drawer E, St. Charles, Virginia 24282.

¹¹⁶ The hearing was sponsored by Big Creek People in Action, and facilitated by Libby Deliee, RSM of Catholic Community Services. A creative center of this type is the Center for Justice, directed by Evelyn Dettling, OSB. This center is an important gathering place for women seeking healing and new strength. For more information, contact the Center for Justice, Box 576, Neon, Kentucky 41840. Another is the Center for Economic Options at 601 Delaware Avenue, Charleston, West Virginia 25302, phone: (304) 345-1298. Still another resource is the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, led by Diane Reese, SND and Sue Julian. For more information, contact the West Virginia Coalition against Domestic Violence, PO Box 85, Sutton, West Virginia, 26601, phone: (304) 765-2250.

¹¹⁷ For an insightful call to church congregations to undertake this mission, see Alvin Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying of the Earth: Cultivating Creation Communities* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1993).

¹¹⁸ See Al Fritsch, SJ with Angela Iadavaia-Cox, *Eco-Church: An Action Manual* (Resource Publications, 1992—available from Appalachian Science in the Public Interest, see note #109 for the address).

¹¹⁹ On micro-financing, see again Otero and Rhyne, *The New World of Microenterprise Finance*.

¹²⁰ *Earth Healing* is a "systems approach to resource use" which offers a "resource audit" to religious congregations and other groups. In the words of the program, "a resource audit provides an integrated analysis of an institution or community and an instrument for long-range planning. It examines goals, resource-use patterns, and opportunities for increased self-reliance and dollar savings." For more information, contact Appalachian Science in the Public Interest (see note #109 for address).

For an example of creative beginning, see the pioneering work undertaken in the Diocese of Knoxville, and known as "Eco-Church Ministry." Here parish leaders promote a spirituality that expresses sincere love for planet Earth and marginalized people, and using environmental resource assessments, encourage the development of church plants as ecological models. For more information on this pioneering project, contact Glenda and Marcus Keyes, Justice-Peace-Integrity of Creation, Diocese of Knoxville, 119 Dameron Avenue,

Knoxville, Tennessee 37917.

Similar pioneering efforts in the Diocese of Richmond are led by the Ecological Working Group. One of its special programs is a hands-on educational process called "Habits of Creation." For more information on this additional pioneering project, contact the Ecological Working Group, Richmond Catholic Diocese, PO Box 660, St. Paul, Virginia 24283, phone: (703) 732-5050.

¹²¹ See John Paul II's 1991 encyclical on Christian mission, *Redemptoris missio*, sections 37–38. The English version is available from the USCC (see note #11 for address). On the religious significance of the four cultural stages of speech, writing, printing, and electronics, see again Joe Holland, *Religious Myth, Sexual Symbol, and Technological Function in the Postmodern Electronic Ecological Era*.

¹²² See again John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, section 51.

¹²³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelization in the Modern World)*, 1975, section 18.

¹²⁴ *National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Go and Make Disciples*, 1992.

¹²⁵ *Written communication from Beth Davies, CND on March 19, 1995*.

¹²⁶ "During the 1940–1970 period, Appalachia lost more than 4,000,000 people. The fact that the vast majority of these hardy mountain people . . . became stable workers, homeowners, and good citizens is a tribute to their religion, family structure, and individual moral character." Michael Maloney, *Appalachian Migration to Southwestern Ohio* (reprint available from Catholic Social Service of Southwest Ohio, 100 East 8th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202).

¹²⁷ The phrase "the Lord" replaces the original wording in light of Jewish sensitivity to the use of the name of God.

¹²⁸ *Catholic Bishops of Appalachia, This Land Is Home to Me*, p. 30.

