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intersections

Fall 2012



in this issue

Lutherans, Creation, and Sustainability

Purpose Statement

| This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-six colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA. The publication has its home at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, which has generously offered leadership and physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators that have addressed the church-college/university partnership. The ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College Conference. The primary purpose of *Intersections* is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- Lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching
- Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives, and learning priorities
- Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

2013 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference

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Vocation: A Challenge to the Commodification of Education

From the Publisher

| It is commonplace today to note that higher education faces a complex set of problems. So we should all be accustomed to this milieu by now, right? Even if we remain troubled by an apparent absence of solutions to our problems, we should no longer be surprised by their complexity and seeming intractability, right? Not me. It seems that each day I am surprised again by the complexity of the problems we face within our own community of ELCA higher education.

The rhetoric has surprised me most recently. It is not the harshness of the words sometimes used by partisans. It is that nearly all voices use the same rhetoric to frame the basic questions facing ELCA higher education, namely: Will our colleges and universities be secular or religious? Where do they sit on that continuum?

Some of us in higher education leadership know that this rhetoric is hokum. There is a third way of doing higher education from a Christian perspective that is religious in motivation (and in practices) but on the ground looks secular. Our rhetoric must accommodate this third way. Nonetheless, the everyday reliance on the standard rhetorical model of religious versus secular by everyday ELCA members, many within the Lutheran higher education community, the media, and so forth, adds to the complex texture of the issues we face.

A well-known principle for acting in the face of a complex situation is the admonition to *do something*. After more than half a century of debates about the aims and purposes of Lutheran higher education, it is indeed time that we *do something*. During 2013, I will encourage the presidents of ELCA colleges and universities to do exactly this, despite the complexities we face. We need to *do something* to move forward—for the sake of our common mission and our shared vocation.

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Seth Fitts, *Lily and Bird*, 2012.
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From the Editor

I admit that I was surprised when I first noticed Norman Wirzba in his magnificent book, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (Oxford, 2003), using the word *vocation* to connect human ecological practices to the nature and role of God in the created world. Doesn't *vocation* largely designate professional or at least interpersonal and "societal" work—even after Luther released it from the domain of professional churchmen? Can *vocation* be stretched to cover our work in and for the *natural* world?

I had confused the center with periphery—the heart of vocation with its encasing skeleton. As Wirzba gently reminds us, care for the earth and especially its soil (*adamah*) was the vocation given to *Adam* (Gen. 2:15), and remains the quintessential vocation of us all (Wirzba 22, 31). Such care must itself be "grounded." It is not firstly by developing eco-industries or by using food for fuel but by *gardening* that we take up our authentic vocation (118). Just as God creates and redeems by "making room" for the flourishing of Creation, so too humanity is called to the hospitality of "welcoming and enabling the whole of creation to share in the peace and joy of the divine life" (21).

Martin Luther wrote, preached, and taught largely with the aim of reversing the gnostic flight of Christians from the world. He sought to ground us, as it were, in the earth that is created and loved by God. "Vocation" is but one way of naming the heart of this incarnational and creation-centric theology. Moreover, Luther's primary way of describing God's Incarnation and Christian discipleship was through *kenosis* or self-withdrawal: Humans, like God, make room for others so that they, too, might enjoy fullness of life. More radical still, we often come to learn the scope and shape of such self-emptying hospitality from those we

think *we* are serving—including good Samaritans and perhaps now nature itself. Topsoil, in the words of Wendell Berry, "is very Christlike in its passivity and beneficence, and in the penetrating energy that issues out of its peaceableness" (quoted in Wirzba 22). In other words, we might learn how to care for nature by attending to its care for us.

As Jim Martin-Schramm and Cynthia Moe-Lobeda acknowledge in this issue, Lutherans and the faculty, administrators, and staff who work at Lutheran colleges and universities have no absolutely *unique* perspectives on the vocation of caring for creation. But it would seem that we do bring quite a lot. Do our deeply grounded Lutheran identities support and sustain our more recent, and sometimes frantic, environmental concerns and efforts? If so, how might we name, celebrate, and further cultivate that theological spring? If not, could the rising danger of depleting and devastating the natural world prompt us to reexamine our religious roots, asking again what difference it makes that we called to serve through *Lutheran* higher education?

Besides four feature essays that think through sustainability, creation, and Lutheran higher ed, this issue of *Intersections* includes interviews with four leaders of environmental initiatives on our campuses, as well as a report about the vocation of our alumni. Each of the authors first presented his/her ideas at the 2012 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota. I hope that the entire issue helps sustain a conversation that involves many voices, especially the groaning of earth our home.

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Vocation for Life: A Report on a New Initiative for Alumni

In December, 2010 representatives from several ELCA-related colleges and universities gathered on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota to talk about strategies for engaging alumni and friends in the work being supported by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., through its Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV). In the midst of an old-fashioned Minnesota snowstorm, these leaders came up with the idea of “Vocation for Life”—a set of opportunities and resources that all the ELCA schools could make available to alumni to help them address vocational questions that arise after college and across the lifespan.

The primary objective of the project is to offer our graduates the gift of ongoing vocational exploration, through workshops available to alumni in locations throughout the country, regardless of which of our schools they attended. A second objective is to foster collaborative work among ELCA colleges and universities, as we seek to explore and lift up vocation as the unique hallmark of Lutheran Higher Education. In working together with our graduates, we hope to reach a clearer understanding of the distinctive gifts we bring to the world and the ways these gifts influence our common calling as Lutheran colleges and universities. Finally, connecting with alumni in this way not only helps them in their vocational journeys, but also helps us all to see that vocational exploration and discernment is a life-long activity.

Project leaders decided to develop several “pilot” events, each of which would be planned by local teams consisting of alumni and representatives from a minimum of three of the colleges involved in the project. The first Vocation for Life retreat, called “Explore Your Life’s Calling,” took place in Rochester, Minnesota in early November, 2011. The retreat was facilitated by Tom Morgan of Augsburg College, Chris Johnson of Gustavus Adolphus College, and Tom Schlotterback of Concordia College, Moorhead, utilizing the Circles of Trust approach developed by educator and author Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage and Renewal. It was an opportunity for participants to step with intention into a place apart, to pause from the frenetic pace of their regular days, and to explore in fresh ways the big questions of their lives—questions of identity, meaning, purpose, and calling.

The day was designed to nourish deep connection between “soul and role” and to renew participants’ capacity to live, work, and lead from a place of wholeness and authenticity. Participants

experienced the rare gifts of renewal, deep listening, and safe, courageous space to consider things that matter. They expressed appreciation for:

- “the time, space and permission to attend to questions that matter, to be held in a circle of people who were present enough to care for the depths, pains, and joys of my soul”
- “the experience of community as we learned from one another”
- “the sense that my value lies not in doing but in being the person God and my community call me to be”
- “a wonderful experience that has strengthened me for the journey ahead”

A second Vocation for Life workshop was presented to the Pacific Lutheran University alumni board by Lynn Hunnicutt and Samuel Torvend. This half-day retreat used Mary Catherine Bateson’s essay “Composing a Life Story” as the thread tying activities together. Participants received an introduction to the concept of vocation—both Luther’s understanding of the term (what vocation is) and current popular senses of the word (what vocation is not). They then participated in two exercises designed to help them think about the various callings they have discerned throughout their lives, and to use these insights to pay attention to their current vocation.

Recently, several members of the Vocation for Life planning team met at the Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference in Minneapolis. We have five events at various stages of planning, with a second day-long event on November 8 in Rochester, MN, and a longer retreat November 18-20 in Carefree, AZ. Other workshops in Eau Claire, WI; Fargo-Moorhead; Rockford, IL; and Portland, OR are being planned but have not yet been scheduled. For more information on Vocation for Life or any of these events, please feel free to contact Tom Schlotterback at Concordia College (tschlott@cord.edu), or the any of the three authors of this report.

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A Traveler's Manifesto for Navigating the Creation

I believe that what the world needs is a fresh spiritual roadmap that helps us navigate and interpret our place within the universe, from both cosmic and familial perspectives. This spiritual vision must be told as a story so that we can find ourselves within it. The Epic of Evolution is a place to start. As a Christian, I believe that God is present in the creatures of the entire cosmos. Genesis 1, John 1, and Colossians 1 reveal, albeit in somewhat different ways, the same epic narrative of our evolution.

We are created critters—companion species of God's own making. John 3:16 should be re-translated: "For God so loved the cosmos..." God's love is so much bigger, wider, and deeper than we can ever imagine. Martin Luther wrote that God is present both in the veins of a leaf and in the elements of the Eucharist (57-59). Our worldly table is set with bread and wine. Doxologies seem appropriate for such a credo: Thanks be to God for this most amazing world.

This essay and journey through the cosmos begins with three questions: Who are we? Where are we? How then shall we live? These are questions not only about the meaning of the being and becoming of human identity, but also about the nature and action of God's grace in the world. Typically, these questions are addressed by at least three central Christian theological loci: the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the interpretation of the *imago dei* (humanity as the image of God). It is no surprise to Christians that the center of the Incarnation is the person of Jesus Christ. But it might be a stretch for some Christians to imagine that the promise that God has become flesh is not only in a person, but also in a place—in the creation. For Christian theology, the *imago dei* is the doctrine that explains the

relationship of humans to God and this doctrine has been used almost exclusively to reveal that humans alone are created in the image of God. As we shall see, this narrow interpretation fails to explain our relationship not only to God, but also to ourselves and the rest of creation. From my theological perspective, Christians need to expand the notion of what Incarnation means and what it means to be created in the image of God so that the scope of God's creative and redemptive action and work indeed reaches to the scope of all things—from the outer reaches of space to the inner reaches of our hearts. Otherwise, our understanding of God's work is constricted by our fears of extending it beyond our reach.

The place to answers questions of the who, where, and how of human life is with the quotidian—with the daily details, within the scope of the cosmos. We must live and travel in both the cosmic and local realms at the same time. If we ignore one or the other, we can be become displaced. To be the creature of God that God calls us to be requires a kind of dual citizenship—within the details of our daily life, attending to the needs of our neighbors, while always knowing we are part of a much greater cosmos whose future is still unfolding.

The Local with Cosmic Implications

To figure out who I am, I decided to go to Iowa (isn't that what most people do?), via the outskirts of Sioux Falls. On a recent warm spring day, I downloaded directions from MapQuest and began my journey through technological innovation from the urban landscapes of Sioux Falls to the rural farms and fields of Iowa. The first destination—the corporate headquarters of Sanford Research—is located on the very edge of Sioux Falls

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near the interstate. I drove in on the road marked by a sign in the Sanford blue that simply said, “Road to the Cure.” The sign is placed near the corporate Logos which reads: “dedicated to the work of health and healing.” Once a month I drive from my home to this sprawling landscape of healthcare which is surrounded by white rail fences, duck ponds, and neatly trimmed grasses. When I enter the building, I often feel like an interloper in this world of scientific research. But that is my purpose, to come as the “outside” member on the institutional research board (IRB) for Sanford. On their website, Sanford claims the following: “We are changing the landscape of science and health care. Our growing team of more than 200 researchers is focused on identifying new therapies and treatments for some of the world’s leading health concerns. It’s our goal to find solutions that will cure illness, eradicate disease and improve the lives of people in our communities and around the world” (“Sanford”). I have friends who work on breast cancer research while others hope to find a cure for Type I diabetes. Such research in medicine and healthcare is changing the landscape of what it means to be human in ways that most of us still think of as happening only in some kind of B-Hollywood action movie.

“To be the creature of God that God calls us to be requires a kind of dual citizenship—within the details of our daily life...while always knowing we are part of a much greater cosmos.”

In another Sanford building, closer to my home, the sciences of human reproductive medicine are housed. I have met with and listened to the amazing research of the scientists who practice reproductive endocrinology and medicine. Babies are created, made *in vitro* from donor sperm and donor eggs. Embryos can be implanted in gestational surrogates. And now with the recent advances in the sciences of genetics, embryos are genetically screened for potential lethal anomalies. Who are we? And where are we? Sometimes it feels like a land of science fiction where we are venturing into worlds we barely know or understand. And yet all of these human reproductive technological advances begin somewhere else, most likely in the fields of Iowa or in veterinary laboratories.

I continue my techno-journey as I leave Sanford headquarters and head southeast. As I drive through the rolling fields near the Big Sioux River, I cross the South Dakota border and into Iowa. About forty five miles away, I find another corporate landscape:

Trans Ova. This one, however, is not urban. Surrounded by large metal gates and rails, I see hundreds of cattle with tags on their ears. They munch on hay, glaring at me as I drive by. Trans Ova’s website explains its mission: “To become the global leader in the application of innovative and reproductive technology.” And their vision is “to serve our clients by assisting them in increasing the genetic impact of their ‘success’ in their breeding programs.” Trans Ova uses some of the same reproductive technologies that the Sanford Health Fertility and Reproductive lab does, namely, embryo transfer and *in vitro* fertilization (IVF). But Trans Ova also clones cattle and “works closely with clients to understand their breeding goals, and ultimately help clients advance and extend superior genetics” (“Trans Ova”).

What happens in the barns and labs of Trans Ova is only a field or two away from the human labs of Sanford Research. If indeed we are related to all of creation, then I understand what it means to be created in wholly and maybe holy new ways. Reproductive technologies move from non-human to human in just a few small steps. In some weird way, I both feel and know that I’m related to these cattle. In fields not far from Trans Ova are the transgenic cattle created at Hematech, a company that “has developed the world’s first large animal platform technology to produce fully human antibodies using the latest advances in gene engineering and transfer to produce new biopharmaceuticals that help fight disease” (“Hematech”). Inside a circle of about seventy five miles, I am learning that what it means to be a creature of God is much more complicated than I ever imagined.

And while I have discovered that the world around me is much bigger, deeper, and wider than I could have imagined, I have also learned that it is much smaller, more intimately related, more complicated than I can comprehend. I have traveled to places which have redefined for me what it means to be a creature, to be created, and to be related to the rest of the world. I claim that what we have understood by the *imago dei*—to be created in the image of God—is much too small and constricted. If being created in the image of God has something to do with our relationships with other creatures, then this is the place from we will start our exploration. They are strange worlds indeed and require new maps for these new worlds, these techno-scapes. So, if I am going to venture into strange new worlds, I want to do so as those who have gone before me—with the tools and companions of my fellow-travelers.

The Book of Nature, the Book of Scripture

Christians before me have used two books as sources to navigate their quests for meaning: the book of nature and the book of scripture. These sources have shaped the way we interpret the theological doctrines of Incarnation and *imago dei*.

Let us begin with St. Augustine who read the two great books—of scripture and nature—to explore and understand what it means to be a creature of God. Augustine practiced the art of *lectio divina* (“divine reading,” i.e. study through meditation and prayer) not only with the Christian scriptures, but also with the book of nature. He wrote:

Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink. Instead He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that? Why, heaven and earth shout to you: “God made me!” (Augustine, Book XVI)

To open the book of nature is to venture into a landscape of vast dimensions and microscopic elements. We use giant telescopes to explore the galaxies that spiral into an ever-expanding universe and powerful microscopes to examine the DNA in our cells, the map of our human genome. And located somewhere in between the infinite reaches of the universe and the minute strands of DNA are human beings. I can only respond with wonder, amazement, and mystery. I am both a child of God created to be on this planet called Earth and a child of the universe that is still on its voyage to that which is becoming

“Located somewhere in between the infinite reaches of the universe and the minute strands of DNA are human beings. I can only respond with wonder, amazement, and mystery.”

new. Scientists remind us that the voyage of the universe from its inception in the Big Bang until now has taken approximately 14-15 billion years and the journey is still unfolding. I’m both on my own journey through my lifetime, trying to make sense of it all, and also part of a much larger voyage, that of God’s voyage, that is moving in, with, and under me (compare Hefner 55-56). The large and small of it—somewhere in between, *in medias res*—we are travelers on the way, looking upward and heavenward, inward and internally.

Creation is the starting place from which I navigate and interpret the message that God so loves this cosmos that

God gave God’s only son. The theologian that has blazed the theological trail for me is Joseph Sittler, a Lutheran theologian. Joseph Sittler was, and still is, ahead of his time. He listened to the cultural sirens around him and interpreted their warning calls. Scientists, poets, artists, and writers were all saying the same thing: Pete Seeger published his political song, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone” and Bob Dylan sang his war protest song, “Blowin’ in the Wind.” Rachel Carson published her famous book, *The Silent Spring* in 1962, warning us that chemicals pesticides were causing environmental devastation.

During these same turbulent times, in his prophetic address to the World Council of Churches, Sittler warned that the church was not paying attention to these cultural warning signs. Like Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s earlier warnings to the churches in Nazi Germany, Sittler feared that churches focused only on their own piety and institutional trappings and rituals. Churches were reducing the gospel of good news about the wide scope of God’s love and grace for the world to the small place of personal salvation and heavenly hereafters. Sittler claimed that the message of the Christian gospel preached in congregations was too small. According to Sittler, the place in which God’s grace was at work was much larger, grander, and wider than we could ever imagine. In other words, when Christians translate John 3:16, they should remember that God so loved the cosmos, not just the world of their own personal lives. God, the Word incarnate, is the God of the whole cosmos. The opening words of Genesis, “In the Beginning,” reflect the same words that launch St. John’s Gospel: “In the Beginning was the Word.” The early Greek and Hebrew poets seemed to have greater imaginations than we often do. While they open worlds with their words, we have used words to close off and constrict our worlds.

The biblical heart of this cosmic Christology is in Colossians:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the one who is first over all creation. Because all things were created by him: both in the heavens and on the earth, the things that are visible and the things that are invisible. Whether they are thrones or powers, or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him. He existed before all things, and all things are held together in him. He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the one who is firstborn from among the dead so that he might occupy the first place in everything. Because all the fullness of God was pleased to live in him, and he reconciled all things to himself through him—whether things on earth or in the heavens. He brought peace through the blood of his cross. (Col. 1:15-20)

So, if God is in Christ, and in all things, God is also pleased to live in us. I heard it once said that Martin Luther explained grace this way: when we look into the mirror, we know that we can be pleased with our image, because we are looking into the image of God's gracious love for us. How different we might be if we reflected on this icon of mutual pleasure between God and us.

To explain the cosmic vision of Colossians, Sittler used the image of an orbit. Our redemption is only meaningful when it swings within the bigger orbit of God's creation (Sittler 39-40). I quote him at some length:

We must not fail to see the nature and size of the issue that Paul confronts (in Col. 1:15-20) and encloses in this vast Christology. In propositional form it is simply this: a doctrine of redemption is meaningful only when it swings within the larger orbit of a doctrine of creation.... Unless the reference and the power of the redemptive act includes the whole of human experience and the environment, straight out to its farthest horizon, then the redemption is incomplete. There is and will always remain something of evil to be overcome. And more. Men and women in their existence will be tempted to reduce human redemption to what purgation, transformation, forgiveness, and blessedness is available by an "angelic" escape from the cosmos of natural and historical fact. (Sittler 39-40)

Sittler's words shatter our narrow worldviews. In much the same way, scientists have shattered the self-centeredness of our worldview and our seemingly grand place within it. We credit Galileo and Copernicus with replacing our earth-centered world view with a heliocentric one. And the implications of Darwin's *The Origins of Species* and recent discoveries by Crick/Watson/Franklin about DNA have charted new territories with maps of the human genome. Sittler was saying the same thing as the scientists: Our world is so much bigger, deeper, and wider than we can ever imagine. And while we are important actors in the theatre of nature, we are not always at the center of the stage. We must interpret our place within the larger scope of God's gracious actions in creation.

It might be wise to travel back to Iowa—to those cattle at Trans Ova. Those transgenic species, created with cattle and human DNA, are our brothers and sisters. And so are the researchers and scientists who have created them. Such complicated relationships are part of this creation of God. We are called to love and serve our neighbor. But who is our neighbor? I never thought I'd have to travel to Iowa to really understand the implications of that question.

Sittler says we should look to the farthest horizon, and step out with our neighbors, in "caring-relationship with nature," who is our sister and brother (compare Hefner 65). We can start with our kinfolk, our sisters and brothers. We are one among God's creatures, giving praise to God. These words are radical to me precisely because I went to Iowa and saw my bovine kin—those in whom the collusion of science, technology, DNA, and God's intentions for the world come together in a crazy, complex family tree of creatureliness.

“While we are important actors in the theatre of nature, we are not always at the center of the stage.”

To be created in the image of God is to be made for relationship with all of creation and with God. Sometimes I might wonder about my family tree, whose roots and limbs are expanding with new species—hybrids of machine and human, human and non-human, animal and plant. Transgenic and trans-cultural, my relatives, like me, are co-companions of God's creating and human co-creating, animal making and machine designing. All of a sudden, my family tree looks much stranger than before and I'm not sure what a reunion with all of creation would be like. What new species have yet to emerge in this crazy world? What really will it mean to preach and think about a new heaven and a new earth?

Cosmic Dimensions of Incarnation and *Imago Dei*

Now that we are more grounded in the familiar landmarks of our tradition, we can expand our vision of what it means that God is incarnate in the world, and that we are created in the image of God. These two theological loci, reshaped and expanded, will give us new theological definitions to help sort through another important question: How then shall we live? Gregory Peterson, a Lutheran theologian and philosopher, explains that the specific term "image of God" is found in the book of Genesis in three places: 1:26-27, 5:1-13, 9:1-7. The interpretation of these texts and specific doctrine has a long and varied history and they have been used to distinguish and separate humans from the rest of the creation. However, Peterson makes clear that the modern ecological crisis and influence of evolutionary sciences have challenged the traditional notion that we alone are made in the image of God (Peterson). He along with other theologians such as Philip Hefner claim that "nature itself shares in the image of God" (Hefner 273).

We must theologically relocate the *imago dei* into the landscape of the whole created order. Who we are is related to where we are. Because we come from the *terra firma*, and God is the ground of our being, I would define the image of God as: *the vocation of the created order—to be and become freely that which fulfills God’s gracious purposes and intentions for the creation.* Specifically, for human beings, humans are created co-creators, and the meaning and purpose of human life comes from their placement within the natural world (Hefner 57). This locates our relationship with God and with the rest of the world. We are both free and interdependent.

Part of our own displacement stems from the fact that for too long we have fancied ourselves to be above nature or separate from it. Instead of honoring our call to care for nature, we have dominated, domesticated, and romanticized it. We assume that nature is the backdrop on the stage in which only we are the stars. I have tried to establish that such a drama about ourselves is wrong-headed, even dangerous. We must examine more closely the complicated and complex images of nature and humans that we find today. For example, when we hike in the wilderness we take our GPS with us. Everywhere we go we take our gadgets. There is literally no place in the world that remains

“Part of our own displacement stems from the fact that for too long we have fancied ourselves to be above nature or separate from it. Instead of honoring our call to care for nature, we have dominated, domesticated, and romanticized it.”

untouched by humans and human technology. We blend together—nature, technology, humans, and animal. We are not separate, but related. We are more like hybrids, or mutts—a blending of natural and artificial, human and machine, animal and plant. Our natural world is techno-natural.

We are techno-sapiens rooted and entangled in techno-natures. The *imago dei* must reflect the cyborgs, hybrids that we really are. The human being has evolved from *homo sapiens* to techno-sapiens. This does not mean that we are less or more human, but that being human and human becoming means we are intertwined and inseparable from the technologies we use. We need new boundaries and roadmaps for interpreting the *imago dei*.

In, With, and Under: Incarnations in the Connections

I can think of no other event that has rekindled my imagination about my relationship between the natural world, human beings, and technologies than the South Dakota floods of 2011. Here a disaster unfolded that didn’t seem to obey the boundaries between “natural” and “human.” From where the Missouri River begins its natal journey at the headwaters in Three Forks, Montana to the landscapes it carves in the Dakota plains, I watched and learned about the mighty river during that summer. The mountain streams of southern Montana that form the Missouri River flooded the farms, homes, and businesses in the prairie landscapes of the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Iowa. Record snow packed in the mountains of Montana and then melted into the turbulent runoff that surged into the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin rivers. The three rivers did not look like the clear, placid mountains streams that win blue ribbons for fly fishing. Instead they tumbled forward and flooded over their banks. The waters that give life to the valleys are the very waters that destroyed life along the way.

But their destruction was not alone some “force of nature,” or some “act of God.” The Missouri River, once barely touched by the effects of humankind, carves its path with the help of human dams, levees, and drainage systems. We, along with the “forces of nature,” co-created the depths of the river basins, measured its flow on charts we decipher online, and fought against its very torrents by frantically building large berms of white sand bags. The mighty Missouri marks the threshold between drought and flood, creation and destruction, west and east, turbulence and placidness. We stand on the threshold: knowing how powerless we are over such a mighty river and yet how powerful we are when we can change the course of its tumultuous comings and goings.

No one should claim that we can “go back” to some kind of pristine, pure wilderness (as if there ever was such a place), anymore than we can “go back” to some kind of pure, pristine Garden of Eden (as if there ever was such a place). Such cultural and theological naiveté is dangerous. We are here and now, and can only move ahead. But how we do so is a theological and ethical concern. If we think that nature is only the backdrop for human activity, or if we claim that God only acts in human hearts, or if we separate non-human nature from human nature, then we misunderstand what it means to be created in the image of God. If we are created for relationship with the entire world, then we must reflect on, live with, and care about all those with whom we are related. We are located in the connections between public and private, technology and nature, human and non-human. And God is in, with, and under these connections that we make.

If we think that nature is only the backdrop for human activity, or if we claim that God only acts in human hearts, or if we separate non-human nature from human nature, then we misunderstand what it means to be created in the image of God. While the rest of creation has been given the gift of freedom to create, humans bear special responsibility for the particular freedom they have been given. No other creature can cause such suffering to others. While the potential for natural evil has been present from the beginning of creation, moral

“If we think that nature is only the backdrop for human activity, or if we claim that God only acts in human hearts, or if we separate non-human nature from human nature, then we misunderstand what it means to be created in the image of God.”

evil seems to belong alone to human beings, even if it is never completely separate from the natural world. We are all in this together in ways that can either save or destroy the world.

In his last book, posthumously published, Norman Maclean wrote about the 1949 Mann Gulch fire near Helena, Montana. *Young Men and Fire* is a drama about the power of fire and the lives of the young men who fight it. Fifteen firefighters, the elite Smokejumpers, dropped from the skies to fight a forest fire, and all but three died. Their story, told by Maclean, is framed by suffering and tragedy. Through the metaphors of life and death, and the pilgrimage he takes through their steps along the way to death, Maclean extends the power of fire not only from the landscapes of Montana, but also to the mushroom clouds of nuclear power and fire. For Maclean, “The atomic mushroom has become for our age the outer symbol of the inner fear of the explosive power of the universe” (295). Perhaps Maclean wrote *Young Men and Fire* so that we don’t forget how close life is to death, creativity to annihilation.

Most interesting to me is Maclean’s comment as he remembers the way that the Ponderosa pines burst into flames in the Mann Gulch fire: “The world then was more than ever theological, and the nuclear was never far off” (294). Maclean gets it: God is in the connections between life and death, on the ragged edge, and so are we. Our vocation is to understand what those connections mean so that our future is not one of annihilation by fire but of living into a wholesome and life-giving future with those with whom we are connected. We have been baptized into the waters of life and with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Elements of creation, joined together with the promise of God’s word, stand firm as a promise that God will bring life out of death, hope out of despair. Our faith is formed in the ecological, evolutionary elements of God’s creative and redeeming work. More often than not, I am both in awe and completely baffled by it all.¹

Endnotes

1. This paper will be part of two chapters in my upcoming book entitled, *The Geography of God’s Incarnation*. Used here with the permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers.

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Facing Tornadoes and Climate Change: An Interview with Jim Dontje about Environmental Innovation at Gustavus

What is the work of the Johnson Center for Environmental Innovation at Gustavus Adolphus?

The Center works in collaboration with students, faculty, and staff across the campus. On the facilities side, it has worked with the Physical Plant director, as well as some key faculty, to bring on-line three large solar thermal systems and several solar electric systems over the past 18 months, as well as support the LEED certification in Beck Hall, our new academic building.

Through student connections, I and others have helped with recycling and energy conservation efforts, consulted on numerous student projects, and been a part of developing a student garden. Over the next few months, we will be adding a food waste composting system and greenhouse to that effort.

I have seen good environmental initiatives come from all across the campus. One of our Campus Safety Officers took it upon himself to create a battery recycling drop-off in our bookstore. When we got NSF funding for a small wind turbine, our physical plant staff “did their homework” and were able to do the installation in a very technically proficient manner.

What is the most challenging issue?

The issue of climate change was, and remains, the top environmental concern. Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions is essential for the success of all our other environmental efforts. I have an ongoing concern that we, as a society, and Gustavus as an institution, have not taken seriously the climate issue. The political partisanship and corporate disinformation campaigns that have led to a public disregard for the issue, the distractions of a severe economic recession, and the administrative changes that we, like every institution, go through on a regular basis, keep distracting our attention from a response to climate change that is proportionate to the danger. This distraction is despite the fact that through our annual Nobel science conference, we have had internationally respected scientists and ethicists state very clearly in front of large audiences on our campus that it is time for strong action. On a more hopeful note, after our most



recent Nobel Conference that focused on oceans, some key faculty and administrators have recognized the need to work together toward a better response.

How is Gustavus positioned or equipped to undertake these initiatives?

The history of Gustavus includes its challenging but successful recovery from being struck by a tornado in 1998. While that was a painful event, and the response taxed the community’s resources to the extreme, the result was a community that knows that once they have come to consensus about what needs to be done, they can do amazing work together. When I am discussing environmental initiatives, if there is consensus about what to do, the conversation moves quite easily to “how can we make it happen.”

Each of our core values, Community, Faith, Justice, Excellence, and Service has an environmental component. We could add a sixth for environmental stewardship, but when we take each one of the existing values seriously, the environmental values rise to the surface naturally.

Our Linnaeus Arboretum gives us space for reflection and a constant reminder of why environmental stewardship and sustainability are important. Besides wildlife, including deer and wild turkey, it draws student researchers pursuing class projects and members of the public wanting to enjoy the space. Because we value the environment in a way that prompts us to set us aside this much area for the arboretum, we are naturally led to think about extending that preservation across campus.

Does the Lutheran identity of Gustavus here matter?

The “Lutheran identity” sometimes leads us to be more cautious, but ultimately our “Lutheranness” is an essential part of our environmental ethos. Lutheran theology and history has always been open to considering environmental issues, witnessed by Luther’s response what we should do if we thought Jesus would return tomorrow (“plant an apple tree”). Our Lutheran identity leads to a willingness to ask what our ethical response should be to our creation.

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JIM MARTIN-SCHRAMM

A Lutheran Ethic of Environmental Stewardship

The task of this essay is to sketch out a Lutheran ethic of environmental stewardship. I have structured my remarks around the following questions:

- If heaven is our home, why should Lutherans care about ecological issues?
- Does our Lutheran theological heritage call us to care for the earth and what humans are doing to it?
- Do Lutherans offer a unique perspective in the debates over the interlocking problems of global warming, energy consumption, water availability and usage, the loss of species, and so forth?
- What ethical resources can Lutherans and other Christians bring to debates about environmental stewardship and social justice?

My responses to the first three questions are fairly brief. My response to the last questions is much longer.

If heaven is our home, why should Lutherans care about ecological issues?

This question was first posed to me by the ELCA's Northwest Wisconsin Synod Lay School of Theology when they invited me to give a series of talks on a similar theme. At first I was a little taken aback by the question, but then I realized that it probably is a question many Christians wonder about. What follows are three brief responses to the question. The first comes from scripture:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them." (Rev. 21:1-3)

Barbara Rossing's book, *The Rapture Exposed*, has helped me better understand the book of Revelation and its rich but confusing imagery and symbols. The passage above emphasizes that heaven is coming to Earth. We are not going there, God is coming here. God intends to dwell here, on Earth, "not in some heaven light years away," as Marty Hagen's hymn puts it.

Martin Luther offers a similar response to this question about heaven:

God is wholly present in all creation, in every corner, behind you and before you. Do you think God is sleeping on a pillow in heaven? God is watching over you and protecting you...God is entirely and personally present in the wilderness, in the garden, in the field. ("These Words" 57, 61)

Like the Book of Revelation, Luther here emphasizes the imminence of God's presence on Earth.

Finally, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes the following to his fiancée as he reflects on the relationship of marriage and faith and their future life together:

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I don't mean the faith that flees the world, but the faith that endures in the world and loves and remains true to that world in spite of all the hardships it brings us. Our marriage must be a "yes" to God's earth. It must strengthen our resolve to do and accomplish something on earth. I fear that Christians who venture to stand on earth on only one leg will stand in heaven on only one leg too. (Bonhoeffer and Wedemeyer 64)¹

I love this last line. These quotations help reorient our focus on Earth, not on heaven. We will never have an adequate environmental ethic if our eyes are always set on heaven rather than on Earth as our home.

Does our Lutheran theological heritage call us to care for the earth and what humans are doing to it?

Absolutely. The Lutheran tradition contains a host of theological perspectives that can and should form the foundation of a robust environmental ethic.²

For example, Lutheran perspectives on the doctrine of creation emphasize God as the Creator of all. This theocentric perspective is a much needed antidote to the rampant anthropocentrism among those of us in the Global North. While human beings are created in the image of God (*imago dei*), Luther emphasized that we are not substantially like God because we possess consciousness or reason, but rather because we have the capacity to relate to all of creation with the care and affection of God (Luther, "Genesis," as cited by Hall, 101). The Lutheran theocentric perspective emphasizes that human beings are not set above other creatures but rather are set apart to serve the flourishing of all that God has made. The *dominus* (Jesus) is the model of *dominion*. Our call is to care for our kin.

"Luther emphasized that we are not substantially like God because we possess consciousness or reason, but rather because we have the capacity to relate to all of creation with the care and affection of God."

The doctrine of the Incarnation similarly challenges the rampant dualism of our era. It insists on the unity of body and soul and cherishes the presence of God in all of earthly reality. Here, laid in a manger, and surrounded by animals, the finite bears the

infinite. Bodies are affirmed, protected, and valued. All bodies. All that God has made has value. We are not fundamentally individuals but rather social and ecological creatures who share in common the goodness of bodily life. We cannot live without each other. We are Earth creatures. We were formed from the dust, and to the dust we will return.

One of the hallmarks of the Lutheran tradition, however, is a robust doctrine of sin. Despite being created in the image of God and being saved through Christ's death on the cross, Luther believed that all human beings remained in bondage to the powers of sin, death, and the devil. This notion that human beings are both saints and sinners (*simul iustus et peccator*) yields a realistic view of human nature that forges a middle way between naive idealism and cynical pessimism. Even in Luther's day this awareness of sinful behavior extended well beyond the individual into the systems, powers, and structures that shape human behavior and thus influence all of life. This Lutheran emphasis on the pervasiveness of sin enables and requires us to look carefully at the laws and policies that wreak havoc on ecological systems and jeopardize the welfare of all who are poor and vulnerable.

While the notion of being both a saint and sinner has the potential to yield a paralytic ethic, the Lutheran doctrine of justification by grace through faith empowers Christians to live out their vocation. We are not justified by our works to "save the planet." Instead, our justification by grace through faith empowers us to make our faith active in love through the care and redemption of all that God has made.

Do Lutherans offer a unique perspective in the debates over the interlocking problems of global warming, energy consumption, water availability and usage, the loss of species, and so on?

I don't think Lutheranism offers an absolutely unique perspective in these debates, but I do think Lutherans can stress four vital Christian insights.

First, our theocentric worldview combats the rampant and destructive anthropocentrism among the privileged and powerful who assume that all of creation is for their benefit and exploitation.

Second, our incarnational theology repudiates destructive dualisms that skew a holistic understanding of life and are often conjoined with a logic of domination to justify men in charge of women, one race in charge of another, owners in charge of workers, and humans as masters over nature.

Third, our belief that Christ exists in community counters the excessive individualism of modern industrial culture and points to the fundamental reality that we are utterly interdependent upon the health and well-being of all below us on the food chain.

Fourth, our accountability to God leads us to care about the welfare not only of present generations but also of future generations even though our economic and political systems are happy to dump current social and ecological costs on future generations.

What ethical resources can Lutherans, through their ecumenical ties, bring to debates about environmental stewardship and social justice?

Lutherans have helped to develop ethical resources via our work in and engagement with the ecumenical community.³ Christians in the World Council of Churches (WCC) have been wrestling with the nexus between social justice and environmental issues for decades. In fact, it was the WCC that elevated the concept of sustainability to a social norm when it challenged its members and the international community in 1974 to create a “just, participatory, and sustainable society” (Rasmussen, “Doing Our First”).

Faced with the prospects for nuclear war, rapid population growth, deepening poverty, and growing environmental degradation, members of the WCC began in the 1970s to consult the sources of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience to develop various ethical resources to grapple with complicated and interconnected problems related to social justice and environmental well-being. In 1979, a WCC conference on “Faith, Science and the Future” identified and gave explicit attention to four moral norms: sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity (Albrecht, Shinn). In 1983, the sixth assembly of the WCC encouraged all of its member communions to use these norms in their pursuit of “justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.”

Then, in 1984, the WCC was one of the first organizations in the world to call attention to the dangers of global warming with the publication of *Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith*. This study demanded an integrated and two-fold response. First, it distinguished between “the luxury omissions of the rich” and the “survival emissions of the poor.” It emphasized that social justice is key to any strategy to combat climate change. Second, it noted that related environmental problems reveal that nature has become a “co-victim with the poor.” The statement declared that “Earth and people will be liberated to thrive together, or not at all.” Quite presciently, the WCC also emphasized that “we must not allow either the immensity or the uncertainty pertaining to climate change and other problems to erode further the solidarity binding humans to one another and to other life” (12-13, cited in Rasmussen, “Doing our First”).

Some of the participants in these WCC conversations were also engaged in ethical reflection about various policy issues in their own countries. Presbyterians in the United States addressed issues related to energy policy in a comprehensive policy statement adopted in 1981, *The Power to Speak Truth*

to Power, which was developed further a decade later in 1990 when the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (PCUSA) approved a major study on environmental policy entitled *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*. In 2008, the PCUSA’s 218th General Assembly approved *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*. The document utilized the ethic of ecological justice and the related moral norms of sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity to assess United States energy options and to formulate related policy recommendations.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) drew, in part, on the work of the WCC and the PCUSA as it developed a series of social statements on various issues beginning in the early 1990s. The ELCA’s statement on environmental issues in 1993 emphasized that justice “means honoring the integrity of creation, and striving for fairness within the human family.” It also called on members of the ELCA to “answer the call to justice and commit ourselves to its principles—participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability” (“Caring for Creation”). All four of these principles are referred to in the ELCA’s 1995 statement on peace issues (“For Peace”), in the ELCA’s 1999 statement on economic justice issues (“Economic Life”), and in the ELCA’s 2011 social statement on genetics (“Genetics”). The latter study claims “these four principles could be said to articulate a core ethics of ‘faith active in love through justice’ for ELCA social policy” (30).

While the ELCA has utilized the four dimensions of justice that emerged from WCC discussions in the 1970s, the National Council of Churches has developed the notion of an ethic of ecological justice that emerged from reflection on United States energy policy among Presbyterians in the 1980s. Today the National Council of Churches’ “Eco-Justice Program” enables “national bodies of member Protestant and Orthodox denominations to work together to protect and restore God’s Creation.” The program defines eco-justice as “all ministries designed to heal and defend creation, working to assure justice for all of creation and the human beings who live in it” (National Council).

I have used the ethic of ecological justice and its related moral norms to conduct an ethical assessment of energy options and climate policy proposals (Martin-Schramm). This ethic addresses human-caused problems that threaten both human and natural communities and considers both human and natural communities to be ethically important. The word *ecological* lifts up moral concern about other species and their habitats; the word *justice* points to the distinctly human realm and human relationships to the natural order. The remainder of this essay explores the concept of ecojustice in greater detail and traces the biblical and theological foundations for sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity in Jewish and Christian traditions.

An Ethic of Ecological Justice

The ethic of ecological justice is a biblical, theological, and tradition-based ethic that emphasizes four moral norms: sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity.

Justice

The norm of justice used in the title of this ethical perspective is an inclusive concept. Its full meaning is given greater specificity by the four norms of sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity. Justice is, however, a norm in its own right with a distinct history in Christian ethics and Western philosophy. In Christian traditions justice is rooted in the very being of God. It is an essential part of God's community of love and calls human beings to make fairness the touchstone of social relations and relations to other species and ecosystems. Justice is not the love of Christ (*agape*). Justice involves a calculation of interests. Justice has a more impersonal quality than love because social groups are more its subject than individuals. Nevertheless, justice divorced from love easily deteriorates into a mere calculation of interests and finally into a cynical balancing of interest against interest. Without love inspiring justice, societies lack the push and pull of care and compassion to move them to higher levels of fairness. Love forces recognition of the needs of others. Love judges abuses of justice. Love lends passion to justice. Justice, in short, is love worked out in arenas where the needs of each individual are impossible to know.

Justice in Christian thought is the social and ecological expression of love and means a special concern for the poor, a rough calculation of freedom and equality, and a passion for establishing equitable relationships. The ethical aims of justice in the absence of other considerations should be to relieve the worst conditions of poverty, powerlessness, exploitation, and environmental degradation and provide for an equitable distribution of burdens and costs. The moral norms of sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity help to flesh out more fully what an ethic of ecological justice might entail.

Sustainability

Sustainability may be defined as the long-range supply of sufficient resources to meet basic human needs and the preservation of intact natural communities. It expresses a concern for future generations and the planet as a whole, and emphasizes that an acceptable quality of life for present generations must not jeopardize the prospects for future generations.

Sustainability is basically good stewardship and is a pressing concern today because of the human degradation of nature. It embodies an ongoing view of nature and society, a view in which

ancestors and posterity are seen as sharing in present decisions. Sustainability precludes a shortsighted stress on economic growth that fundamentally harms ecological systems and any form of environmentalism that ignores human needs and costs.

There are several significant biblical and theological foundations for the norm of sustainability. The doctrine of creation affirms that God as Creator sustains God's creation. The creation is also good independently of human beings (Gen. 1). It is not simply there for human use, but possesses an autonomous status in the eyes of God. The goodness of matter is later picked up in Christian understandings of the Incarnation and the sacraments (see McFague 172 ff.; Ruether).

Psalms 104 is a splendid hymn of praise that celebrates God's efforts at sustainability: "When you send forth your spirit...you renew the face of the ground" (Ps. 104:30). Similarly, Psalm 145 rejoices in the knowledge that God gives "them their food in due season" and "satisfies the desire of every living thing" (Ps. 145:15-16). The doctrine of creation also emphasizes the special vocation of humanity to assist God in the task of sustainability. In Genesis the first creation account describes the responsibility of stewardship in terms of "dominion" (Gen. 1:28), and the second creation account refers to this task as "to till and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). In both cases the stress is on humanity's stewardship of God's creation. The parable of the Good Steward in Luke also exemplifies this perspective. The steward is not the owner of the house

"The doctrine of creation also emphasizes the special vocation of humanity to assist God in the task of sustainability."

but manages or sustains the household so that all may be fed and have enough (Luke 12:42). The Gospels offer several other vivid metaphors of stewardship. The shepherd cares for the lost sheep. The earth is a vineyard and humanity serves as its tenant.

The covenant theme is another important biblical and theological foundation for the norm of sustainability. The Noahic covenant (Gen. 9) celebrates God's "everlasting covenant between God and every living creation of all flesh that is on the earth." The biblical writer repeats this formula several times in subsequent verses, as if to drive the point home. The text demonstrates God's concern for biodiversity and the preservation of all species (Gen. 9:16).

It is the Sinai covenant, however, that may best reveal the links between the concepts of covenant and sustainability. Whereas the prior covenants with Noah and Abraham were

unilateral and unconditional declarations by God, the Sinai covenant featured the reciprocal and conditional participation of humanity in the covenant: “If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God...then you shall live....” (Deut. 30:16). Each of the Ten Commandments and all of the interpretations of these commandments in the subsequent Book of the Covenant were intended to sustain the life of the people of God in harmony with the well-being of the earth (Exod. 20-24).

At the heart of the Sinai covenant rested the twin concerns for righteousness (justice) and stewardship of the earth. Likewise the new covenant in Christ is very much linked to these twin concerns as well as to the reciprocal relation of human beings.

In Romans 8:18 the whole creation suffers and in 8:22 “groans in travail.” But suffering, according to Paul, does not lead to despair. “The creation awaits in eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Rom. 8:19), and “in this hope we are saved” (Rom. 8:24). Suffering, as in the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross, points beyond to the hope that is already partially present. Part of this hope is a return to the good stewardship of Genesis 1 and 2 before the Fall in Genesis 3.

Sufficiency

The norm of sufficiency emphasizes that all forms of life are entitled to share in the goods of creation. To share in the goods of creation in a Christian sense, however, does not mean unlimited consumption, hoarding, or an inequitable distribution of the earth’s goods. Rather it is defined in terms of basic needs, sharing, and equity. It repudiates wasteful and harmful consumption and encourages humility, frugality, and generosity (Nash, “Revival”).

This norm appears in the Bible in several places. As the people of God wander in the wilderness after the Exodus, God sends “enough” manna each day to sustain the community. Moses instructs the people to “gather as much of it as each of you need” (Exod. 16). The norm of sufficiency is also integral to the set of laws known as the jubilee legislation. These laws fostered stewardship of the land, care for animals and the poor, and a regular redistribution of wealth. In particular the jubilee laws stressed the needs of the poor and wild animals to eat from fields left fallow every seven years (Exod. 23:11). All creatures were entitled to a sufficient amount of food to live.

In Christian scriptures sufficiency is linked to abundance. Jesus says: “I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Jesus rejected the notion, however, that the “good life” is to be found in the abundance of possessions (Luke 12:15). Instead, the “good life” is to be found in following Christ. Such a life results not in the hoarding of material wealth but rather in sharing it so that others may have enough. Acts 1-5

reveals that this became the model for what amounted to the first Christian community in Jerusalem. They distributed their possessions “as they had need (Acts 2:45). Paul also emphasized the relation of abundance to sufficiency: “God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough” (2 Cor. 9:8).

The norm of sufficiency is also supported by biblical and theological understandings of wealth, consumption, and sharing. Two general and not altogether compatible attitudes dominate biblical writings on wealth and consumption. On the one hand there is a qualified appreciation of wealth, on the other a call to freedom from possessions that sometimes borders on deep suspicion (Hengel). The Hebrew scriptures generally take the side of appreciating wealth, praising the rich who are just and placing a high estimate on riches gained through honest work.

Both sides are found in the teachings of Jesus. The announcement of the coming community of God carries with it a call for unparalleled righteousness, freedom from possessions, and complete trust in God. The service of God and the service of riches are incompatible (Matt. 6:24; Mark 8:36, 9:43-48, 10:17-25; Luke 12:15, 8:14, 11:18-23, 19:1-10). Jesus himself had no possessions and prodded his disciples into the renunciation of possessions and what later has been called “holy poverty,” that is, poverty that is freely chosen as a way of life (Matt. 8:20; Mark 1:16, 6:8f.; Luke 9:3, 10:4).

On the other side Jesus took for granted the owning of property and was apparently supported by women of means (Luke 8:2). He urged that possessions be used to help those in need (Luke 6:30, 8:2f., 10:38f.). He was fond of celebrations, talking often about feasts in the community of God.

The biblical witness on consumption follows much the same pattern. The basic issue has been between self-denial and contentment with a moderate level of consumption (Hengel). The side of self-denial evolved into the monastic movement of later ages. The way of moderation is expressed well in I Timothy 6:6-8: “There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and cannot take anything out of the world; but if you have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”

Sharing is an implication of neighbor love, hoarding a sign of selfishness and sin. Jesus repeatedly calls his disciples to give of themselves, even to the point of giving all they have to the poor. He shares bread and wine with them at the Last Supper. Paul in several letters urges Christians elsewhere to share with those in the Jerusalem community.

Sufficiency and sustainability are linked, for what the ethic of ecological justice seeks to sustain is the material and spiritual wherewithal to satisfy the basic needs of all forms of life. They

are also linked through the increasing realization that present levels of human consumption, especially in affluent countries, are more than sufficient and in many respects are unsustainable. Only an ethic and practice that stresses sufficiency, frugality, and generosity will ensure a sustainable future.

Finally, the norm of sufficiency offers an excellent example of how human ethics is being extended to nature. The post World War II stress on economic growth has been anthropocentric. Economists and politicians have been preoccupied by human sufficiency. The anthropocentric focus of most Christian traditions reinforced this preoccupation.

With increasing environmental awareness, however, this preoccupation no longer seems appropriate. And while other species are not equipped to practice frugality or simplicity, indeed to be ethical at all in a human sense, the norm of sufficiency does apply to humans in how they relate to other species. To care is to practice restraint. Humans should be frugal and share resources with plants and animals because they count in the eyes of God. All of creation is good and deserves ethical consideration. The focus on sufficiency is part of what it means to practice justice.

Participation

The norm of participation likewise stems from the affirmation of all forms of life and the call to justice. This affirmation and this call lead to the respect and inclusion of all forms of life in human decisions that affect their well-being. Voices should be heard, and, if not able to speak, which is the case for other species, then humans will have to represent their interests when those interests are at stake. Of course, how far to extend moral considerations to other species is a controversial issue. So too is the issue of moral significance (Nash, *Loving Nature*, 179 ff.). Participation is concerned with empowerment and seeks to remove the obstacles to participating in decisions that affect lives.

The norm of participation is also grounded in the two creation accounts in Genesis. These accounts emphasize the value of everything in God's creation and the duty of humans to recognize the interest of all by acting as good stewards. Through their emphasis on humanity's creation in the image of God, the writers of Genesis underline the value of human life and the equality of women and men.

The prophets brought sharp condemnation upon kings and people of Israel for violating the covenant by neglecting the interests of the poor and vulnerable. They repudiated actions that disempowered people through the loss of land, corruption, theft, slavery, and militarism. The prophets spoke for those who had no voice and could no longer participate in the decisions that affected their lives (Amos 2:6-7; Isa. 3:2-15; Hos. 10:12-14).

With Jesus comes a new emphasis, the kingdom or community of God (Mark 1:14-15). While the community of God is not to be equated to any community of human beings, it nevertheless is related. It serves as a general model for human communities and is to some degree realizable, although never totally.

The community of God has its source in a different kind of power, God's power of love and justice. This power alone is capable of producing genuine and satisfying human communities and right relations to nature's communities. The community of God cannot be engineered. Technology, material consumption, and economic growth may enhance human power, but offer little help in developing participatory communities. Reliance on these powers alone can in fact make matters worse by creating divisions.

Jesus also stressed the beginning of the community of God in small things, such as seeds that grow. He gathered a community largely of the poor and needy. He gave and found support in a small inner group of disciples. In this day of complex technologies, large corporations that dominate globalization, and mammoth bureaucracies, Jesus' stress seems out of place to many. In their pell-mell rush to increase the size and complexity of social organizations and technological processes, humans are missing something, however. For effective community and participation, size counts and must be limited in order for individuals to have significant and satisfying contacts.

The concern for the poor evident in the Gospels is another support for the norm of participation. Without some semblance of justice there can be little participation in community. Extremes of wealth and poverty and disproportions of power create an envious and angry underclass without a stake in the community. Equality of worth, rough equality of power, and political freedom are prerequisites for genuine communities.

In the early church small communities flourished. The Jerusalem church, while poor, had a remarkable sense of sharing. Paul's letter to the Romans contains perhaps the most ideal statement of community ever written (Rom. 12). He also talked about the church as the body of Christ. It has many members, all of whom are united in Christ. Differences between Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free are unimportant (Gal. 3:28). He repeatedly used the Greek word *koinonia*, rich in communal connotations, to describe the house churches he established.

All this is not to romanticize the early church. There was enough conflict to avoid sentimentalizing the notion of participation. It is difficult, the more so in industrialized societies even with their full range of communications, to achieve participatory communities. A multitude of decisions each requiring expert technical judgments and having wide-ranging consequences must be made in a timely way. Popular participation in decisions, especially when

there is conflict as there is in environmental disputes, can paralyze essential processes. Expedience often results in the exclusion of certain voices and interests. Impersonal, functional ways of relating become easy and further reduce participation.

The norm of participation calls for a reversal of this trend. At minimum it means having a voice in critical decisions that affect one's life. For environmental problems it means having a say, for example, in the selection of energy and resource systems, the technologies these systems incorporate, and the distribution of benefits and burdens these systems create. All this implies free and open elections, democratic forms of government, responsible economic institutions, and a substantial dose of good will.

Finally, there is the difficult problem of how to bring other species and ecosystems into human decision-making. In one sense they are already included since there is no way to exclude them. Humans are inextricably part of nature, and many human decisions have environmental consequences that automatically include other species and ecosystems. The problem is the large number of negative consequences that threaten entire species and systems and ultimately the human species, for humans are dependent on other species and functioning ecosystems. The task is to reduce and eliminate where possible these negative consequences. One reason is obviously pragmatic. Humans are fouling their own nests. Beyond this anthropocentric reason, however, it helps to see plants, animals, and their communities as having interests that humans should respect. They have a dignity of their own kind. They experience pleasure and pain. The norm of participation should be extended to include these interests and to relieve pain, in effect to give other species a voice. Humans have an obligation to speak out for other forms of life that cannot defend themselves.

Solidarity

The norm of solidarity reinforces this inclusion as well as adding an important element to the inclusion of marginalized human beings. The norm highlights the communal nature of life in contrast to individualism and encourages individuals and groups to join in common cause with those who are victims of discrimination, abuse, and oppression. Underscoring the reciprocal relationship of individual welfare and the common good, solidarity calls for the powerful to share the plight of the powerless, for the rich to listen to the poor, and for humanity to recognize its fundamental interdependence with the rest of nature. The virtues of humility, compassion, courage, and generosity are all marks of the norm of solidarity.

Both creation accounts in Genesis emphasize the profound relationality of all of God's creation. These two accounts point to the fundamental social and ecological context of existence.

Humanity was created for community. This is the foundation of solidarity. While all forms of creation are unique, they are all related to each other as part of God's creation.

Understood in this context and in relation to the concept of stewardship in the Gospels, the *imago dei* tradition that has its origins in Genesis also serves as a foundation for solidarity. Creation in the image of God places humans not in a position over or apart from creation but rather in the same loving relationship of God with creation. Just as God breathes life into the world (Gen. 7), humanity is given the special responsibility as God's stewards to nurture and sustain life.

“Creation in the image of God places humans not in a position over or apart from creation but rather in the same loving relationship of God with creation.”

In their descriptions of Jesus' life and ministry, the gospels provide the clearest examples of compassionate solidarity. Jesus shows solidarity with the poor and oppressed; he eats with sinners, drinks from the cup of a gentile woman, meets with outcasts, heals lepers, and consistently speaks truth to power. Recognizing that Jesus was the model of solidarity, Paul used the metaphor of the body of Christ to emphasize the continuation of this solidarity within the Christian community. Writing to the Christians in Corinth, Paul stresses that by virtue of their baptisms they are all one “in Christ.” Thus if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together (1 Cor. 12:26). It would be hard to find a better metaphor to describe the character of compassionate solidarity.

The norm of solidarity also finds its home in a theology of the cross. The cross is the central symbol in Christianity. It points to a God who works in the world not in terms of power *over* but power *in, with, and under*. This is revolutionary. It upsets normal ways of conceiving power. God suffers with all living things that groan in travail (Rom. 8). In the words of Jesus: “The last shall be first, and the first shall be last” (Matt. 19:30; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30). The one who “was in the form of God...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:6-7). The implication is clear. Christians are called to suffer with each other and the rest of the creation, to change their ways, and to enter a new life of solidarity and action to preserve and protect the entire creation.

Conclusion

These four moral norms sketch the broad outline of an ethic of ecojustice. In my view, these resources offer a sophisticated ethic to grapple with social and environmental issues that are intertwined. They also offer a common moral vocabulary with which to engage in ethical reflection and public discourse about these issues. One does not have to be a Christian to agree that sustainability, sufficiency, participation, and solidarity are all moral goods that should be maximized in policy discussions. And yet, all too often these debates quickly boil down to a cost-benefit analysis of what is economically cost-effective or politically expedient. Christian ethics requires consideration of a broader range of values and a deeper sense of accountability to God.

Endnotes

1. For a rich discussion of Bonhoeffer's earth-affirming faith, see Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics*, 295-316.

2. I do not like the conventional distinction between social and environmental ethics because I think it perpetuates a dualistic way of thinking that separates nature from culture and denies the integrated nature of all reality. I prefer to talk about an ethic of ecological justice which seeks to integrate the fields of social and environmental ethics.

3. The second half of this essay is adapted from my book, *Climate Justice: Ethics, Energy, and Climate Policy*, 26-36. Used with permission from Fortress Press.

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Putting Principles into Practice: An Interview with Kenneth Foster about Concordia's Sustainability Council

Why was the President's Sustainability Council at Concordia created?

Shortly after arriving at Concordia in 2011, President William Craft formed this council to replace an existing Sustainability Task Force and appointed administrators, faculty members, and students to serve on it. This was an important move to re-energize those who had become frustrated with an apparent lack of movement towards putting into practice sustainability principles. The council's creation was a direct response to the need for high-level leadership and coordination as the college sought to embrace its responsibility to be a good steward of natural resources and to protect the earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty.

How does the Sustainability Council work with more "grass-roots" initiatives?

The twin problems faced by colleges in pursuing sustainability are: first, while there are many possible initiatives that could be pursued, an effective overall plan and strategy are needed to decide which make the most sense. Second, while it is easy enough to draw up an attractive plan, implementation of it often proves to be much more difficult. Keeping these two issues in mind, the President's Sustainability Council has worked on strategic planning while also seeking to encourage and facilitate the continuing bottom-up sustainability-related efforts of students, faculty, and staff. This back-and-forth between high-level planning and on-the-ground action hopefully will help us to develop an ambitious plan that can be implemented successfully.

How do faculty, staff, and students engage one another?

Pursuing sustainability on a campus provides a rare opportunity for all parts of the community to work together. Facilities staff members are immediately recognized as essential teachers and mentors, opening the way for innovative faculty-student-staff collaborations. Staff members now routinely work with faculty and students to work toward sustainability.

The students have proved to be the most active leaders in sustainability work at Concordia. They have pushed for the creation of an EcoHouse, of a Green Revolving Fund, and so



on. Yet even when students are not the initiators of something, we make a point of trying to involve students in whatever we do. We are an educational institution, so we want to make our sustainability work promote student learning.

Would you tell us more about the EcoHouse?

Some years ago, some students got together and started pushing for the creation of an ecohouse, a college-owned residential property where students could model sustainable living. They faced the inevitable discouraging roadblocks, but their persistence and skillful actions eventually paid off. Productive conversations among students, faculty, and staff resulted in a proposal that gained quick approval from the President's Cabinet. The EcoHouse opened this fall as a living-learning laboratory. The college made a conscious decision not to put in eco-friendly upgrades at the outset. Instead, the residents will collaborate with others to make improvements in a step-by-step fashion—as homeowners have to do in real life. The EcoHouse project continues to be a model for how sustainability creates synergies among diverse parts of the college community.

Does the Lutheran identity of Concordia matter for these efforts?

The Lutheran identity of the college does matter. It rightly and appropriately calls us to ground our work in a conviction that the earth is not ours but is rather God's creation. The earth is sacred, and we have a responsibility to take care of it. Yet as a Lutheran college we are also centrally concerned with social justice—with the well-being of all people. So we can easily pursue sustainability in its fullest sense, which means that we seek to preserve the ecological integrity of the earth, to enable all people to live in dignity, and to facilitate the creation of just societies. In our Concordia College Vision for Sustainability, we wrote: "We have a moral responsibility to preserve the integrity of the ecological systems on which life depends. This responsibility arises from love for people, love for all creation, and love for God. This responsibility is especially salient for a college of the ELCA."

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CYNTHIA MOE-LOBEDA

Climate Justice, Environmental Racism, and a Lutheran Moral Vision

What is the vocation of a Lutheran college at this particular point in history? I begin with a simple response and then spend this essay deepening it. *A central aspect of that vocation is to prepare students for what Thomas Berry calls the “great work” of our era, drawing upon the distinctive gifts of Lutheran traditions in doing so. That “great work” is to forge a sustainable relationship between the human species and our planetary home and do this in ways that diminish the gap between those who have too much and those who have not enough. This daunting challenge is a defining face of God’s call to love neighbor as self in this age of ecological peril.*

From a Lutheran perspective, the call to neighbor-love permeates all aspects of life, including our lives as individuals and our lives as members of societies. Neighbor-love bids us to shape societies in ways that enable all people and Earth’s web of life to flourish, with particular attention to the wellbeing of people who are vulnerable to exploitation by others.

What are some distinctive gifts that a college or university shaped by Lutheran heritage can offer to this panhuman and interfaith challenge of our day? I will focus on one set of resources that revolves around what I refer to as moral vision. Moral vision begins with a courageous commitment to “see reality for what it is”—that is, to recognize “what is going on” and especially to recognize evil where it parades as good. I am drawing here on Luther’s insistence on calling a thing what it is. Lutheran theologian Winston Persaud, describing Luther’s conviction, writes, “when reality seems distorted and sinful, and seemingly God-forsaken...a theologian of the cross is not afraid to recognize reality for what it is” (Persaud 265-66). In

Luther’s words, “A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is” (“Heidelberg Disputation” 53).

Most of us do not recognize reality for what it is today. We do not acknowledge fully the reality of ecological peril and the horrendous inequity that is built into it. This reality seems too God-forsaken, too hopeless. *Seeing* this reality, however, is crucial. We cannot reverse our headlong race into environmental catastrophe without recognizing that we are on that way. As James Baldwin once said: Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed unless it is faced. We must see what is going on.

This initial aspect of moral vision—seeing what is—is brutal. Neither we nor our students nor anyone should risk it without also engaging a second and a third aspect of moral vision. The second is seeing more just and sustainable alternatives, and the third is seeing God’s saving presence at work in the world to bring abundant life for all. Do not gaze at the cross forever without seeing also the resurrection. We will begin with seeing what is, but do not fear that we will stay there.

Seeing What Is

We face a moral crisis never before encountered. One young and dangerous species now threatens Earth’s capacity to regenerate life as we know it. We are using and degrading the planet’s natural goods at a rate that Earth’s ecosystems cannot sustain. We have generated an unsustainable relationship with our planetary home. The credible scientific community is of one

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accord about this basic reality. The 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment—the most comprehensive sustainability assessment ever undertaken—proclaimed that, “Human activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of the Earth that the ability of the planet’s ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted” (Millennium). The problem, however, is not *human* activity per se. It is especially the activity of some of us—the world’s high consumers.

“Less acknowledged in the United States is the intricate connection between ecological degradation and social injustice.”

Let us call the ecological peril the Earth crisis. The Earth crisis alone is daunting. Less well known, less acknowledged in the United States is the intricate connection between ecological degradation and social injustice. Consider more closely two broad forms of that connection: climate injustice and environmental racism.

Climate Justice

The suffering and death caused by climate change is not distributed evenly among Earth’s human creatures. In general, the world’s people of color and people who are economically impoverished are at far more risk. The problem runs much deeper. Those of us most protected from the effects of ecological degradation are also the ones most responsible for it. Therein lies the justice issue at its starkest.

Citizens of the United States daily produce nearly 50 times the greenhouse gases as do our counterparts in some lands, while the world’s more impoverished people and peoples suffer most and first from the life threatening consequences of global warming. Martin Parry, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Working Group II declares: “The people most affected by climate change are and will be those living in developing countries....and within those regions it will be the poor that will be most affected” (IIED). Even a slight degree of warming decreases the yield of the world’s food staples—wheat, corn, rice, barley—in seasonally dry areas (Parry). Subsistence farmers and people with little money will go hungry. We will not. Rising sea levels are not likely to force you or me permanently from our homes and livelihoods in the near future. Not true for many of the world’s more impoverished people in low-lying areas. The Maldives, a nation of tiny islands and atolls no more than a mile wide or eight feet above sea level at any point, is threatened with loss of its entire land mass. The entire

nation may be forced to relocate. The Maldives has become a leading nation in calling for serious action around climate change. Its president is one of the world’s most eloquent voices entreating the world community to take seriously the reality of climate injustice. “Please ladies and gentlemen,” he implored, “we did not do any of these things [lead high carbon-emission lifestyles] but if things go business as usual, we will not live. We will die. Our country will not exist” (Nasheed).

Not only economic privilege but also white privilege marks the climate crisis. The over 600 million environmental refugees whose lands will be lost to rising seas if Antarctica or Greenland melts significantly will be disproportionately people of color. So, too, are the people who go hungry as global warming diminishes yields of food staples. The 40 percent of the world’s population whose lives depend upon seven rivers fed by rapidly diminishing Himalayan glaciers are largely not white people. Ongoing ecological destruction, especially in the forms of climate and water issues, could be the most deadly manifestation of white privilege and class privilege that the world has known.

These are examples of what many voices from the Global South refer to as “climate injustice.” Two years ago, while working in India with a number of seminaries and the National Council of Churches of India (NCCI) on eco-justice ministry and theology, I realized the extent to which white privilege and class privilege offer to a few of us relative protection from the earliest and severest impacts of global climate change. The NCCI describes climate injustice in a recent draft of a policy statement: “[T]he powerful nations and the powerful within the developing nations... have emitted and continue to emit green house gases beyond the capacity of the planet to withstand. However the subaltern communities with almost zero footprint are forced to bear the brunt of the consequences of global warming” (NCCI)

In short, “climate injustice” refers to the imbalance between nations responsible for climate change and the nations suffering or predicted to suffer from its effects. While we all may be in this together, we are not all in it in the same way or to the same deadly extent, at least initially.

Environmental Racism

The social justice/ecology nexus takes a second form. Closely related to climate injustice, it commonly is identified as “environmental racism.” The term was coined in 1987 by Benjamin Chavez, an African American civil rights leader, in the groundbreaking study, “Toxic Wastes and Race,” commissioned by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice.¹

Environmental racism refers to government and corporate regulations and policies that directly or indirectly target certain impoverished communities and communities of

color for dangerous land use. As a result, people of color and impoverished people are far more likely to be exposed to toxic and hazardous waste. (The term initially referred to environmental discrimination based on race alone. But it quickly came to denote the disproportionate distribution of environmental dangers not only in communities of color but also communities of economically marginalized people.)

Illustrations of environmental racism are endless. They are international and domestic. The aforementioned study documented the disproportionate location of facilities for treatment, storage and disposal of toxic waste in or near “racial and ethnic communities” in the United States (Chavis). Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the extent to which black and economically impoverished people are more vulnerable to climate related weather disasters. Mississippi’s “cancer alley” is not in a white wealthy area. In Seattle the industrial flats full of polluted water and truck exhaust are smack in a low-income area of town.

Environmental racism on an international level is even more pernicious. A small dark-skinned woman from a tribal community in India walked quietly into the basement office of an Indian social movement organization that I was visiting. Clinging to her hand was a very tiny boy with a tube through which he breathed. They had come to spend the night in the office. The child’s birth defect was caused by the disastrous gas leak from a Union Carbide subsidiary’s plant in Bhopal, India. That plant and the careless safety precautions that allowed the horrendous leak would not have been located in a wealthy white neighborhood of United States.

While disasters such as Bhopal are present in the public discourse, much environmental racism on the international level is easily hidden from the public eye in this country. The transfer of ecologically dangerous production plants to countries of the two-thirds world is one major example. So too is the Coca-Cola plant in India that has destroyed the water supply and therefore the crops for thousands of people—dark-skinned people.

“Transboundary dumping,” or dumping waste across national borders, is another example of international environmental racism. Much of our garbage ends up in landfills in the Global South. As incinerators close in the Global North, they are often sold to companies in the developing world who then incinerate our municipal, medical, and hazardous waste. Beginning in 1986, the *Khian Sea*, a 500-foot vessel hauled 15,000 tons of toxic incinerator ash from Philadelphia around the world for *sixteen years* trying to dump it in port after port. Initially a large portion of it was dumped on a beach in Haiti, labeled “soil fertilizer,” but thereafter every port refused to accept it: Senegal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Cape Verde, and Indonesia. Finally the rest disappeared somewhere in the Indian Ocean.

In like manner, computers and other electronic goods that are discarded by consumers in the United States are often shipped to cities and villages across Asia, Latin America, and Africa where residents disassemble them for sale in new manufacturing processes or where they are simply dumped as waste. Each computer monitor contains highly toxic materials. This practice is essentially a massive transfer of hazardous waste products from the wealthy world to the poor.

The fossil fuel industry demonstrates environmental racism both in the United States and in the Global South. The peoples whose communities and lives are devastated by coal and oil production tend to be already marginalized people: Africans of the Niger Delta, African Americans in Mississippi, poor whites in Appalachia, Indigenous of Latin America and North America, and other people on the underside of power and privilege.

Ecological Imperialism

In sum, we see at least two broad dimensions of the link between social injustice and ecological degradation. They are climate injustice and environmental racism. Together on the global stage, they are known by some as “ecological imperialism.” The stark reality is that, in general, people with relative economic wealth and people of European descent stand a greater chance of protection from the impacts of global warming and toxic waste than do many of Earth’s peoples. This concern demands holding social justice and ecological well-being as inseparable in the quest to embrace creation and to build a sustainable relationship between the human species and the planet. Eco-justice is a term for that linkage.

These realities are gut-wrenching for people of relative economic privilege who live in the Global North, including me. Our lives are wound up in and benefit materially from economic structures and norms that breed deadly ecological destruction for many people whom we fail to see. Our everyday life, in the ravenously consumptive and petroleum dependent mode that we consider normal, threatens Earth’s web of life and many neighbors whom we are called to love. This is a deeply troubling aspect of “reality as it is” for us today. A crucial step in moral vision is to *see* it.

Seeing What Could Be²

So what does all this mean for the vocation of a Lutheran College? I do believe that faith in a God who loves this creation and all of its people with a boundless and gracious love calls us to equip ourselves and our students for countering the climate injustice and environmental racism on which our lives are built. This requires seeing them. But it is a horrible

sight. My own experience convinces me that clear vision of our corruption into this systemic sin is indeed too dangerous. It easily aggravates denial, hopelessness, or despair. Yet love for neighbor demands seeing where neighbor is brutalized. The question before us is what can make “seeing what is” morally empowering instead of morally defeating?

A Lutheran theological perspective insists that while daring to see what is in terms of human brokenness and sin, we also cultivate a second and a third form of vision. They are seeing what ought to be and what could be (more just and sustainable alternatives are) and recognizing the presence of God, “flowing and pouring through all things,” and working there toward creation’s flourishing. That entails recognizing God with us, for us, and within us. We ought not teach our students or ourselves to recognize what is going on in terms of ecological violence and the related social inequity without also opening the floodgates of hope. The other two forms of vision are two of those floodgates.

Practicing the second, “seeing what ought and could be,” includes enabling students to see, experience, study, and engage with ordinary people and groups who are forging paths toward sustainable Earth-human relations marked by justice. The world is full of them. Vast numbers of people and groups around the globe are creating ways of life that Earth can sustain and that do not impoverish some to the benefit of others. They are forging lives, institutions, and bodies politic in which huge transnational unaccountable corporations are not free to toxify communities’ water supplies and land, or to emit limitless greenhouse gasses in the quest to maximize profit. They are re-shaping households, businesses, schools, and cities to live in harmony with Earth’s economy of life. They are building communities in which the well-being of humankind and otherkind trumps wealth accumulation. Public policies, practices of daily life, and re-constituted principles of economic life are their building blocks.

Paul Hawken and the Wise Earth Network that he founded conclude that “over one—and maybe even two—million organizations currently are working toward ecological sustainability and social justice.” “I believe this movement will prevail,” he writes. “It will change a sufficient number of people so as to begin the reversal of centuries of frenzied self-destructive behavior” (Hawken 2, 186, 189). Peasants and other farmers, scientists, economists, factory workers, educators, elected officials, students, healthcare professionals, homemakers, educators, journalists, and more comprise this social force. Some are from communities of oppressed people. Others emerge from communities of conscience among highly privileged people.

This second lens of moral vision sees vibrant and growing signs of hope. Indeed on a pragmatic level, hope springs forth from the courage, tenacity, and creativity of people and movements

throughout this country and around the globe who are generating alternative practices, policies, institutions, and worldviews. From a theological perspective, this second aspect of moral vision is grounded in a theology of cross and resurrection. It sees the promise that soul-searing, life-shattering destruction and death are not the last word, in this moment or forever. In some way that we cannot fully fathom, the last word is life raised up from brutal death

God’s Presence Permeating All that Is

Moral vision, from a Lutheran perspective, has yet a third lens. It sees that human creatures are not alone in the move toward more just and sustainable ways of living. The sacred life-giving and life-saving Source of the cosmos is with, within, and for Earth’s creatures and elements—human included—luring creation toward God’s intent that all may “have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). In the world’s monotheistic traditions, that power is known as YHWH, God, or Allah.

“Despite evidence to the contrary,
God’s will for all of creation to have
life with abundance and joy ultimately
will be fulfilled.”

The Holy One, as understood through a Lutheran perspective of cross and resurrection, dwells in, with, among, and beyond us. This creating and saving presence brings seeds of hope. One such seed is the claim that, despite evidence to the contrary, God’s will for all of creation to have life with abundance and joy ultimately will be fulfilled. The power of God liberating all of creation from the bonds of oppression, destruction, and death is stronger than all forces of evil that would undermine God’s promise that all shall have life and have it fully. God “will not allow our complicity in...evil to defeat God’s being for us and for the good of all creation” (Morse 249). In the midst of suffering and death, be it individual, social, or ecological, the promise given to the Earth community is that life in God will reign. So speaks the resurrection.

I do not know all that this promise means for us and for Earth’s community of life. It *does not* lessen our call to devote our lives to building a more just, compassionate, and sustainable world; it does *not*, that is, allow us to sit back and let God do the work. That conclusion would be absurd, because God works through human beings. Nor does the hope born of cross and

resurrection ensure our survival as a species in the face of climate change. It *does* ensure that the radiant Spirit beyond comprehension that is above, beyond, under, and within all, ultimately will bring all to the fullness of love, beauty, and life. We are to live trusting in that promise. In Martin Luther's imagery, if the world will end tomorrow, one ought to plant an apple tree. The resurrection promise, then, is one profound source of hope.

The cross speaks in yet another way to those of us who have glimpsed even momentarily the horror of being wealthy Christians in a world of hunger or the horror of what we are doing to earth and what it will mean for our children. Jesus' execution by Roman officials has been understood differently throughout church history. As I have noted elsewhere, there is good reason to distrust many interpretations of the cross. It is a much abused and controversial symbol of Christian faith ("Theology of the Cross," 181-195). Yet in many contexts, the image of the cross continues to unfold dimensions of God's infinite love and ubiquitous life-saving presence. It holds particular promise for this inquiry into seeing and resisting systemic evil.

We may run from this knowledge of the cross because it implies too much brokenness and evil present in our lives. Jesus' execution by imperial power, however, demonstrates that even in the depths of human brokenness, including our entanglement in structural sin, the saving Christ is present, is healing, and is liberating. This truth enables seeing the structural brutality of which we are a part without being destroyed by that knowledge. Canadian theologian, Douglas John Hall, says it well: The central message of the cross "is not to reveal that our condition is one of darkness and death; it is to reveal to us the One who meets us in our darkness and death. It is a theology of the cross not because it wants to put forth this ghastly spectacle as a final statement about life in this world but because it insists that God...meets, loves, and redeems us precisely where we are: in the valley of the shadow of death" (Hall 149). This I believe with my whole being.

God is present even if I have no awareness of it, and have no faith that God is present. A central message of what became known as Luther's theology of the cross is that where God seems absent, there God is. God is hidden in God's apparent absence ("Heidelberg Disputation" 52-53). The saving power of God is hidden in the form of its opposite (*sub contrario suo abscondita sunt*). Nothing can separate us "from the love of God in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:39). God's liberating love, working through this world, can move us from doing ecological and economic violence to dismantling it, even if that seems impossible. Salvation is "both from the *affliction* of evil and from the *infliction* of evil" (Morse 225).

Consider yet another wellspring of hope within Christian traditions. Multiple streams of Christianity, from its earliest

centuries, have affirmed that God, the source of life itself, the One who is saving and has saved, this God abides within human beings and within the entirety of creation. This claim is particularly striking when uttered by theologians not commonly recognized for it. Luther is one. He insists in various sermons and treatises that God inhabits the things of Earth: "The power of God must be essentially present in all places even in the tiniest leaf" ("That these Words" 57). God is "present in every single creature in its innermost and outermost being" (58). God "is in and through all creatures, in all their parts and places, so that the world is full of God and He fills all" (Santmire 129, quoting Luther). Luther asserts that *everything* "is full of Christ through and through"—that *all* "creatures are...permeable and present to [Christ]" ("Confession" 386). Or again: "Christ...fills all things...Christ is around us and in us in all places...he is present in all creatures, and I might find him in stone, in fire, in water" ("The Sacrament" 342-43). In these claims Luther is by no means alone. The assertion of God indwelling all of creation has been present in Christian theology since its beginning.

Fascinating to me and relevant here are the implications for moral-spiritual power. According to Luther, wherever the word of God comes, it comes to renew the world. If God is present within the trees, waters, winds, and creatures—human creatures included—then God is at play within us *and our earthy kin* to change and renew the world. We are called to hear the healing, liberating, and transforming Word of God in the other-than-human parts of creation to garner wisdom and moral power from that voice. With this move comes hope.

This third lens of a moral vision recognizes that we are not alone here on Earth in our efforts to forge just, compassionate, and ecologically sustainable ways of life. God is at play and at work with us and within this good creation. And God's justice-making, Earth-honoring love ultimately is the destiny toward which and through which creation moves, including, of course, each of us.

Conclusion

I have found that this three-eyed moral vision serves students well. It enables them to acknowledge the unfolding reality of ecological devastation, its consequences on vulnerable neighbors the world over, and our implication in it without fleeing in denial, despair, or numb apathy. To the contrary, this moral vision enables entering into this soul-wrenching reality with infinite hope, on behalf of neighbor love, seeking a more just and sustainable world.

We began by noting one central aspect of our vocation as Lutheran colleges and universities. It is to prepare students

for meeting the unprecedented moral challenge facing their generation and ours, and to draw upon distinctive gifts of Lutheran traditions in doing so. The moral challenge is to build ways of living that Earth can sustain, and to do this in ways that diminish the death-dealing gap between those of us who consume far too much and those that have far too little. Lutheran traditions, like all religious traditions, are called to bring their particular gifts to this daunting “great work.” We have considered one of many gifts from the living Lutheran heritage. It is morally empowering vision—a way of seeing grounded in cross and resurrection.

No humans before us have been called to halt a mad dash into ecological-social horror on a global scale. We can reverse this trajectory only if as a society we dare to recognize the peril, its social consequences, and our complicity in it. Moral vision, as sketched here, dares to see that reality and to move on in hope. For we move on trusting that the God who called this world into being loves it with a love beyond human imagining, a love that will never die. It is our blessed call to live that love into the world as individuals and as parts of social systems, knowing that the One who calls us also works within us enabling us to move from death to life, from inflicting ecological devastation to cultivating ecological healing. May Lutheran colleges and universities prepare faculty, staff, and students to hear and heed this holy calling.

Endnotes

1. Many people understand the environmental justice movement in the United States to have been born in early the 1980s when the North Carolina state government selected the poor, rural, and overwhelmingly black Warren County as the site for a hazardous waste facility to accept 6,000 truckloads of soil laced with PCBs. Residents and allies, furious that the state dismissed their concerns over PCBs leaching into the drinking water, lied down on roads leading to landfills. Six weeks of marches and nonviolent street protests followed, and more than 500 people were arrested—the first arrests in United States history over the siting of a landfill. Although the people of Warren County ultimately lost the battle and live with a toxic landfill in their backyard, their story drew media attention and inspired communities across the country to resist similar injustices. The aforementioned report, “Toxic Waste and Race,” was generated in part by the church’s involvement in this incident. Today, the legal challenges raised by the people of Warren county are considered by many to be the first major milestone in the American environmental justice movement.

2. This brief section is drawn largely from Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Systemic Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*, forthcoming.

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Farming and Eating Locally: An Interview with Garry Griffith about Augustana's Farm2Fork Program

What was food service like when you first came to Augustana? How have things changed?

I was a little bit shocked, actually. Almost all the vegetables, soups, and even the meats were pre-cooked and pre-packaged. We weren't making much of anything from scratch. In our kitchens at that time you could find dozens of pairing knives but no chef knives. Why? Because the knives were only used to open packages. It didn't take us long to start getting all of our vegetables, potatoes, and even meats fresh from local farmers. I and others started working extensively with our staff in the summers, giving them a set of skills for choosing and preparing quality foods. We've really come a long way.

What we call our "Farm2Fork" program is a significant investment into the health of our community, helping to build regional and local food systems. Local farms and ranches provide our campus with a direct and reliable food source, thereby making us less dependent on food sources that are thousands of miles away. Jim Johansen of Wesley Acres in the neighboring town of Moline was our first partner, but there are now a number of others that we work with closely.

Is it hard to find farmers to work with?

It wasn't in the case of Johansen. He recognized that our vision for local food systems was the near equivalent of his own. We share a vision of what local, sustainable food production and consumption should look like. But there are many barriers. It's hard to get farmers to give up their high yields of corn and soy bean production to grow a diversity of crops—especially vegetables that need to be tended and that aren't sold to a corporation. The really scary part is how high grain prices are. There are many disincentives for farmers to grow crops for local consumption. We're still not sure how we can sustain this model, although national trends toward farmer's markets and sustainable agriculture are encouraging.



How do students get involved?

Augustana has a small vegetable farm and orchard on campus called Augie Acres. Students tend the gardens; dining services uses a good deal of the produce and the students sell the rest in an on-campus farmers market. Much of the student work is through team-taught "learning-community" courses. Since many of our students are from the Chicago sprawl and have never gotten dirty in a garden before coming to college, growing their own food seems like something we ought to be teaching them.

How else does Dining Services contribute to the health of the area?

We do all we can do with recycling and minimizing waste, including a program that provides students with washable "to-go" containers. We use compostable materials and compost locally.

Our most exciting venture is probably working with Wesley Acres to recycle our used fryer oil which they convert to bio-diesel to heat their green houses to extend the growing season and run farm equipment. Last spring, Augustana purchased their own bio-diesel converter and an Alternative Fuels class will help convert our cooking grease to usable fuel. Meanwhile, we're adding utility vehicles on campus that can use bio-diesel fuel. We hope we can produce 2500-3000 gallons per year at 68 cents per gallon. (Compare that to \$4 per gallon for gas!) And so, the very programs that help local growers also help Augustana to be energy independent and help teach our students to be citizens of the local economy, which includes the health of soil and water.

Does Augustana's Lutheran identity matter to these efforts?

As a Lutheran school and a place where students and staff take many religious traditions seriously, we feel as though being good stewards of the earth has been put in our charge. It is the responsibility of any church or religious organization to understand that resources are limited and that stewardship is our collective calling. Anything we can do to teach that stewardship is well worth it.

GARRY GRIFFITH is Director of Dining at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

BAIRD TIPSON

Sustaining Sustainability

In this essay, I am going to address something that is absolutely vital to the well-being of faculty members at Lutheran Colleges: securing the resources to support your work, including the work of environmental sustainability. Securing such resources is absolutely vital, yet usually looked down upon. When I was having breakfast last week with a retired faculty member at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, I mentioned that most faculty members I knew—at both colleges and seminaries—considered the people who garner resources for our colleges somewhat *unclean*, analogous to the people who clean latrines. Someone has to do it, but they're mighty glad it isn't them. He didn't disagree.

As a former president of one Lutheran college and former provost of another, writing to members of Lutheran colleges, I decided that this essay should begin with a scriptural text. So I chose Romans 12:2. In the words of the Authorized Version of 1611, that passage reads: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." College presidents are perpetually interacting with this world, and in my fifteen years in the job, I rarely had the luxury of avoiding the challenges of this text.

Victor Ferrall, the former President of Beloit College, wrote a book that I suspect all the presidents and many of the trustees of your colleges are reading: *Liberal Arts at the Brink*. I won't go into the depressing details; suffice it to say that colleges like ours are having a hard time. They're spending more money than they're taking in. I think most of you are aware of the way Lutheran colleges used to operate, or at least liked to imagine

that they could operate. Faithful Lutheran parents believed that Lutheran colleges provided the best academic and social environment for their children, so that a good percentage of Lutheran children went to Lutheran colleges. Local congregations were generous with financial support, and so were the local synod and the national church. A good deal of the president's job involved visits to congregations; he often preached or spoke to Sunday School groups. Ethnicity had a good deal to do with this: Danish-American, Swedish-American, Norwegian-American, even once upon a time German-American families tried to keep members of the next generation in the ethnic family by sending them to colleges that would preserve their ethnic heritage.

If they ever existed in quite this idealized way, those days are gone forever. Local congregations, synods, and the ELCA continue to cut, if not entirely eliminate, support for our colleges. Lutheran parents and their college-bound children are more likely to look to *U. S. News and World Report* than they are to the Bible or the national anthem from the old country. So where do we get the means to stay open, let alone to support initiatives in environmental sustainability?

I here describe three projects that foster an academic environment for sustainability and explain how the resources were secured to make them possible. Because they are all from the institution where I most recently worked, Washington College, they are "secular," but since Washington College is a small, not enormously well-endowed liberal arts college like most of yours, I think these examples are apposite. Each of them relied on a different means of support. And each of them raised issues about

BAIRD TIPSON, now retired, was Provost of Gettysburg College (1987-1995), President of Wittenberg University (1995-2004) and President of Washington College (2004-2010).

conformity to the world. To protect the privacy of the individuals and organizations with whom we worked, I'm going to be vague about names and details, but that shouldn't impair your ability to understand the ways resources for the projects were acquired.

“Lutheran parents and their college-bound children are more likely to look to *U. S. News and World Report* than they are to the Bible or the national anthem from the old country. So where do we get the means to stay open, let alone to support initiatives in environmental sustainability?”

All three of these projects are part of the Washington College's Center for the Environment and Society. Because it sits on a relatively unspoiled river in a rural county on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Washington College chose some years ago to emphasize the study of the environment and the effects of human interaction with the environment. The center's mission is to foster this work. So I will describe first the center's partnership with Chino Farms, second the development of what came to be known as the Chesapeake Semester, and third the acquisition of a work boat, the *Callinectes*.

Decidedly “In the World”

The college's Field Research Center sits within Chino Farms, a remarkable combination of Audubon bird sanctuary, working farm, and research center on 5000 acres along the other side of the Chester River from the college. Over the years, several Washington College faculty had done research on Chino Farms, but although they had coexisted for decades, there was no formal relationship between the farms and the college. The owner of Chino Farms lived in another state but frequently visited Chestertown, and the director of our center began having lunch with him. It became clear that he was concerned for the long-term sustainability of Chino Farms. (We fund-raisers have our own vocabulary for donors, drawn mostly from agriculture; we “cultivate” donors; we “harvest” gifts. Donors generally don't like to think too much about their own demise, so in our language “long-term sustainability” generally means what happens after the donor dies.) Was the college really as serious about

its commitment to the environment as it professed to be? It was time for the president to get involved.

As I got to know this potential partner, it became clear to me that our interests were not identical. Some of his interests—for example, providing a test site to burn switch grass as fuel—were beyond the college's present capacity. But there was a lot of overlap. As he and the college got to know one another better, due largely to the efforts of the center's remarkable director, we began talking about a formal agreement. That agreement was finalized just about the time of my retirement, and now students and faculty at the college have unparalleled opportunities for senior projects, internships, and significant research. Since my retirement, the owner has come onto the college's Board of Visitors and Governors. Initially, the college had no connection to this donor other than his geographic proximity; it was the college's commitment to serious engagement with environmental issues that gradually pulled him in.

Another of our director's dreams was the creation of a unique academic experience for a small group of seriously committed students (see: <http://chesapeake-semester.washcoll.edu>). For an entire semester, these students would devote all their academic work to a comprehensive study of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. They would learn to understand the natural ecology of the bay: what kinds of animal and plant species thrived in the bay; how water quality affected populations of grasses, finfish, and shellfish; what effects climate change was beginning to have. But they would also study the human ecology of the bay: how human beings—past and present—exploited the bay's resources to support themselves; who ultimately made decisions about those resources; how writing about the Chesapeake Bay—literary imaginings of the bay going all the way back to John Smith—shaped attitudes toward it. In the event, they even spent a week-end in the woods building temporary shelters and foraging for food, just as bay inhabitants had done before the arrival of Europeans.

Such a semester involved a good deal of travel to places like Richmond, Annapolis, and Washington where political decisions were being made, as well as to many locations on and around the Chesapeake Bay. It ultimately came to include a trip to another major estuary. We first planned to take students to Baja California, but drug cartel violence caused us to think again, and we ultimately established a fruitful relationship with an estuary system in Peru. Obviously, such a semester could not be sustained with tuition money alone.

By envisioning summer workshops for teachers and income-generating summer activities for adults, our director produced a model that promised to become self-sustaining in a few years. But where to get start-up costs? We turned to a national foundation

with whom we had a long-established relationship, and after a good deal of back-and-forth, including writing and rewriting our proposal, we received the needed funding.

“Our demonstrated commitment to academic excellence and the academic rigor of this proposal led the foundation to grant us the resources needed to get it off the ground. In other words, we *met the world’s terms.*”

Why was our grant proposal successful when many others had failed? First, we had an excellent long-term relationship with this foundation, a healthy “track record.” Just as my predecessors had done, I made a point of visiting their offices in New York and staying on good terms with the grant officers who would decide on our proposal. Second, our commitment to the liberal arts—which this particular foundation cherishes—had been unwavering for more than two hundred and twenty-five years. But third, and most important, our proposal was sound, carefully-thought out, and unique in integrating many of the liberal arts into the study of something the college was clearly in a position to do, namely, provide students with the opportunity to learn in great depth about a topic right at our doorstep: the Chesapeake Bay. Our demonstrated commitment to academic excellence and the academic rigor of this proposal led the foundation to grant us the resources needed to get it off the ground. In other words, we *met the world’s terms.*

Risking Conformity to the World

My third example ended up supporting both of the first two. The Director of Washington College’s Center for the Environment and Society is by training an underwater archaeologist, and he recognized the importance of getting access for our students and faculty to a state-of-the-art workboat. The center had some makeshift vessels such as pontoon boats and small motorboats that could go out on the Chester River and take water and bottom samples, but we clearly needed something that could transport larger numbers of students farther down the river and out into the Chesapeake Bay, something equipped with serious scientific equipment for twenty-first century research. He dreamed of a vessel of about forty or fifty feet, with a powerful engine that could move everything quickly down the twenty miles river from Chestertown to the bay.

There was obviously no way buying and operating this kind of boat was going to come out of the college’s operating budget. But wait: If we had such a workboat, it could be made available to local teachers, who could in turn bring high-school science classes for an opportunity on the river. Local farmers and watermen would profit from our research. This would benefit our entire region. So I approached our congressman, at that time a wonderful representative named Wayne Gilchrest who had been a former high school civics teacher at Kent County High School. How did he feel about an earmark for a workboat?

I don’t know how *you* feel about earmarks. However you feel, I suspect you wouldn’t have any trouble fitting this kind of request into the category of “conforming to this world.” Fortunately, Congressman Gilchrest was a committed environmentalist who had worked for years to preserve a natural flyway down the entire eastern shore. He understood why it was important for watermen and farmers to learn everything they could about Chesapeake Bay ecology—he was intimately involved, for example, in efforts to rebuild the oyster population in the bay—and how the present generation of high school students will be called upon to make important decisions that pit environmental preservation against other pressing social needs. The college had made a point of keeping him involved in our environmental affairs and had previously hosted a workshop where he brought together farmers, watermen, and environmentalists to address challenges to the river and to the bay.

Working with a congress person fits somewhere between working with an individual donor and working with a foundation. For one thing, the college is likely to have a more intimate understanding of the particular federal program into which an earmark can fit than is the congressman himself. We worked with someone who specialized in finding niches in federal programs, crafted our request appropriately, and then helped the congressman and his staff understand exactly how we were asking them to proceed. We also had to get our two senators on board. Neither was unsympathetic, but both had many other priorities that must have seemed more pressing than environmental education in Maryland’s most rural county. And then our congressman had to insert his bill into the long list of similar requests from his colleagues. It’s entirely possible to go all the way through such a process only to fail at the end because the congressional leadership has decided to limit earmarks in that particular appropriations cycle.

We didn’t fail, and my wife Sarah got to christen the workboat *Callinectes*. The name is Greek for beautiful swimmer, and *callinectes sapidus*—the “savory beautiful swimmer”—is the Chesapeake blue crab. Actually, my wife tried to christen the *Callinectes*; the champagne bottle wouldn’t break on the fiberglass bow and had to be smashed in another manner.

Of course, once you have a workboat, you're still faced with the challenge of operating it. Large boats have often been called holes in the water into which you throw money. When the college is not in session, various plans are afoot to take paying passengers out on the river and the bay, and grants that include using the boat will have to request money for its operation. By the way, where the foundation expected a detailed, academically respectable, thirty page proposal, the congressman needed only a paragraph. It was up to me to make the case in person that carried that paragraph along.

From Conformity to Covenant

I know I've only scratched the surface, but I would suggest that in all three situations, which I think are representative, the college is "conforming" to the world, and that the question of *how far* to conform poses interesting ethical issues. To use another biblical concept, the college, represented by the president or another fund-raiser, creates a kind of "covenant" with the donor, one ideally governed not by strict legal constraints but by mutuality of interest. Although it may appear to you that the college is simply approaching donors with its hands out, my experience has convinced me that each party to the covenant gains important benefits. Our individual donor gained the satisfaction that comes from having contributed voluntarily to something that mattered deeply to him; having seen the pleasure donors derive from such gifts, I would never underestimate that satisfaction. Most of us have made such contributions, however modest, to our churches, our undergraduate alma mater, or some other

“...the question of *how far* to conform poses interesting ethical issues.”

institution that is important to us. The donor's generosity also gave him confidence that the important work he had overseen during his lifetime would continue after he was no longer around to supervise it. More commonly, this happens when a donor endows a scholarship or a faculty chair, thereby making certain that a student or faculty member in an area of importance to him or her will continue to benefit from her or his generosity forever. Pragmatically, there are also tax benefits involved for the donor, and those of you with an arithmetic bent would probably find the study of the various kinds of possible annuities and trusts of more than passing interest.

The foundation gains the satisfaction of forwarding its own mission and of taking significant credit for the success of what it

funds. If, as is true in this case, your mission is to advance excellence in liberal arts education, you take pride in working with an institution to achieve results that confirm the importance of what you are up to.

“The more you can show... the extraordinary benefits of attending a Lutheran college, the more likely they are to want to make sure those benefits are available for their children and grandchildren.”

And the congressman? Not only has he advanced something important on his own agenda, but he has directed federal dollars to his district. We made sure he was present at the christening so his staff could take publicity photos, and in retirement he serves on Washington's Center for the Environment and Society advisory board.

I close with two requests for faculty teaching at our institutions. I hope I've given you a sense of how some environmentally-focused problems can be both funded and sustained, and how this process involves a certain conformity to the ways of the world. It's very likely that colleges like ours will sustain—or fail to sustain—themselves through the next several decades based on their success at raising money largely from *individual* donors. And the individuals most likely to support you will be your alumni, in other words the very students you will be teaching this coming fall. Those of us who write compelling essays and score well on tests like to believe that our best students will be our most successful graduates. But that is often not the case. I work out during the week at the newly-remodeled Gettysburg College athletic facility, and I'm told that some of the most visible names on the wall, the donors to the facility, were not particularly good students. Let's be realistic. There are many kinds of intelligence, and the one most likely to earn A's in class is not necessarily the one most likely to succeed in the marketplace. So first, do your best to inspire all your students; you never know which one might strike it rich someday and endow a chair in your honor. Seriously, the more you can show your students, by your example, the extraordinary benefits of attending a Lutheran college, the more likely they are to want to make sure those benefits are available for their children and grandchildren.

Second, I suggest that faculty consider, at some point in their careers, getting involved in academic administration. Those who are in the formative years of a faculty career can put this off; they

need to concentrate on teaching and on research. But at some stage, I hope all faculty will consider how to contribute to the kind of enterprise I have been describing. Initially that might involve writing and administering a grant. Some dean's offices provide for faculty members to rotate in and out as assistant or associate deans. Serving as a department chair or the chair of an important faculty committee can also be a springboard to a stint in administration.

I say this because I see a disturbing tendency for boards of trustees to look beyond college walls for their leaders. Even after the meltdown of our financial system, outsiders still imagine that "colleges need to be run more like businesses." Desperate for money, trustees may also be tempted to look for experienced fundraisers who may have little direct experience of academic life. Of course, some experienced fundraisers such as Randy Helm of Muhlenberg College (formerly Vice President for Development at Colby College) who holds a Ph. D. in ancient history from the University of Pennsylvania, or Lex McMillan of Albright College, (formerly Vice President for Development at Gettysburg College) who wrote his English literature Ph.D. thesis at the University of Virginia on C. S. Lewis, have made

excellent college presidents. But I believe that our colleges need as large a pool as possible of dedicated faculty members, teacher-scholars who love to breathe academic air, who have also taken a turn in administration.

I am all too aware that faculty culture disparages administration and that faculty members condescend to those of us who have, as my nephew once put it, "turned to the dark side." But if you want administrators who are sympathetic to your concerns, *be those* administrators.

I want the person who meets with individual donors, congress people, and foundations not only to be passionate about teaching and scholarship but also *to have done it*. I want that person to know just what it is that may have to be conformed a little to this world, and I want them to be skilled at creating an outcome that includes a good measure of what the Hebrew Bible calls *chesed*—covenant faithfulness—to both parties.

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About the Artist

Seth Fitts is a southeastern United States artist who currently resides in Georgia. He graduated from the University of West Georgia in 2003 with a BFA in Painting.

Seth's body of work explores the realms of the human condition, the soul, the spirit, and imagination. Seth works in mostly traditional techniques of art making, combining them in mixed media applications. The substrate that is used varies due to Seth

using reclaimed material in addition to wood, paper, and canvas.

Seth is also aspiring to be an illustrator. There are book projects he is working on which hopefully will come to fruition within the next year.

You can view his work at www.sethfitts.deviantart.com and www.sethfitts.com.

Health Food in the Inner City: An Interview with Brian Noy about Augsburg's Campus Kitchen



What is Campus Kitchen? How does it serve the needs of the community?

The Campus Kitchen at Augsburg College works to make healthy food accessible to all

in and around the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood. The program is a component of the Sabo Center for Citizenship and Learning and shares the goal of creating a healthy community through education and service. The Kitchen provides for basic needs, service learning, leadership development, and genuine engagement between the college and the community. We have four components that all work to make learning happen through connections with food and the community:

- *Food to Share:* 2,000 meals are served each month by volunteers and service learners to youth programs, homeless shelters, seniors, and community centers. Most of the meals are created from the surplus food from A'viands/Augsburg Dining; some are prepared from scratch in our Campus Cooking Classes.
- *Food to Grow:* Our community garden provides over 80 spaces for organizations and people from the neighborhood and campus to grow their own food, as well as food for the meal program.
- *Food to Buy:* Our two farmers markets on campus and at the Brian Coyle Community Center allow local producers to provide for the nutritional needs of the community. Markets run on Tuesdays through the summer and even accept EBT/food stamps.
- *Food to Know:* Educational programming helps college students, neighborhood youth, and others make connections between food, health, and the environment by developing cooking and gardening skills.

How does this program bring Augsburg and the neighborhood together?

Clearly, the low income neighborhood that Augsburg calls home can use fresh and healthy meals. The garden originally aimed to beautify a blemished corner of campus, and to provide growing spaces to the many interested gardeners who live in the nearby

high-rise apartment buildings. There is also no nearby grocer that sells a substantial selection of fresh produce, and the farmers market fills that niche.

Our meal program is now led by student leaders with support from students who volunteer from their own interest, or have a service-learning requirement in a course. The garden includes about 100 individual plots, 25 of which are managed by students, 25 by Augsburg employees, 25 by neighbors, and 25 by community organizations, including clinics, schools, and churches.

In fact, Augsburg has a deep history of training the neighborhoods' immigrant community, beginning with its Norwegian teachers, social workers, and pastors. That history continues today as we serve Somalis, Mexicans, and others. The program clearly demonstrates the college's commitment to service-learning and experiential education across lines of race, education, income, and religion.

It sounds like a really successful program. Do you face ongoing challenges?

It's a great program, one that offers a lot of room for creativity. The garden is a great example of a campus space that has been fully integrated with the community, where all sorts of amazing (and sometimes dramatic) connections occur. In it, we have students working alongside other newer and often lifelong gardeners and farmers from all over the world. The biggest challenge is with liability and licenses concerns; we need to make sure that our activities fit into the expectations of insurers and city inspectors. It always works out, but seems to occupy a disproportionate amount of time and resources.

How did you come to these sustainability efforts? What's next?

I was an undergraduate at Augsburg, and I loved working with campus and community members to make a sustainable campus and neighborhood. I have that same feeling now as a staff member as I work with idealist and creative students. Now that the program is nearly a decade old, and the heart of our operation is well established, we have more energy and time to explore other creative avenues, such as the farmers market and connections to other local farms.

BRIAN NOY serves as the Director of Campus Kitchen at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Lutherans Restoring Creation

**A movement
promoting care for
God's good creation in
the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

“Lutherans Restoring Creation” is a grassroots movement within the ELCA, seeking to foster care for God’s good creation in all expressions of our church’s life. Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) is a program designed to encourage the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to incorporate care for creation into its full life and mission at all levels. LRC is inviting ELCA members to become partners in these efforts at the congregational, synodical, seminary, and national levels. The goal is to incorporate care for creation into the organizational patterns, worship life, educational programs, responsibility for buildings and grounds, lifestyle of members at home and work, and public ministry of all of these institutions, so that earthkeeping and justice for all Earth community becomes integral to the identity and purpose of our church.

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Augsburg College | MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Augustana College | ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

Augustana College | SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Bethany College | LINDSBORG, KANSAS

California Lutheran University | THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA

Capital University | COLUMBUS, OHIO

Carthage College | KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Concordia College | MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

Finlandia University | HANCOCK, MICHIGAN

Gettysburg College | GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Grand View College | DES MOINES, IOWA

Gustavus Adolphus College | ST. PETER, MINNESOTA

Lenoir-Rhyne College | HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA

Luther College | DECORAH, IOWA

Midland University | FREMONT, NEBRASKA

Muhlenberg College | ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Newberry College | NEWBERRY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Pacific Lutheran University | TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Roanoke College | SALEM, VIRGINIA

St. Olaf College | NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

Susquehanna University | SELINGROVE, PENNSYLVANIA

Texas Lutheran University | SEGUIN, TEXAS

Thiel College | GREENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

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