Chapter III

COMMUNITY FORMATION

A Place for People

It was a dreary day. Not only was it overcast but the pollution from the brown coal the East Germans were burning added to the general sense of depression. It was also February, the mid point of winter. That together with a number of experiences Ruth and I had had traveling throughout the German Democratic Republic in l982 added to the feeling of futility. It was early evening as I took the tram out to an Eastern suburb where I was to meet with a youth group in a church. The streets were dimly lit and the neighborhood unfamiliar. I was grateful when I reached the parish hall.

I was early and there was only one person, a young man in his mid twenties, there to greet me. His greeting was loud and affectionate. That surprised me given the reticence and reserve one often observed in East Germany. He continued to speak in a loud but friendly manner. However, when the others came he was more silent. I noticed during the meeting when we were having a general discussion about life in the GDR, he was very subdued.

The group, mostly working young adults from the parish, were surprisingly outspoken about their feelings of the Communist regime. Perhaps the church provided the only place where they felt free to speak their minds. Seven years later in the "Wende" ("change") of l989 the important role of the church as a "free space" became dramatically clear. The greatest complaint was the restriction on travel. As young people they wanted to see the world and no doubt watching Western TV they were even more motivated to travel. If they were retired from the work force or sick or invalid they could travel. They could even emigrate. But these were young workers and the government held them tightly in its protective care. In l982 they were not talking about fleeing their country. They just wanted the freedom to travel.

In the midst of this discussion the young man who had greeted me stood up. I guess the thing I will never forget beyond the words he spoke, was the look on his face. His countenance was a strange mixture of pride and pain. He walked to the center of the room, reached into his pocket and pulled out some official looking documents. He walked around the room waving these in the faces of his friends.

"I can leave anytime I want to. They call me retarded." As he showed them his travel papers he said, "They don't want me!"

I think that was the end of the discussion. I'm not sure what went through the minds of the young East German workers who were wanted in their country. But I thought about the more subtle but no less cruel ways in which people in my own society receive the same message. As long as you are a producer you were valuable in the East. In the West we might claim we are a bit more just: as long as one is a producer and consumer. In both the East and the West community has eroded. Mass production and massive consumption have not bonded people into healthy societies. People are still looking for a place to call home.

We have gone a long way from community, from home, from a household oriented society. When the steam engine offered a cheap substitute for human labor, a process began which separated daily labor from the place of lived community. Today we are realizing the social costs of the breakdown of the extended family where household and labor provided the warp and woof of community. Immense changes have taken place during the generations of the industrial and technological revolutions. Many aspects of life have been altered, but the new social arrangements required to cope with the modern world have not yet been found. The ancient patterns of the extended family have simply eroded and the fragmented family that remains is fragile. The nuclear family assumed by many to provide the base for society is being replaced by the single parent family and by living arrangements that are mobile, temporary and in the end lonely.

It would be convenient to view all of this as the inescapable consequences of progress. But there is a wide spread suspicion that something fundamentally is wrong. Many recognize the fact that the increase in the quantity of life's possessions and opportunities has not been accompanied by an increased quality of life and they wonder why. So we wonder and worry about community. We come with many questions about living together, a task for which an individualistic culture leaves us ill prepared. What can we do, where do we start, with whom do we begin? There are no experts to consult nor authorities whose permission is required. We are suspicious of easy formulas or advice

that has not been lived for we know instinctively that community is an indigenous affair. We don't need to go any further than our own resources and those that surround us to pursue the task of renewing community. The initiative properly belongs to the people themselves.

Community building might be described as the first step of the self beyond its private border. It represents the critical point at which the personal goes public. And it begins on a small scale with the embryo-self nurtured in the intimacy of "two or three". This micro approach to a macro problem may appear as too small and too fragile, but it is an approach with great revolutionary power for it is within reach of every person. The task is, furthermore, less formidable if you believe, as I do, that the foundations for building and rebuilding community already exist. God has already provided the people and the framework to make community possible. Coming to believe that is the first important step that we take. Community begins with God's covenant.

As we conclude this century and assess its achievements and failures, I believe we will have to include those items that the Twentieth Century failed to do or weakened and eroded. Among the failures was the inability to create a solid foundation at the base. The efforts of the Twentieth Century were on such a scale as to relegate to insignificance the base community, something without which societies cannot survive. Life was dramatically expanded through mass media and high speed travel. Unfortunately, it has been an expansion primarily in the direction of breadth not depth. Perhaps that is why so few of the achievements of this Century will endure. The next century begins with an urgent search for alternatives to the ways of the preceding century.[1] For example, the Twentieth Century has nearly depleted many of the world's unrenewable resources in its hectic pursuit of its goals. Thomas Merton claimed that we didn't know what we were doing: "We do not know if we are building a fabulously wonderful world or destroying all that we have ever had, all that we had achieved."[2] This century may not be well remembered by its descendents who will have to pay the price that the residents of the Twentieth Century were unwilling to pay.

Perhaps the next century will be wiser and not place its trust in either of the two alternatives offered by the Twentieth Century: collectivism or individualism. Perhaps people in the next century will not seek to build societies in "mass" movements but in "grass" movements, human scaled communities with human scaled solutions. Perhaps before it is too late we will discover that building community is an organic process which procedes like all growing things from the bottom up. Survival will force us to go back into the earth, to return to the values of the soil, and recover the depth needed for the expanded world which the Twentieth Century produced.

Separated Worlds

I began with the question of how the Church might be faithful and effective in society. A number of models have been suggested for attending to the two basic realities of personal faith and public life. In the preceeding chapter I examined this question in terms of vocation and occupation and wondered if there might be ways and social systems that could enable people to realize their vocations better in what they do for a living. Perhaps one reason why so much expectation is heaped on the religious professional and the Sunday worship is that most people find it difficult to relate their faith to their daily work on ecclesiastical turf. In this chapter I will explore how the Church might be seen as a nurturing community when it attends to the roots in the soil, the base. I now come to the heart of the matter of the Church's role in society. In the final analysis it is not isolated individuals that God sends into the world but communities, covenanted communities. Therefore one of the central challenges to the church today is community formation. That is a challenge we share with many others. Rebuilding community is of critical importance to everyone in our society.

Most of us have been raised in several communities. We work in one world, live in another and study in yet another. There may be other communities as well in our complicated lives: clubs, organizations, friends, leisure time activities and church. The religious world is only one of our many separated worlds. The local parish is usually located closer to the residential community, to the private life of its members, than to their occupational communities, except in rural areas. There are many inner city churches where people commute in from the suburbs to "go to" church. Since the Industrial Revolution the separation of faith and work has been accentuated with the growing distance between residence and work, between place of nurture and place of employment, between the economy of the household and the economy of the marketplace, and between the values of stable community and the

values of mobility. The intricate web that holds the human community together has been unremittingly torn leaving the individual dangerously vulnerable.[3]

These separate communities each have their own life styles, symbols and language. The constant transition from one to the other casts us into distinctly different roles. We live in a conformist society and are profoundly affected by peers and social environments and readily become different people in them. For example, some of us met persons we really didn't know when we saw our parents in their occupational role for the first time. We simply are different in different contexts. In any event, the connections between our separated communities are neither apparent nor easily established. Herein lies a root cause, I believe, for the separation of the personal and the public, of vocation and occupation.[4]

There are many efforts to put these separated communities together. I suppose every family struggles in some way or other to make these connections. A few have tried to integrate the personal and the public in separate religious communities with their own schools, economy and extended family living. The Amish are among the best known for their attempts to retain a unified community in America. In Israel the kibbutz represents a similar effort. The rest of us continue on in the segmented communities of family, occupation, social life, political involvement and church accepting such compartmentalized living as the norm. Some of these communities are even in opposition to each other. For example, one's career may be in conflict with one's marriage. Or leisure time and the demands of church members may be in contention. Or the school and the church youth program may battle for the same extracurricular time. The "altar"/"street" model looks pretty idealistic from the perspective of our multiple worlds. Most of us have more than these two centers to contend with. We have become so departmentalized in this scientific age that our lives appear to be spread all over the landscape.

Behind the search for community today, is the deep need to put things together. There is a universal search for common ground on which to integrate our own splintered existence into a meaningful whole as well as to share life in common with others. In this chapter, I want to talk about that common ground, about a settlement pattern that brings together faith and life, vocation and occupation. This will require a new way of sharing resources called the "household economy".

Household Economy

The base community in the Western World is in disrepair. Western societies are elaborately overdeveloped at the top and on the surface but underdeveloped at the base and within. We tend to put down and "look down," at the uncredentialed base, and especially at those such as singles who do not live in the traditional family groups. The base is hidden from us because it is ignored in figuring the Gross National Product, for example, where no acknowledgment is given to what Scott Burns calls the "Household Economy."

> Everything I do for myself or my family and everything they do for me are excluded from accounts of national product and income. Everything I do for money, however dubious its intrinsic worth or utility, is added to the GNP and national income.... A multitude of entirely negative economic events--the cost of police, prisons, pollution, accident, etc.--are included in the GNP, while the value of home production, volunteer work, and the services of consumer owned capital are excluded. . . .How much is a service in the household worth if no one pays for it? No one knows. . . . The exchange of money, by definition, authenticates the legitimate value of any work. In effect, the market ideology says, "I was paid for, therefore I am".[5]

The GNP is measured more by money spent on warfare than on welfare.[6] Why is this so? Is it because the Industrial Revolution has considered factory made goods superior to homemade ones? Is it because the urban was considered superior to the rural? Is it because the household is seen to be primarily women's domain and therefore inferior in a society shaped by male values? Still today is a male professional person steps outside his expected role and washes dishes or another's feet many are shocked (or consider this an extraordinary act of humility).[7] But other groups are showing us the way: AA and its many spin-offs, The Regeneration Project, Amnesty International, Grief Groups, The Green Party ("We are neither left or right but ahead"), myriads of small support groups, Base Christian Communities, etc. A more accurate way to measure growth is to measure a system's ability to meet basic human needs. Using this criterion some rich countries are poor indeed.

Both capitalism and socialism have given capital priority over labor. Both societies have thereby objectified and infantilized people and denied them their unique spirituality. Since society is driven more and more by economic forces far beyond the control of the people themselves, they no longer believe they can shape their own world . As we noted in Chapter V citing the work of Dietrich von Oppen, such systems cannot survive if they do not become participatory. In *Laborem Exercens* , Gregory Baum summarizes the US Bishops' statement on economics:

> Injustice equals marginalization: people find themselves excluded from access to needed resources, from recognition and responsibility. Justice from this perspective is defined as the struggle to overcome the marginalization by ever extended participation. In other words, people are meant to be the subjects of their society.[8]

Human scaled

Some years ago I received a call from Walter Tengelson, an acquaintance in New York. At that time he was the director of a Lunar Module team on Long Island. He called me on his WATTS line to explain something called "Trans-systems Analysis." In the midst of the telephone conversation there was an explosion at his end of the line. People were shouting, clapping their hands and uncorking champaign bottles.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Aren't you watching TV?" Walter replied.

"No," I said, "I'm sitting in my office correcting papers."

Walter went on to explain what had happened. The astronauts had just landed safely on the Pacific Ocean after the first flight to the moon. The team in Long Island that had worked ten years on the project were celebrating.

"But, Walter," I said, "Why aren't you celebrating with them? You are the director of that team.?"

"I'm not interested in putting people on the moon or on Mars any more," answered Walter. "But I am interested in applying the same planning process required for the complex moon shot in order to unleash human resources here on earth where they are desperately needed."

The last contact I had with Walter was after he had finished a job for Mayor Lindsey of New York City using "trans-systems analysis" to straighten out the mess following a long garbage strike. His next plan was to set up coffee houses throughout the country for grass root groups to meet and share resources.

Like Walter, I too have been interested in unleashing the human resources in society to meet the vast needs. This began with a life long interest in the ministry of church members in daily life and expanded to community wide citizen mobilization campaigns called Town Meetings and People's Fairs. I have also done some work at the international level to set up "Yellow Pages" of citizen resources worldwide. But like Walter that large scale experience has turned my attention away from exploring outer space to discovering what is already hidden in earth's soil.

E. F. Schumacker has eloquently made the case for building from the base in his book, *Small is Beautiful* . Movements of liberation and the Base Community Movement in Latin America have revealed the power of the underside that has been so neglected. Even the Church at times forgets its origin in base groups. Since Constantine the church has frequently opted for the large scale, establishment approach. The Reformation, especially the conservative side, despite the rhetoric of the "priesthood of all believers", soon threw itself under the protection of the princes. Historically the church has not long remained with the "least of these", but has sought public privilege and power. Schumacker's *Small Is Beautiful* reminds us of an alternative way for the church to be present in society. Schumacker's book was the first in a series that argued for building community on a human scale from the base.[9]

I can argue that when Vatican II shifted from the church as *magisterium* to church as "people of God" the time had come to shift to the people of God in their place, literally putting the people of God in their place! When we do this

in the "community plot" i.e. in an organic context of a soil already enriched and prepared by God, then we have gone the ecclesiastical circle or completed the breathing exercise and returned to the mystery. "What begins in mystery does not end in politics but in mystery." What we should do in public life is placed in the framework of what God is doing!

Where to Begin

Community begins with a few. Six to ten people who covenant together in any given neighborhood, small town or institution can transform that social space. In the past thirteen years of hosting retreat groups at the ARC Retreat Community we have been impressed with what happens to people when they share of their deeper selves after the solitude of a retreat. Often these groups disperse to their individual locations where hope and vision are not easily sustained. But what if such groups were made up of individuals from the same place and lived out their covenants together? Might not the key to community renewal lie in these small "joint ventures"?

A Biblical way of describing the church's role in society is "peace building," through the formation of *shalom* communities. Such communities begin at the base, with the planting of the seed (a theme Jesus often used) and the nurturing of the root system. Often community development and peace strategies concentrate on the top leadership level. I am arguing throughout this book for inverting that approach and for beginning at the base. This requires both prophetic courage and imagination together with resourcing skills for it calls us to put into practice in our own life and work what it means to be a community seeking the welfare (*shalom*) of others.[10] Let us review briefly what that might involve.

In Chapter IV I described the church as a people called out into the world with different occupations, located at strategic places on a journey around personal faith and public life. The power of the church I suggested in Chapter V does not come not through the church's institutional role in society but through the acts of civil courage of the people themselves. In Chapter VII I reviewed various roles for God's people in society and selected the risk taking and hope raising function as the most strategic, doable, and revolutionary one. In this chapter I am underscoring the need for small communities at the base of society to nourish and sustain the life and work of God's people in society. At this point I want to raise the question whether the present structures of the church actually do facilitate such a presence in society. Do we start with existing structures or are new ones required? Is the congregation the beginning point or is there a level of community beneath the congregation that should be the starting point?

For a short time in l950 I was assigned to work with a Dr. Fricke in the Province of Hesse Nassau on the *Baugemeinde* project. *Baugemeinde* means literally "building community" but the German word *Geimeinde* can mean either civil community such as the village or township or it can mean the church community, the congregation. In the program in which Dr. Fricke was working in the German church both meanings applied.

Up until that time I had been living and working with Displaced Persons, refugees from the Baltic countries who were under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. However, there were millions of German refugees who did not receive direct United Nations help and had to be absorbed by the German economy. Many of these were the so called *Volksdeutsche*, which I mentioned in the previous chapter. Without international help for food and shelter their situation was very difficult. Dr. Fricke was attempting to gather these refugees together to form cooperative settlements. A law had been passed which made funds available at low interest rates for constructing cooperative housing units. The Baugemeinde project took advantage of this resource and was helping refugees build houses with their own labor. Since I had had experience in work camps I was intrigued by this self help approach. But what struck me most about this church sponsored project was that the church was the last building that was constructed. Homes came first.

As I reflect on Dr. Fricke's work I realize that he had his priorities straight. First build human community, a neighborhood, a support system and then build the church. Or perhaps the sequence is more complicated: as you are building human community you are building the church community. And perhaps it is not that physical needs come first, but that a concern for the spiritual welfare of the people puts physical needs first. In any case, I believe it is wise for a congregation to first seek the welfare of its public community as Jeremiah suggested to the refugees in Babylon (Jer. 29) and then it will realize its own welfare. Putting the church building last is not to put spiritual welfare last. Putting up a church building does not mean automatically creating community in the neighborhood. The base for human society for thousands of years has been the primary community of the family. Because the Western nuclear family is in disrepair that is no reason for other institutions to replace it - such as the school, congregation or social agency. Rather it is the occasion for placing a very high priority on renewing the family (and

I believe this means enlarging it to "extended families" or base communities of various sorts). The Baugemeinde program wisely began by building homes for the community as the way to lay the foundation for a strong congregation.

What might the work of the congregation look like if it were refocused on rebuilding community at the base? As the architects say, "form follows function!" Parish ministry that is focused on "community formation", i.e. working with God's people in their daily life settings not maintaining present ecclesiastical structures might look something like this:

1. The parish is seen as the whole community not just a clientele within it. Working in the church does not mean working apart from the broader human community but in the"public parish".
2. Pastoral ministry is understood not as a solo career but the collective ministries of a community. Ministry occurs in the diversity of places where people are strategically located.
3 Authority and power are used to empower others. When acquired they are given away.
4. Theology is seen not as theory seeking to prove its validity but as experiences of the community seeking interpretation in the light of faith.
5. What begins in mystery does not end in bureaucracy but in rediscovery of vocation for all the people: "Who me, the church?" "Yes, you!"
6. Institution becomes "organization." Committees becomes communities.
7. The rungs of vertical systems become the "rings" of Sarah's circles.[11]
8. God's people become placed in community as an indigenous church.

The Indigenous Church

The case for the church's base community has need stated nowhere more convincingly than in an unpublished article passed around grass roots groups, "There is Hope for a Tree," by a Roman Catholic theologian, Rosemary Houghton. She argues that the informal mission of the first Christians in tiny communities of two was enormously effective. She writes:

> It is of the kind which I have come to call the "gossip's gospel" and it is, as in the beginning, predominantly though not exclusively done by women. The women at the empty tomb of the Lord were told by the angels and by the Lord himself, to tell the disciples "and the rest" that he was risen. These were the first Christian missionaries. Themselves not in danger of arrest as were the Eleven, they did indeed tell 'the rest' the good news of resurrection. How could they keep silent in a city among whose thronging Passover pilgrims were hundreds and probably thousands of those who 'had hoped that he was the one to deliver Israel" and were cast into misery, anger and despair by the news of the death of Jesus? The news was spread from wife to husband, mother to child, sister to sister or brother, friend to friend, neighbor to neighbor, in whispers through the city and the countryside. 'He is not dead, he is risen.' 'We saw him.' 'She saw him.' My aunt Joanna saw him.' 'My cousin Mary saw him.' 'He has been seen by Peter--by the Eleven--by James. The gossip's gospel' no doubt met a variety of responses--ridicule and contempt, apathy and doubt, but also hope and even immediate faith, even among those who 'did not see.' And so when the public preaching began, it is really not surprising that the numbers ran into thousands, and that the numbers grew and that the news spread through the country, with a speed which can in no way be explained purely by the efforts of the small number of accredited apostles.
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> When the mission to the Gentiles began, it was the same. People who had returned home after the feast of Pentecost took the news with them. There were not only people living in Palestine but "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and parts of Libya about Cyrene,' as well as visitors from Rome--' Jews and proselytes alike--Cretans and Arabs.' They went home and spread the message, which is why there were, later, rather garbled versions of the gospel around which had to be corrected. But also, there were many little knots of expectant people. Those who heard (like Lydia, who had a small dyed cloth business) went home and told others and set about organizing the resulting church in their homes. It was in such households that Paul and the others spent their brief rest periods and talked for hours with new converts and with people growing in ministry, and later with those engaged in building up existing local churches. And people from those household churches told their friends, drew them in, and sent them out to tell others. The church grew, not as a larger and larger mass but as a multiplication of small 'personal' units of a size capable of effective rapid interaction at every level. This pattern of development is expressed in the theology of the church,

> which is totally present as the Body of Christ in each gathered community. The 'great' church is not the sum of these but their common incorporation in Christ. The local churches which incarnate the presence of Christ in their place are not sects, therefore, and there is an interdependence in order to grow by shared experience of the Spirit; teaching universality balances locality. So the new faith spread around the Mediterranean as gossip does spread, but a gossip ('God-sibs' means 'God-related') not of bad news but of good. And so it has been ever since, and so it must be now.[12]

In 1981-1982, Ruth, and I spent several months visiting small communities and retreat centers in various parts of the world. We sought out countries like China, Siberia, the Baltic countries, and the Germany Democratic Republic where of necessity the life of the church had to operate at the primary level, sometimes underground. When we arrived at Uppsala, Sweden, to spend the remainder of the year studying at the University, we met Bengt Sunkler, a retired professor of world mission, a remarkable person. He had been a missionary and bishop in Africa and was deeply committed to the development of the indigenous church in Africa.

We met Bengt Sunkler for tea one afternoon in his apartment. He received us with the warmest hospitality and with great excitement for he had just received exciting news from a friend in Paris. Sunkler was writing a book on the origins of the Christian Church in Africa. In his research he had stumbled on a little footnote that indicated that the White Missionary Fathers (a French Roman Catholic missionary society) had been preceded to the mainland of Africa by five Catholic sisters. The French priests had encountered a remarkably positive response to their preaching in the villages which Sunkler wondered about. This almost overlooked footnote caused him to wonder if any of those five Sisters might have been African women who had returned to their own villages before the priests arrived. He had, therefore, sent an urgent request to a friend in Paris to check this out in the archives at the Sorbonne. Word came back that three of the sisters were Africans! Sunkler told with great excitement of his now revised plans to rewrite his book not as a European success story but as the account of an indigenous movement rooted and spread by the Africans themselves. The real story lay in the soil of Africa itself, in a footnote that he had nearly overlooked!

God is building a kingdom on earth, one so small that it remains invisible to many and inconsequential to others for it is build on the poor and the oppressed whose histories remain undocumented as though they were unimportant. As I stated in Chapter III we need to listen to the silent andforgotten ones to know the truth. Walter Brueggeman makes this point regarding the Book of Jeremiah:

> The One who plucks up plants (Jer. 24:7), who brings what is to naught (I Cor. 1:28), is the One who can call into existence things that do not exist (Rom. 4:17). And that is the extraordinary thing in Israel's history. The Lord of history gives history to the landless who should have no history. He takes the barren as mother of promise. He takes the slaves as bearers of freedom. He takes the desperately hungry as heirs of the new land. And now he takes hopeless exiles as his new people.[13]

The power of God's kingdom is a invisible hidden within like leaven in a loaf or like a small seed growing underground. Small is beautiful but of course small is small.[14] In dealing with massive issues like world hunger, however, large responses are required. Small becomes large, very large, when many mini responses begin to multiply and reached epidemic proportions.[15] Small is large! The microbes will win in the end! That may strike terror in some but for those who understand the organic processes that regenerate the soil it is good news. Bacteria might be our friends rather than our enemies.[16]

There is a film without words which shows a series of camera sequences beginning with a few bathers lying on the beach. The first view is from ten feet and then one hundred feet and one thousand feet and the last view is from ten to the tenth power. The final scene is the Milky Way. The camera reverses direction and begins with the bodies on the beach again and moves in for dramatic close up shots of the body and its cell structure until at ten to the minus tenth power the last scene in the sequence is again the Milky Way! When I saw that film I was left with a new understanding of the power of the human being located at the matrix of the macro/micro worlds. The gigantic tasks that so quickly overwhelm us and leave us feeling impotent are actually as close to us as the universes within our own cell structures. Is this the mystery of God's kingdom? Are the resources for the vast enterprises of God in the world that close and accessible to every person? If this is true then no person is powerless for each person stands at the vital crossover point between the macro and the micro. If that connection can be made by human beings then another kind of power can be unleashed on this planet.

The Third Settlement

The special challenge for our generation is to tap this alternative power. That power comes from a radically different yet ancient view of the world. This new perspective might be described in terms of rebuilding community from the base, from the soil. You might call this a new pattern of land settlement. I call this perspective the "Third Settlement of Earth."[17] Like our ancestors who occupied the Promised Land only after a severe displacement and an arduous journey, so we face an exodus in our own time. It may not be an exodus of geographic displacement but an "exodus in place" which others might describe as a "change of consciousness" or a "transformation of values". There are some striking differences, however, between the ancient exodus experience of Israel and today's exodus. Then it was a matter of saving a particular people from bondage. Today it is a matter of saving all of creation from bondage. That is not to say, however, that today's concern for the care of the earth was absent from the first exodus. Israel was to be a blessing for all other nations. Today we understand "nations" as encompassing all forms of life on this planet.

The "First Settlement" is the pattern still found among the so called "primitive" societies which live close to nature. For them nature and grace are not in opposition. The rhythm of their life style is set in accordance with their natural environment. For such communities the earth and all its forms of life was part of a family. Mother Earth nourished all the creatures who were related. Therefore one lives gently on and with the earth and with all its forms of life. Humans are neither superior to nor "over against" other life forms but members of the family. I have in mind not only the Indians, the "Native" Americans, but also Spanish speaking peoples and Africans who preceded most of the white settlers but who viewed land differently than the land owners.

The "Second Settlement" came with the modern age that viewed nature as an object to be exploited. Nature and grace were in opposition, even violent opposition at times[18]. Waves of immigrants set out to conquer nature, including nature's people, the "primitive peoples" (now called the "Third" or "Fourth" World). In North America this happened rapidly with the Western movement of pioneers who brought their old community and culture with them to a new land. They brought with them their "little publics" with which to undergird the establishing of a larger republic. When other settlers appeared and crowded their space they moved farther West. As long as an open frontier wasavailable, this settlement pattern persisted. Some see this period ending with the Civil War when the Western frontier was closed and Paradise was lost. But I believe the mentality lingered on. Even after the open spaces were all settled the next frontier to be conquered became the rich resources of the land. Somewhere around the end of World War II the last wave of settlers found themselves crowding into Southern California with nowhere else to go. It is no surprise that Watts in Los Angeles was the first urban area to go up in smoke. That was the end of the American dream of private space away from strangers. The "Second Settlement" came to an end.

The "Third Settlement" began with the burning of Watts. People began to recognize that there was nowhere else to flee from one another except the outback in Australia or Antarctica. The "Third Settlement" does not mean geographic exodus to another place as much as it challenges us to remain in place in an increasingly urban society and build new community out of the differences of race, religion, sex, economic class, age, culture, marital status: all the differences that had previously separated us. Certainly it cannot mean another Oklahoma "land rush" for this time we must proceed at a pace commensurate with the patterns of the environment. Land is not to be conquered but rather to be lived with as a vital member of the wider community. The settlers of the "Second Settlement" rushed too quickly into new territories ignoring the lessons to be learned from the earlier inhabitants and creating tools before they knew how to use them or understand the consequences of their use (e.g. nuclear power). It means to live with the land and deal with its resources not as owners but as partners. It means to view the land and its various life forms as part of the community with "liberty and justice" for all that make up the shared environment.

Unlike the "Second Settlement" which involved bringing old community to a new place, we are challenged today to build new community in old places, of creating "little publics" to form public citizens for our day. From the "First Settlement" we must learn how to do this in partnership with the natural environment.[19] The "Third Settlement" must involve a new covenant with the land which seemed to be forgotten in the Second Settlement.[20] I would call this the Covenant of Community Regeneration, a statement of the interdependence of everything needed for the regeneration of life. But the way to the "Third Settlement" is still through the wilderness. Our exodus is "in place" for our modern "Egypts" are becoming deserts of our own making. Ironically, being "driven into the desert" by our own actions may be the way of rediscovering the qualities of desert life that can prepare to take us through a new Exodus in order to enter the land with promise.

There is a desert ethic, a land ethic, which can enlarge our understanding of community. The community of the land that life in the desert compels us to rediscover for our own survival, is a biocommunity of millions of life forms. In the desert there are dormant micro life forms waiting for the return of the moisture that once was there. Many deserts were rain forests once. In many cases humans were the ones that destroyed them. Humans have a responsibility to these life forms and indeed to themselves (survival!) to restore an environment that can revive the deserts. In this biocommunity there is *koinonia*, i.e. a symbiotic relationship between all spiecies. God's people" now contains a much greater range of life forms than had been imagined. "Ecology widens the circle" expanding our boundaried ecclesiologies like Pentecost. "All things kindred" as Chief Seattle put it. Earth is Mother. The "people" are now a larger community than merely humans. The desert can teach us the alternative set of values required for the resettling of the land. The land can speak to us for it still contains gene pools[21] of wisdom formed over millions of years of it own journey. These values have to do with:

space, wilderness as retreat for prayer, reflection and new visions;
pace, for meditation, tarrying long enough for wise and responsible long range action;
grace , acknowledgement that the land we live with is promised land;
place, engagement in a specific moment and site in history.

Unlike the recent journeys of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and High Technology, this journey is not for conquering nature but for learning to live with nature as a member of the family. Whereas Descartes' approach to knowing nature began with radical doubt, the "Third Settlement" begins with radical trust: trust that the wisdom, the relationships, the patterns formed over millions of years and, for Christians, confidence in the Creator's work, can guide us with the rest of the "family" toward healthy choices. The "Second Settlement" arrogantly set out with its Descartian knowledge to conquer and control the land. The "Third Settlement needs to set out humbly with the sense of discovery and adventure.[22]

We also need a new covenant with the land that commits many of us to switch from high mobility to long term residence, to shift from the cosmopolitan "I'm just passing through" to the parochial "I'll stay here as long as you need me." I grew up, studied and worked in the same neighborhood for over fifty years. In my own experience being rooted to a specific place has not been a restrictive but rather a liberating factor like the securely anchored kite that is able to fly high and freely because of its solid base. Rebuilding community will require a new kind of pioneer: not restless to find new places, but settled enough to find new possibilities in old places.

Commitment To Place

The "Third Settlement" means commitment to place, a value that sounds subversive in today's mobile society. The covenant we need to make with others must include the places where we live and work.[23] In a mobile society it is almost immoral to speak about staying where you are. Success means leaving where you are. Only those who are failures stay behind. This cultural bias re-inforced my own drive to gets things moving in church and society for a long time. I saw my Lutheran tradition as having opted for quietism ("come weal or woe the status is quo"). In later years I have had second thoughts about "staying power" over against "leaving power". Perhaps there was a case to be made for "sticking with it", "for hanging in there", for placement that needed to be heard. Some years later a fresh look at "parochialism" was reinforced by the slogan among some peace and justice groups, "Think globally, act locally".

As a society becomes increasingly urban the understanding of place diminishes. The transitoriness of fluid life in the city, the mobility of relationships has profoundly eroded the sense of place. In the city most people are uprooted. Few can trace long term involvements. I consider myself an anomaly for spending my entire professional life within a few miles of my place of birth and almost forty years on the same campus. The seminary where I taught purchased the buildings in which I attended high school! And yet I have wondered if that placement, that rootedness, has not made me a freer person able to soar like a kite because of being securely anchored in a particular place. At least in my experience such a long term attachment has not limited my life. I have found as much if not more parochialism in suburbia as in small town rural America. We have glamorized suburban life for its freedom and self fulfillment, yet there remains a deep search for place (often expressed as a desire for community) because for uprooted suburbanites live with few if any commitments.[24]

Walter Brueggemann argues that the crisis of an urban society is not meaninglessness but rootlessness. "A sense of place is a primary catagory of faith".[25] The proper home of God's people is the world, the earth, the land and their

way to it is through the wilderness. In the desert we learn to live with the land again. Perhaps the sense of homelessness of today's urban dweller is their desert path to the land. The yearning for land in the "Babylonian Captivity" of an urbanized society, might be the way for rediscovering the land as promise and the training ground for preparing Americans to occupy the land anew, the wiser for having been exiled from the land.[26] Forty years to recognize we have been in a wasteland of our own making may indeed be the time framework necessary for a rehabilitated generation to occupy the land again and understand that it is "promised" land, i.e. gifted land that nature with its remarkable regenerative powers still offers us. They too are part of the enlarged community, of the total life or ecosystem.

What commitment to a place can mean was brought home to me by a personal encounter some years ago when I met a school friend on a plane to Cincinnati. My friend, whom I will call Peter, is a well known scholar and writer. We met in graduate school and had not seen each other for many years. During the flight I caught up on Peter's involvements as well as on the activities of his family. Peter was a popular speaker and was on his way to fulfill an invitation he had received. I knew that he was being sought by a number of American Universities and at least one prestigious European institution. I asked.:

"Peter, how long do you plan to stay in your present situation?"

He was not offended by the personal question, but his answer came as a surprise. "I'm not moving for seventeen years."

My surprise to his very specific answer was tinged with irritation. Peter was a very gifted human being and it seemed that everything he did was done with planned thoroughness. But planning your life that carefully did sound a bit strange, so I pressed the issue.

"Seventeen years! How can you be that specific about your professional decisions?"

Peter put down the book he was reading (he always seemed to be doing several things at the same time), and turned to me to answer, "Because that is the agreement that my wife and I have made with the county welfare department."

Peter went on to explain that they had adopted two minority children and had made a commitment to keep them in the county for that length of time. He had, indeed, a clear answer to my question. The specificity did not come from a rigidly planned life but from a sensitive parent willing to adjust his own successful career for the sake of two small children. Peter had his priorities right. Community should come before career.

There is much talk about community development or community renewal and not enough, I believe, about community settlement. Unless we deal with our reluctance to remain around long enough to establish community for the long term, to make commitments that are dependable and to nurture relationships that are stable we are not apt to realize healthy community life. Jesus still asks of the disciples, "Can you not tarry for a while?"(Matt. 26:40). What is most needed is the spirit to make such commitments intentionally. I would argue that all community is intentional. It is the fruit of settlement based on commitment and covenant.[27]

That encounter on a flight to Cincinnati was over twenty years ago and Peter continues to live in the same place. Peter's many books have inspired many people. But I find his life even more powerful reading. Exodus "in place" involves changing the patterns where we live and work and where we have power to effect change. This "exodus in place" requires a courage to remain placed and face change (even breakdown) and recognize it as the breaking open of people and systems to new alternatives. The only "open society" that is available to us in the future is one that has been broken open: the "Opened Society". But more of that in the final chapter.

Soil Care

Perhaps a better term than "settlers" for describing a new relationship to people and places is "gardeners". What we are talking about is learning how to care for the very earth on whom our very lives depend. There is an ancient legend among some America Indian peoples that was once related to me. I may not recall the details accurately but its main thrust has remained. According to this legend a white race of people would come someday to North America. Therefore, the appearance of the first white settlers was not as traumatic history books may have described it. This race would have two faces: one friendly the other evil. The Indians were instructed by this legend to always look at the friendly face, to offer hospitality, to share with these new comers. But the legend goes on to

predict that eventually the evil face will be exposed and the Indians will be driven off the land. They will flee into the woods [or desert?]. The white race will occupy the land but they will treat it badly. Eventually the land itself will rise up and destroy the white race. Then the Indians will come out of the woods (desert) and live on the land again.

How earth now threatened by ecology disaster after disaster may "rise" up is beyond categories of scientific knowing but it is not beyond imagination. It is all too real. Yet at 11:59 PM the human race may yet stop, look and listen. Impasse may open our eyes and ears. Maybe finally we will be able to see what is hidden and proceed another way.

The ecological crisis is finally forcing us to consider alternative ways to live on planet earth and steward its resources.[28] We need, however to make a distinction between "deep ecology" and "shallow environmentalism."[29] Fritjof Capra defines "shallow environmentalism" as the concern merely for more efficiency in the control and management of natural resources for the benefit of "man". [30] A deep approach requires new perception, i.e. a new philosophical and religious basis for understanding the life of the planetary ecosystem. I remember a striking comment by Joe Sittler in response to why he as a theologian was so active in the Chicago chapter of the Save Lake Michigan Organization. "Most of the people in the organization are in it for ethical reasons concerned how the water might be preserved for the sake of humanity. I"m in this for theological reasons. . . .for the sake of the water itself."[31] Some would call Sittler's concerns, "deep ecology".[32]

Walter C. Lowdermilk, a forester and hydrologist, in l939 in a radio broadcast in the Holy Land expressed his concern for the care of the earth in the form of the Eleventh Commandment:

> Thou shalt inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect the hills from overgrazing by thy herds, that thy descendents may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land, thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendents shall decrease and live in poverty or perish from off the face of the earth.[33]

My first introduction to environmental concerns came from a pastor/farmer, E.W. Mueller, who completed many years of leadership in rural ministry as the first director of the Center for Community Organization and Area Development CENCOAD at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. "E.W.", as he was affectionally called, was a pioneer in advocating the concept of symbiotic community development. He believed that the original settlement of North America should have been along the natural water ways North and South acknowledging from the outset the importance of environmental patterns for the building of human community. At CENCOAD he helped communities in the area recognize the importance of organic interdependence and cooperation for survival rather than competition. Where state lines, denominational districts, and other artificially imposed boundaries blocked the natural flow of life and work, E.W. proved himself to be a fearless border crosses by advocating fresh ways of thinking and acting regionally. His concept of a "60 minute city" scaled to human needs is a model that can serve the "Third Settlement" very well. E.W. cared deeply for the soil for he new in the long term it was the basis for community.

Constantine Doxiodis, the well known Greek city planner, also recognized the connection between the quality of life and the size of human settlements. He believed that the size should be such as to maximize the development of the cell group or what I mean by base community and what psychiatrist Mansell Pattison places at the center of his "zones of intimacy."[34] For Doxiodis the intimate communities can thrive in cities of not over 50,000. Agronomists talk of the carrying capacity of the land which, in terms of the community of community, varies with the size. So each level of community from family, to face-to-face community, to towns, cities, larger regions, nations, continents and the world has its level of self-sufficiency.[35] What should guide the size of human settlement, according to Doxiodis, was the scale that allowed for the optimum development of the base community, the neighborhood. Doxiodis also had a sense of the care of the soil.

I believe organizations which seek renewal and efficiency by reorganizing from the top down are making a fundamental mistake. Renewal comes from the roots, from the base, and begins with recognizing and supporting the levels of self sufficiency from the bottom up. Much of the frustration of institutional maintenance, I believe, comes from the failure to understand the law of organic life which is that the only thing you start from the top down is

digging a hole in the ground. Institutional regeneration does not proceed from the drawing board (theory, planning committee, policy making, ideology) to the field (soil, base, local) but from the field to the drawing board.

Base Christian Communities

The Christian Church began with a small community of twelve, then with teams of two, small groups of two or three (according to Jesus' promise), cells, households, base communities. Ministry was shared and celebrated in community. Word and sacrament came in close touch with the lives of the people because they participated personally and directly in these "sacred" acts in ordinary settings. The center of worship often in households as it has been in the Jewish tradition. The temple and synagogue were perceived as supportive institutions but the daily sharing of faith was in the household in the context of daily life. That was the strength of the early church.[36] The church's message was powerful but its approach was not by conquering public life from above but by undermining it from beneath. The Word of the Gospel "destroyed" the enemy ("One little world slays them" Luther) not by toppling apparently invincible systems but by announcing their foundations to be insecure, broken, illusionary. Since hierarchic systems stay in power as long as certain myths of their invincibility are maintained, counter claims are life threatening.[37] The mere rumor that the dominant system was based on untruth can be the beginning of the unravelling of the whole fabric. Therefore, any freedom of expression including harboring doubts is treason. Yet that power of believing contrary wise, of spreading rumors, of even entertaining the possibility of an alternatives world transforming. Naming something by its proper name ("You are the Christ" or "You are the tempter") was the weapon by which a few eventually transformed a hostile society. Though embodied in tiny communities the power of the early church was it's stubborn existence, its sheer isness.

Building community is not a matter of rhetoric but of lived experience, what I mean by isness. You can deny claims that people make, but you cannot deny their existence: what is plain and simply "there", the naked fact of being. Such reality exists before creeds and formulas. Words alone do not contain the essence of the truth but are references to it, they follow from what precedes them. Words describe what comes out of formation, one of the stages to becoming fruits (cf. p. 38). Formation precedes formulation. The deeper you go into pre-verbal levels of knowing (essential knowledge, see pp. 45 ff), the less helpful are words. But the more that is disclosed in experience the more persuasive language about it becomes. Words, language, doctrine should move one toward experience, toward actualization, toward fruition and not, as so often appears to be the case, toward obfuscation. What begins in mystery should end in politics. But if the finally products are merely words, then we end up with mystery compounded!

That language develops toward more complex and difficult expressions when the very purpose of language is to communicate does seem strange when you stop to think about it. But one reason for this may be the desire for power. The more specialized, the more dazzling, the more remote from the general ownership of the masses, the more confusing language becomes, the fewer there are who control it. When everyone understands immense power is lost. To go about teaching in parables such that anybody, indeed, all who have ears, might understand is to give away one's power base. That simply is not done in those circles where maintaining control by the elite few is at stake. The least confusing language of all are actions which, as the old saying goes, "speak louder than words". If a word is worth a thousand words, then simple and direct acts are worth millions. So Paul has good reason for choosing not to speak in the lofty terms he could have used as an educated person of his time, but chose the language of the people (*koine* Greek) to announce and clarify what was already embodied in the life of small communities. Jesus had already presented the mystery of God in parables and acts of unambiguous love. Stories of communities of lived faith provided the the communicable and infectious virus by which the Gospel spread rapidly. Living the faith in the ordinary affairs of households was and continues to be the most effective way of communicating God's love to others.

Since Constantine, however, the household increasingly became secondary to the parish church structure in terms of church thinking and practice. What had been primary h became secondary, and what had been supplementary or secondary became primary. Throughout church history there have been efforts to reverse this process. Today base communities are aborning all over the world. In Latin America they number in the scores of thousands. In China and Eastern Europe the life of the church continued even under political suppression in small household groups. The well known communities of Taize in France and Grandchamp in Switzerland have inspired efforts elsewhere to build from the base. Ecumenical communities are already exploring how diversity in faith traditions can enrich rather than fragment community. Might communities of faith become proto types of the "Third Settlement"? Might they provide the best soil and scale for connecting personal faith and public life?

I believe that the highest priority must be given to building the base. For professional ministry that means, I believe, recognizing that formal preparation is not a matter of individual careers but of the preparation in community for ministry. Such attention to living one's faith in a primary setting is necessary both for the sake of personal development and sustaining a support group for a caring and risk taking ministries in society. But it is also necessary to include the diversity needed for a holistic ministry. Each of us has certain skills and each of us is at a different place at any given moment on our journey. Ministry understood as a corporate matter can cover the many places where the presence of God's people is needed. Others may not be at the same place as another. That is the classic problem in individually oriented careers. One's personal agendas can easily and unintentionally be imposed on others. Ministry in and through community provides a wide range of options and resources.

We are ripe, over ripe, for a new settlement pattern. The rebuilding of the base through new communities demonstrating in lived word the integration of faith and life, the inward and outward, is how the Third Settlement can begin. God is hidden in those closest to us. As we begin to explore with those with whom we share life most intimately the meaning of ministry we will discover the mystery of the micro and the macro. We will then begin to grasp the significance of Christ's promise, "Where two or three are gathered" there Christ is present, there the everything is present. [38]

Symbiotic Community

We said in introducing the figure eight model that it was limited. To illustrate the points just made regarding community we need another model, a more organic and symbiotic one. The diagram below describes the process of growth at two levels: under the soil (the primary world of seeds, fragile roots and organic food) and above the soil (the secondary world of structured and managed activity).[39] I shall also use this diagram as a way of visually summarizing various points that have been made in the preceding chapters.

SECONDARY (*Market economy*)

Fruits (acted out faith)
calculative knowledge
STRUCTURE
Forms (structured faith) **reason**

--soil - - -- - - -- Formulation (articulated faith) - - - *existential knowledge* - -

PRIMARY (*Household economy)* **wisdom**

Formation (shared faith) SPIRIT
essential knowledge

Foundation (Personal Faith) **mystery**

This chart depicts the interaction of the life and experience of God's people in the world (above the soil) and the mystery of God's work in faith communities (beneath the soil). This is the issue faced by Israel after the desert experience when she occupied the Promised Land. And it is the question faced by every believer and every christian community as it grows from formation into forms. That question is the central theme of this book: how does one move from the personal and to the public and back again? God's people live in both levels partly underground (organic, messy, unpredictable, unmanageable[40], undetectable) and partly above the ground (visible, manageable, structured, rational, measurable). This model reflects the ancient challenge to God's people already recognized in the Exodus wilderness: the choice between living on "gifted land" or living on "managed land".

> The place (wilderness) without life support becomes the place of abundance and security. Israel has misread wilderness and had miscalculated about Yahweh and so had yearned for managed land. The wilderness is not managed land. This is what makes it wilderness. But it is gifted land, and surprising

> meat and bread and sabbath do come there. Always Israel is in gifted land yearning for managed land, but characteristically Israel learned that *gifted land* gives life and *managed land* does not.[41]

This model reminds us that life is preserved by pruning and relinquishment. The fruit falls to the earth and there in the soil dies and is recycled to new life. (Actually you do have the early figure eight model here, only set on end!) Maintenance is not by bronzing the apples on the tree, but through the letting go, allowing the fruits of our labor to die naturally. Mission (risking death in the soil) and maintenance (protecting the process) in this model are part of the one process of maturation. The soil is the place where the discarded, worthless, unvalued becomes the very life giving stuff that nourishes new life and regenerates the old system.[42] John Taylor comments on regeneration from discarded material:

> The root of the words humiliation and humility is humus. To be down in the straw and the dung and the refuse--Paul's words--is to become the soil in which the seed of Christ's manhood falls and dies and brings forth the harvest. Here is the meeting of the four elements: we the earth and the spirit, the wind, the water and the fire.[43]

What occurs in the soil is mystery and not manageable. Supervisory procedures from the world of management may not be very helpful. If you dig a seed out of the soil every day to check its progress it will not do very well. Some things are best left unmanaged like the New York taxi cab system. Soil is not to be managed as much as to be cared for, cultivated, respected for its own wisdom, "listened to". The central issue in the care of land, especially gifted land, is how to use to the solar energy which it is able to capture and store. That is true both for the earth itself and the human community at the base: how do we capture the "solar" energy of God's grace? A crucial function of the primary human community in relation to the larger system is regeneration. Regeneration occurs through death in the soil. We must always return to the base, the foundation. In this sense there is no second generation church but only and always a people who live from and return to their roots:[44] a rerooted and rerouted people, new beings by grace.

But regeneration also occurs above the soil in giving, in seeking the welfare of others by sharing the fruits which result from the renewed life from the roots. The process is a matter of continuous growth (Eph. 4:15-16). The fruits are the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22). What is involved here is not a patriarchal relationships of master and servant where fruits are produced through "obedience" but the work of the Spirit operating gratuitously.[45] The church at this level is community not committee and the role of the professional is very different.

You will notice that I have introduced here the levels from the chart on foundation - fruits introduced in Chapter III. What forms us from within and is the "Ground" of all of life is God who has chosen to to dwell("to tent" , to make a home) in our lives for reasons that lie beyond any human understanding God's presence will shape our entire life if we let it, if we allow ourselves to be formed by disciplines of the desert listening to our "ground notes" (God's genetic code in our life?). It is God who forms and directs our formation and through our experience and reflection formulates and through our discipleship and abilities produces forms and fruits. To say that God works through people does not mean that God does it unilaterally without our participation. The process is only realized in freedom. It is an indigenous process. Indigenous does not mean individualistic, independent, nor automatic but voluntary, personal, relational, based on trust, symbiotic. What I mean can be expressed in a brief formula: freedom forms and form frees.

The forms or structures that we find in society if traced to their origin will be found to be the creations of enterprising individuals or small groups. They were birthed originally as expressions of someone's dream, certainly someone's risk. New ventures are like that. They are usually not the product of institutional deliberations but of fledgling and venturesome efforts of a few pioneers. In other words they are the result of the free choice of a few. Freedom forms. But if you explore the source of such freedom you will likely find some firm convictions, some solid guidelines and not infrequently a secure environment which allowed for the development of the imagination and the enterprise for risking something new (to cross borders!). Or to use another illustration: I would like to play a violin with such skill that I could improvise and move directly from what I feet within my spirit to well crafted musical passages that convey these deep feelings. I cannot do that. I have never mastered the violin. I need the discipline, the structured training to be that free! Form frees.

The freedom that God offers us is one based on discipleship. A relationship and commitment freely undertaken based on love. People need freedom to take on such a relationship and responsibility. God gives us that freedom

even before were are able to handle it wisely because without freedom we cannot learn what it means to live responsibly out of love. Freedom and form grow together. The relationship between them is organic, symbiotic.

As mentioned in Chapter III regarding roots and fruits there is a need to understand the kind of stability that occurs in living organisms if was are to grasp the dynamic and complex way in which primary and secondary systems interact. If we approach this issue from the point of view of the base, i.e. from a symbiotic understanding then the self-organizing character of the primary group is not threatening to the secondary system but rather can be seen as the way the whole maintains it's stability. The process is known as homeostasis which Fritjof describes as:

> a state of dynamic, transactional balance in which there is great flexibility; in other words, the system has a large number of options for interacting with its environment. When there is some disturbance, the organism tends to return to its original state, and it does so by adapting in various ways to environmental changes. Feedback mechanisms come into play and tend to reduce any deviation from the balanced state. Because of these regulatory mechanisms, also known as negative feedback, the body temperature, blood pressure, and many other important conditions of higher organisms remain relatively constant even when the environment changes considerably. However, negative feedback is only one aspect of self-organization through fluctuations. The other aspect is positive feedback, which consists in amplifying certain deviations rather then dampening them.[46]

This describes, of course, what happens in breathing already mentioned. Only by responding to feedback, negative (re-active, centripetal resistance) and positive (pro-active, centrifugal thrust) and allowing freedom in the primary system for exploration of alternatives can the whole system survive in a healthy way. This is a very different process from maintaining control from above by insisting on following prescribed procedures, especially in an unprecedented situation for then it is precisely the creativity of the base that is the genius of system maintenance. Thus it can be argued that it was the new freedom for the primary systems of the church in North America far away from central established church control that led to a new vitality of the Church and for society.

Barbara Hargrove believes that church people played a significant role in the building of early American society for "as they learned to organize their church groups they came to organize their community" Is the reverse of that now true? Will the "Third Settlement" of the land help the church find new forms for herself as well? As we learn to organize (re-organize, regenerate) the public communities will we recovery our primary communities? As we "Seek the welfare of Babylon" (Jer. 29) the church's will find their own welfare. One could go on with this argument . . . . . .As the religious community seeks the welfare of the public neighborhood....as the clergy seek the welfare of the laity....as the weekly church seeks the welfare of the daily church. What would such a shift do to our understanding of pastoral ministry? This is not the only perspective on the office of ministry but it is an important one and to the degree that it has been neglected it is a crucial one for us. It certainly provides a solid reason that I believe we should recruit for pastoral ministry people who know first hand ministry in the daily church.

In the above model of the organic life cycle the interdependence of roots and fruits is clear. The primary and secondary are not antagonistic systems as is perfectly clear in the two different acts of breathing (exhaling and inhaling) and the two acts of growth (death and regeneration). The relationship in both is complementary not supplementary. One cannot replace or take over the function of the other. As I stated earlier in this chapter we need interdependence (balance, partnership, mutuality) between the secondary and the primary. They are complementary (symbiotic) as the following chart suggests:

Secondary	**Primary**
Objectivity (facts)	Subjectivity (feelings)
Maintenance (preserve)	Missions (pioneer)
Provide continuity (tradition)	Offer dis-continuity (the new)
Be the elder son (stay at home)	Be the prodigal (explore)
Negotiate diplomatically	Advocate passionately
Be neutral	Take a stand
Remember past	Explore future
Debate formally	Share intimate stories
Develop consensus	Honor diversity
Channel and consolidate	Disperse and multiply
Control/guidelines	Spontaneous action
Extrapolate	Envision

Provide breadth	Provide depth
Host groups	Host individuals
Public formation	Personal formation
Provide Cover	Work under cover
Organize committees	Nurture communities
Market	Cultivate
Package (Protect)	Unwrap (Disclose)

Social Partnership

The above chart suggests that the relationship between the large institutions and the smaller units at the base can be and must be one of mutuality or what I would call "social partnership". By social partnership I mean a type of interdependence in which the integrity of neither partner is sacrificed. Rather each serves as a check on the other to be faithful to their function for the sake of the other. The role of secondary structures is to both guide and encourage, give direction yet encourage freedom and creativity at the base. Parenting is like that. A kind of creative muddling in which there are long range goals but flexibility and sensitive nurturing combined. That is a genuine challenge to large enterprises to keep this balance. Gregory Baum defines this in terms of a balance between "subsidiarity" and "socialization".

> the traditional principle of subsidiarity, which was designed to protect the small units capable of looking after their needs from interference by a higher power, was complemented by the principle of socialization, enunciated especially by Pope John XXIII, which stated that whenever smaller units are unable to provide for their members, the higher levels of authority must promote cooperation so that people will be protected. Small is beautiful, but big whenever necessary. In industrial society, big is unavoidable. The creative tension between the principles of subsidiarity and socialization is replayed in the present encyclical [*Laboren exercens*] in the double demand for democracy at the workplace and for the planning of the economy.[47]

The relationship is mutual but there is, nonetheless, a hierarchy not of authority but of values. Capital is to serve labor, technology the welfare of humanity, the secondary the nuture and development of the primary. Primary is primary. When institutions require more and more maintenance, larger and larger administrative staffs, more and more regulations then it is a sign that the root systems are no longer nourishing, that it is more and more separated from the base. Maintenance cost go up when the base is ignored or devalued. The system becomes more rigid, mor hierarchical, more synthetic when it loses its organic character. Synthetic systems do not regenerate. They do not reproduce new life. They deplete rather than restore energy. Unlike the organic processes of the soil they have to be maintained. They are not self regenerative. Change is problematic for synthetic systems as can be observed by the joyless and humorless struggles of huge institutions, religious and secular, to find the formulas and procedures to shift entrenched power centers[48]. Organic systems live by change. Millions of life forms are lavishly spewed out each Spring for organic systems know that survival has to do with allowing extravagant reproduction. One doesn't plan or manage or negotiate for such change. It comes naturally because it is part of the "system" already. Early warning signs of the human investment required to keep synthetic structures going is that many of the first burn out victims of are the managers themselves.

Larger systems cannot survive without vital roots. The fragile life in the soil also needs protection and nurturing. The function of the fast growing poplars in the forest, for example, is to provide shade for the slower trees to grow. When the little pines become established, the poplars disappear. Secondary systems like governments, universities, large congregations, corporations can provide the climate to encourage the root system. Unfortunately, they too often live *from* the base and not *for* the base.[49] It is one thing to work with structures but quite another to work with organic processes.[50] We need a new understanding of management. Midwifery, which already exists, is an excellent model for the type of cooperation required for living *with* rather than *off* the land. This will involve shifting from a male dominated society to a partnership (gylanic[51]) form.

A new understanding of the relationship between primary and secondary systems is emerging from feminist writings. There is no better place to begin to trace the connections between the private and the public in the

American experience than in the women's movement. Having been relegated to the private and domestic sector, women have been more acutely aware of the denial of the primary in the shaping of public life. Sarah Evans describes this as follows:

> Between l820 and l845 women and men created voluntary associations on a new scale, carving out a public space located between the private sphere of the home and public life of formal institutions of government. In these spaces women gave new content to republican motherhood that transformed the boundaries of domesticity even as domesticity itself was being cloaked in Victorian images of submissiveness and purity.[52]

There are many hopeful examples of good working partnerships between the secondary and the primary. For example, the approach to community medical care for the poor called the Church Clinic. It was begun in Springfield, Ohio, by Granger Westberg. As a teacher in pastoral theology and counselling he had observed that people in the inner city were hesitant to seek our professional help when they were sick not only because they were poor but also because they were intimidated by the white uniformed professional who used a language they did not understand. Westberg began an experiment in a Springfield church where he enlisted a number of parish members to serve as reception groups for the patients. The patient would come to a parish hall room furnished to look like a living room and there met not by a professional garbed in a white uniform but by a small group of ordinary people who had been trained how take health histories through friendly and informal conversation. This was often done over a cup of coffee and without official forms being filled out. The patient would see the doctor accompanied by one of the group, often the pastor or the intern in the parish. Following the doctor's examination the patient would return to the group and talk about what the doctor had said. Because of their anxiety during the examination the patients often did not understand what the doctor told them about their condition and the prescription. The group helped the patient to understand and served as a support for encouragement when needed.

One of the interesting observations by the doctors was that the presence of others during the examination, such as the pastor or intern, helped the patient to reveal information important for the diagnosis that the doctors often otherwise did not get. With others present the patients did not see themselves only as a sick person talking about physical ailments, but more holistically as a person with other relationships and dimensions. Here both the primary world of intimacy and the secondary world of objective analysis worked together to the benefit of all. From this experiment other Church Clinics were established.[53]

The land is another partner I believe we need to add to the primary/secondary issue. This partner is the third one in the covenant discussed in Chapter V. When approached as a matter of construct (e.g. the planned community of Post WW II) community does not have an encouraging history. At least those who lived under the central planning of community in the East for forty years have vigorously rejected that approach. Central planners in the West have not done much better. But community as an organic process finding its paradigms for development from its own environment and including the care of the earth as a full partner, is quite a different matter.[54]

The issue of the primary and secondary was stated by the great French social scientist in 1893 when he wrote:

> A society composed of an infinite number of unorganized individuals, that a hypertrophied State is forced to oppress and contain, constitutes a veritable sociological monstrosity. For collective activity is always too complex to be able to be expressed through the single and unique organ of the State. Moreover, the State is too remote from individuals; its relations with them too external and intermittent to penetrate deeply into individual consciences and socialize them within. When the State is the only environment in which men [sic! no doubt accurate in 1983 can live communal lives, they inevitable lose contact, become detached, and thus society disintegrates. A nation can be maintained only if, between the State and the individual, there is intercalated a whole series of secondary groups near enough to the individuals to attract them strongly in their sphere of action and drag them, in this way, into the general torrent of social life.[55]

Durkheim saw the solution contained in "occupational" groups whose size made them effective bridges between individuals and state. Scale has much to do with the the health of a society.

Small Scale Strategy

I have always been intrigued by the Dutch people and their vitality and creativity demonstrated in many areas. In Holland a little means a lot. During our sabbatical sojourn in The Netherlands (l990-91) we had a common experience. Trying to be sensitive to the local culture we would begin our encounters with "Spreekt U Engels?" "Do you speak English?". The answer was almost always, "A little". But often the person would go on to speak a good deal of English and do so very well. In Holland we discovered that "A little" means "a lot".

Holland is a small country and the people have learned to do a lot with a little. Much of its limited land surface lies beneath sea level. But through centuries of effort a great deal of land has been wrested from the sea and is now prosperous farm land. Although its population is not large (fifteen million) you will find Dutch people placed all over the world. They seem to be in every international organization. Not only are they present, but it has been my repeated experience that the Dutch delegation is one of the best informed. The Dutch seem to do well with a few.

I have wondered about this phenomenon of size especially since I come from a large country with enormous distances. I have wondered if one of the reasons why a little goes a long way is the scale of the country. When you can literally jump on a bike and attend a national committee meeting in one part of the country and be home for supper, I would suppose that you are also not as overwhelmed by the size of the issues you face. Fifty signatures are all that are required to start a local grade school financed by the government. In that scale the individual has a greater sense of participation and importance. Perhaps that is why the Dutch seem to be so well informed on domestic as well as global issues. They live in a human scaled society.

Whatever the reasons, I am inspired and encouraged by how much "a little" means when spoken by the Dutch. I don't think they are being overly modest when they make that response, but rather I think they have learned to be content with the smaller scaled world they inhabit and know their circumstances have given them something special. Small is beautiful and a little is a lot.

Individuals need the shelter of the smaller scale to guarantee the social space for personal as well as public formation. In the long run the State also needs such protection of its citizens for the health of the state. The challenge is to find a healthy way between the individualism of many capitalist societies and the collectivism of many socialist systems. Neither has proven to be the right environment for forming civic responsibility and sustaining the common good. Again Durkheim:

> The State, in our large-scale societies, is far removed from individual interests that it cannot take into account the special or local and other conditions in which they exist. Therefore when it does attempt to regulate them, it succeeds only at the cost of doing violence to them and distorting them. It is, too, not sufficiently in touch with individuals in the mass to be able to *mould them inwardly*, so that they readily accept it pressure on them. [Italics mine][56]

The last chapter concluded with the extravagant claim that building community from the bottom up is a quiet but revolutionary way the church can most powerfully and faithfully impact society. How does one regard community - be it family, support group, household, or cell - as the strategic place to work for the renewal of church and society? Should such a deliberate decision be regarded as an abandonment of the complex and demanding tasks of changing or humanizing the larger social systems? Is such a decision a retreat from direct public activity because of a lack of nerve or of being seduced by the idea that "small is beautiful" and therefore simpler and easier? Is it wise to concentrate on the soil beneath and neglect the centers of power above thus allowing them to continue their domination and control?

These criticisms are certainly valid. The decision to withdraw from direct public action in the post Watergate, post Viet Nam decades still affects many people. However a shift of focus to the primary group as the heart of the church's role in society is a strategic move and can be based on Christ's life and teachings as has been suggested in previous chapters. I am convinced and I firmly believe that the critical connection between religious faith and everyday life is the primary group where our most intimate relationships are formed and our beliefs take their first awkward steps toward action. It is here that personal faith first becomes public. It is at this level that the church's role of risk taking and hope raising can be most effectively pursued.

What begins with the personal, however, has a way of getting institutionalized, co-opted, tamed, and packaged. Ever since reading Rudolf Sohm and Max Weber[57], I have been alternately perplexed and intrigued with the repeated phenomenon of spontaneous, "charismatic," movements ultimately being corralled into rationalized and bureaucratized institutions. Every innovative and free spirited movement seems to move inevitably toward greater

control, structure and rigidity. Soon the familiar signs appear: professional codes, certification processes, canonized theory, prescribed methods, and a clerical elite. Even prophetic movements courageously pioneering new ways and fighting entrenched authorities become replicas of the structures they opposed often in the lifetime of their founders.

I have watched with dismay generation after generation of students enter their profession with a concern for change only to become excessively preoccupied a few years later with the clerical functions of the system (committee meetings, conferences, task groups, and other forms of routinization) more preoccupied with maintenance than mission. Must this always be so? Is there no way to avoid Max Weber's thesis about the "routinization of charisma"? If so, why initiate anything if it only eventually burdens humanity with routinized systems that dull the imagination and curtail the spirit?

Perhaps there is a way out of this dilemma. After years of trying to persuade from within or at times pushing from without with a canoe, I have given up attempting to turn the HMS Queen Mary around. Perhaps such gigantic enterprises do have their legitimate functions. But so do canoes! Canoes are light, maneuverable and even portable. They can explore places where the lumbering, "play-it-safe" and "proceed carefully" policy of the Queen Mary cannot go lest she jeopardize crew, passengers, and cargo. Why not leave the Queen Mary alone? She was designed to do one thing and does that well. Be glad for that. Sinking everything in sight is neither a creative nor salvatory act.

Canoes operate on another scale and have their own unique gifts. They can be used in the service of all (including the heavy ladened supplt ships) in exploring new passageways. The demand for institutions to take risks or create alternatives to themselves is unrealistic and in a way unjust. Boards of directors are selected and charged with maintenance. They establish careful investment practices and policies to preserve what has been entrusted to their care. It would be inappropriate for an institution to adopt a policy of untested directives from the prophet whose vision is usually clearer of what is wrong than what the practical alternatives might be. One could hardly expect the Sanhedrin to hire John the Baptist as their management consultant!

Exploring the new is more possible for small groups. They can take on personally the risks themselves, and they can do so out of their own convictions and with the freedom requisite for exploration. While the rhetoric of many alternative movements has been anti-institutional, there is a sense in which such independent groups actually serve the long range needs of institutions because they provide a laboratory for exploring viable alternatives while leaving existing institutions intact.

In the final analysis the HMS Queen Mary and the canoe need each other. Therefore, a wise course seems to be a view of large institutions which makes modest demands on them and which accepts with gratitude the freedom of not having to consume one's limited energies in changing them. Independent scouting parties, even those operating without royal charter, must eventually report to the home base. Failure to communicate accurately could mean the loss of an important opportumnity[58] My reformulation of Weber's thesis is: "Freedom forms and form frees." Institutions can honor and facilitate those who choose to move beyond their borders, but only the small exploring parties have the freedom to pursue radically what the new forms might be.

At the conclusion of his book on global economic issues, economist-theologian Charles Eliot writes:

> The last and best hope seems to be the small, often autonomous, cells of Christians struggling to find new life styles, new relationships with each other, with the environment and with national and international society. It is there, if anywhere, that one will see the activity of God and hear the genuinely prophetic voice, as these groups go inward in radical contemplation and outward in radical actions.[59]

Let me mention a few such initiatives to illustrate Eliot's point. First, there is the experience of Americans and Europeans who volunteered to live in villages threatened by the violence of civil war in Central America. There was a similar program in Guatemala where international people lived with local persons around the clock whose lives had been threatened. Second, there is already in place a program called Habitat for Humanity that employs the skills of volunteers in housing construction, recruiting volunteers and empowering local communities. Third, there is the effective work of Amnesty International which has made it possible for small groups of people to become advocates for prisoners of conscience. Fourth, for years there have been programs

of yoked communities around the world and an international agency called The Association of Twined Communities. Fifth, there is a remarkable global network of L'Arche Communities started by Jean Vanier in which handicapped and non-handicapped people live together. L'Arche communities began in France. The first was a small village of Trosly north of Paris. Jean Vanier made a life long commitment to live with two severely retarded men and thereby set in motion a movement in which so-called sick people have helped the "healthy" to recover community. The recovery of community is a major challenge facing modern societies.

While on assignment in Geneva, Switzerland, with the Lutheran World Federation in the early 1970's working on human rights and peace issues, I made several trips to South America where political oppression was especially severe. On Easter Sunday, 1974, I was in Montivedeo, Uruguay, with a man we will call Ernesto. He a leader in Latin America of Pax Christi, the Catholic peace group. Uruguay, once considered the Switzerland of Latin America, was at that time under severe political repression. The university was closed. Large numbers of refugees had fled to Argentina. Montivedeo looked deserted. We talked while walking the streets in order to avoid being monitored by the security police.

After hearing how difficult life was I asked Ernesto why he had not fled like most of his friends. I knew he was connected with an opposition group and therefore suspect. "Let me show you why I stay," said Ernesto. He took me to a high rise apartment building and explained that it had been built by a group of friends from the student Christian movement. Many of them had experimented with communes and the like. Finally they decided on a co-op housing arrangement. Taking advantage of a low interest government loan for co-op housing they built their own apartment building. He explained how it combined both private space for the families and common space for the community. The residents had their own school and met weekly for a eucharistic meal and community meeting. That was his support base. Even though one of their members had been arrested by the security police two weeks before, none had fled the country. Together they formed a support base. Because their group included lawyers, labor leaders and others in public positions, the government was reluctant to take them on as a whole. Together they had security and strength.

A Middle Way?

When I was in graduate school in the field of social ethics, there was much talk about "middle principles" as a way of bridging the gap between theory and practice. In retrospect I see such efforts at the level of formulation. In this book I have explored deeper levels from which to understand and reconstruct the connections between personal faith and public life. It is true that bridges are needed at the level of the basic formation of the self and human community. There is no logical or neat formula to achieve these connections because they are organic and as already noted, unmanageable. Nor can the connection be made by individuals. We have proposed in this chapter that the connection is through communities or "middle ways" as Emmanuer Mounier suggests: "Not collectivities but communities or free associations of persons choosing to ratify their destinies as social beings"[60] The church understood at its primary level of household communities or new forms of "extended family" offers just such a bridge between personal faith and public life.

> It is clear in the world of Biblical faith, the family is the primary unit which shapes and defines reality. The individual person belongs to and lives out of the family. It is the family that provides deep secure roots into the past, bold visions for the future, a sense of purpose and a set of priorities for the present. Of course, the family in that context is not the nuclear family, for that is unknown and unthinkable in the ancient world. Rather "family" consists in the network of inter-relations of the extended family that should be thought of as clan or tribe. Family in this sense claims primary loyalty from its members and resists two alternative understanding's of human personhood. On the one hand, the family resists the encroachment of the city or the state, any objectively, rationally organized power which wants to erode tradition or peculiarity. . . . On the other hand, the family is a major resistance against an inordinate individualism which seek to "emancipate" persons to make private decisions and choose private destinies.[61]

Now that I have stated the case for the regeneration of public life in the soil and the critical need to rebuild community from the base and the need for supporting institutions (secondary systems) to encourage and nurture the base, we are now ready to explore how congregations can rediscover their strategic function between the primary soil of community and the larger society.

[1]The twentieth Century might well be characterized as the century of mass movements. I think that a case can be made for these movements being fueled by the ideas that emerged in the previous century: organized labor, multi-national corporations, citizen groups, protest movements, boycotts, etc. Each in its own way forged ideologies out of ideas from the preceding century. Each in its own way sought to "mass" power in various ways to achieve its objective. War on a massive scale has been the most dramatic and disruptive achievement of the Twentieth Century that spent most of its energy preparing or recovering from or trying to prevent global conflict.

[2]Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 55.

[3]Cf. Reynolds and Norman (eds). *Community in America* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, l988), p. 48. Citing Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, they state:

> Individual disassociation invites the tyranny of mass opinion and centralized political authority. The lure of private acquisitiveness spawns political apathy and invites democratic despotism. All social webs that once held persons intact having disintegrated, the individual finds himself isolated and impotent, exposed and unprotected. Into this power vacuum moves "the organizing force of the government," the centralized state.

[4]Jürgen Habermas calls this separation "decoupling" and describes it in *The Theory of Communicative Action,* Vol. 1, p. xxxii:

> consumerism and possessive individualism, motives of performance and competition gain the force to shape conduct. The communicative practice of everyday life is one-sidedly rationalized into a specialist-utilitarian lifestyle; and this media-induced shift to purposive-rational action orientations calls forth the reaction of a hedonism freed from the pressures of rationality. As the private sphere is undermined and eroded by the economic systems, so it the public sphere by the administrative system. The bureaucratic disempowering and desiccation of spontaneous processes of opinion-and-will formation expands the scope for mobilizing mass loyalty and makes it easier to decouple political decisions from concrete, identity-forming contexts of life.

[5]Scott Burns, *The Household Economy*, pp. 61-62.

[6]Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, consider the major threats to the security of the United States to be (1) the erosion of the soil, (2) the decline of national morale, and (3) economic decline. (p. 333) and (4) lack of moral commitment (p. 337).

[7]Cf. Santa Ana, Raiser, Duchrow, *The Political Economy of the Holy Spirit*, p. 60:

> Pneumatic praxis reverses the logic of the market which assumes that following one's own self-interest is the most effective way of contributing to the well being of all. Following the logic of the Spirit the affirmation should be: sharing life increases life for all. . . . .The pneumatic praxis is indeed guided by an alternative value system that stands in contradiction to the operative values of our age. This is more than experimenting with new styles of living: what is at stake is a re-orientation of the framework of the criteria with the aid of which people and communities set priorities, define problems and plan their actions.

[8]Gregory Baum, *Theology and Society*, p. 52. An even stronger statement can be found in Karl Polanyi's, The Great Transformation (Boston: Beacon, 1957):

> To separate labor from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one (p. 163). . . . . [which] could not exist for any length of time with annihilating the human and natural substance of society (p. 3) . . . . The economic advantages of a free labor market could not make up for the social destruction wrought by it (p. 77).

[9]Cf. Kirkpatrick Sale, *Human Scale*; Scott Burns, *Household Economy*; Johann Baptist Metz, *The Emergent Church*; Torres and Eagleston, *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities*; Tom Sine, *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy*; Harry Boyte, *Community is Possible.*

[10]cf. Jer. 29:4-7

[11]Cf. Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion,* pp. 44 f.

[12]Rosemary Houghton, "There is Hope for a Tree", p. 24.

[13]Walter Brueggeman, *The Land,* p. 125.

[14]This point is made by Arthur Simon, director of Bread for the World, in *Christian Faith & Public Policy*, p. 37.

[15]The numbers required to suggest an epidemic may in actuality be very small. Arthur Simon shared that a congressional aid reported that a "ton of mail" had been received on an issue that had influenced a congressman's vote in committee, but upon investigation the "ton" turned out to be only twenty letters! Cf. *Ibid,* p. 110. In a hearing in Washington D.C. I once heard a similar appraisal from a vice president of one of the TV networks that spoke of an "avalanche" of mail after a summer TV series on racism that was seen by 22,000,000 Americans. When asked what he meant by avalanche the answer was 200 letters!

[16]Lewis Thomas describes how humans themselves feel under siege by microbes. Cf. *The Lives of a Cell*, New York: Bantam, l975, p. 88:

> Watching television, you'd think we lived at bay, in total jeopardy, surrounded on all sides by human-seeking

forms, shielded against infection and death only be a chemical technology that enables us to keep killing them off. . . . .we wrap the already plastic tumblers of hotels in more plastic, and seal the toilet seats like state secrets after irradiating them with ultraviolet light. We live in a world where the microbes are always trying to get at us, to tear us cell from cell, and we only stay alive through diligence and fear.

[17]I first introduced the concept in the form of the "Second Settlement" in the late l960's when working with community action programs. Cf. Loren Halvorson, *Grace at Point Zero*, pp. 69 ff and *Peace on Earth Handbook,* pp. 96 ff.

[18]According to Francis Bacon nature was to be "hounded in her wanderings. . . . bound into service . . . put in constraint . . . made a slave" and her secrets "tortured" from her. Cf. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, New York: Harper & Row, 169.

[19]Vincent Harding reminds us of the past and present" community" which any truly new settlement must include. In "Toward a Darkly Radiant Vision", *Community in America*, p. 82 he writes:

> White Americans, whatever their class (or profession), are not alone, cannot be alone, cannot survive or overcome alone (cannot be trusted alone?). The word from Chief Seattle announces that you are surrounded, undergirded, covered, and pierced through by the hands and hearts of all those ancestors of every kind who also love this land and who have experienced "a change of worlds". You are surrounded by life, my friends, and you are challenged by the children of these life-givers, children who know invite you out of your racial individualism into the darkly radiant, expanding community of all those Americans who are changing, recreating this world, your world, our world, for the common good.

[20]William Everett calls the American experience a "partial covenant" in his *God's Federal Republic,* p. 114.

> The land that had formally bound God and the people together in sustenance and sacrifice was no longer a party to the covenant but a space in which to exercise individual dominion. While many people oscillated between indifferent exploitation and romantic wonder, there was little place in law to secure the land from exclusive control by individuals and later giant corporations parading as persons before the law. It is only recently, as American History has faltered in its achievements and its hopes that the land has re-emerged as a party with rights in a fuller covenant of life.

[21]I am indebted to Dean Freudenberger for this rich imagery. Freudenberger speaks of preserving virgin environments because they contain wisdom we need. They are our new laboratories not of specimens taken out of their environment and killed or made to suffer in a "hostile" environment but kept in their habitat for it is only there that they can reveal their wisdom. Scientists have known for a long time that their very investigation introduces elements that spoil the original environment. I cannot help but draw parallels with educational processes that do something very similar.

[22]I have always preferred the Philips' translation of Romans 8:22-25 where the word, "wait", is given a sharper eschatological thrust by being translated as "tiptoe expectancy".

[23]The importance of commitment to place is stated by Alan Gussow in "A Sense of Place" cited in Devall and Sessions, Deep Ecology, p. 111:

> There is a great deal of talk these days about saving the environment. We must, for the environment sustains our bodies. But as humans we also require support for our spirits, and this is what certain kinds of places provide. The catalyst that converts any physical location - any environment if you will - into a place, is the process of experiencing deeply. A place is a piece of the whole environment that has been claimed by feelings. Viewed simply as a life support system, the earth is an environment. Viewed as a resource that sustains our humanity, the earth is a collection of places. We never speak, for example, of an environment we have known; it is always places we have known - and recall. We are homesick for places, we are reminded of places, it is the sounds and smells and sights of places which haunts us and against which we often measure our present.

[24]Cf. Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind*, New York: Random House, l973 and "The New American Land Rush", *Time Magazine,* October 1, l973, pp. 80-99.

[25]Walter Brueggeman, *The Land,* Philadelphia: Fortress, l977, p. 4. Today the pursuit of a professional career follows the course of using communities as stepping-stones for career advancements. We even applaud those who "make it" when they leave to go elsewhere (higher!) because the award is to advance people by removing them from their base. The gifts of commitment to people and place and process ought to be the *sine qua non* for those entering the professions. If so the educational system needs to make accommodations to those who do not want to break up their families or local community ties at the price of getting the degree. They need instead the encouragement that these qualities are indispensable and should not be dispensed with. There are options in the Open University, the Extended Class Room, extension education, apprenticeship, etc. especially in this electronic age where any class room is accessible to any community and household.

[26]Cf. Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*, p 53.

> The gift of the land provides secured people with dangerous alternatives. One alternative is to keep the gift

as gift, to maintain the dialectic with land/with Yahweh, knowing one is gifted by land/addressed by Yahweh. This alternative is to maintain the rich vitality of the covenant. . . . . .(Or the other alternative) to enter life apart from covenant, to reduce covenant place with all its demands and possibilities to serene space apart from history, without contingency, without demand, without mystery.

[27]A number of covenants are being adopted by communities of concern today. At the wedding service of our daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Dan, they made vows to each other and then turned to their families and friends and made this commitment using the words of the Shakertown Pledge (slightly edited):

> Recognizing that the earth and the fullness thereof is a gift from our gracious God, and that we are called to cherish, nurture, and provide loving stewardship for the earth resources,
>
> And recognizing that life itself is a gift, and a call to responsibility, joy, and celebration,
> We make the following declarations:
>
> 1. We declare ourselves to be world citizens.
> 2. We commit ourselves to lead an ecologically sound life.
> 3. We commit ourselves to lead a life of creative simplicity and to share our personal wealth with the world's poor.
> 4. We commit ourselves to join with others in reshaping institutions in order to bring about a more just global society in which each person has full access to the needed resources for their physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth.
> 5. We commit ourselves to occupational accountability, and in so doing we will seek to avoid the creation of products which cause harm to others.
> 6. We affirm the gift of our bodies, an commit ourselves to proper nourishment and physical well-being.
> 7. We commit ourselves to examine continually our relations with others, and to attempt to relate honestly, morally, and lovingly to those around us.
> 8. We commit ourselves to personal renewal through prayer, meditation, and study.
> 9. We commit ourselves to responsible participation in a community of faith.

Jean Bethke Elshtain espouses what she calls "social compact". As cited in Charles H. Reynolds and Ralph V. Norman (eds.) *Community in America*, p. 88:

> A compact is no contingent agreement but a solemn commitment to create something "new" out of disparate elements - a family, a community, a polity - whose individual members do not remain "as before" once they become part of this social mode of existence.

Another type of covenant stated here in terms of "Basic Principles" comes from the ecology movement and is cited in Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*:

> L. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
> 2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
> 3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy *vital* needs.
> 4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
> 5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
> 6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
> 7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
> 8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

[28]Theologians have only recently regarded the care of the earth as a serious theme of theological reflection. Cf. Catharine Halkes, *And All Shall Be Recreated*, p. 80:

> In this theology all emphasis is put on the confession of faith *that* God created the world but not on *how*. The phrase in Genesis "subdue the earth" belongs to this "how" in the creation story; and it is therefore not

surprising that this passage has received little attention from theology. Put more strongly, Liedke assures us that in l972, when he first began his study of the *dominium terrae* there was not one single monograph to be found in any area of theology whatsoever relating to this topic. He discovered that this term was even absent from the registers of the theological dictionaries!

[29]Cf. George Sessions, "Shallow and Deep Ecology: A Review of the Philosophical Literature", in B. Schultz and D. Hughes, eds. *Ecological Consciousness*, Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1981.

[30]Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, pp. 411-412.

[31]This echoes Sittler's famous address to the World Council of Churches meeting in India in l960. Cf. Joseph Sittler, "Called To unity", *Ecumenical Review*, #14 Jan. 1962.

[32]Two leaders of "deep ecology, are Arne Naess and George Sessions. They offer the following list of the principles of the movement:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and inhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy *vital* needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating *life quality* (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

Bill Devall and George Session, *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered,* Salt Lake City, Utah: Gibbs M. Smith, l985, p. 70.

[33]Quoted in Roderick Nash, *The Rights of Nature*, pp. 97-98.

[34]Mansell Pattison, "Pastoral Care and Primary Prevention", (unpublished manuscript). Pattison draws on the work of anthropologist Anthony Wallace on the upper limits of viable community, and on the work of Dutch anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain on the optimum number for human interaction. Pattison argues that an intimate group is most healthy when its number is eight. Villages reach their optimum size at 1,500. Within that are more intimate ranges of community: eight for the core community, twenty-five for the next range; etc.

[35]Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 269.

[36]Cf. Judge, E. A., *The Social Pattern of the Christian Group in the First Century*; Eduard Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament*; for the Old Testament background cf Walter Brueggemann, "The Covenanted Family: A Zone for Humanness," Journal *of Current Social Issues,* Winter l977.

[37]Cf. Elizabeth Janeway, *The Power of the Powerless*

[38]Arthur Koestler argues that in the biological world there are subsystems that are both part and whole. He calls these subsystems "holons" and claims that each holon has two apparently contradictory processes: one is integrative while the other is self-asserting. The larger system is healthy when each holon has the "space" for its individual activity yet is responsive to the needs of the whole. Such larger systems are flexible and able to cope with change. Cf. Arthur Koestler, *Janus* (London: Hutchinson). The claim of the whole within the part has focused in sacramental theology on the issue of the capacity of the finite to contain the infinite.

[39]These two spheres were identified by the l9th Century sociologist Tönnies as *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft.*

[40]Life in the soil can be compared to living in the land of Promise, a land of graciousness. This point is made by Walter Brueggemann in *The Land,* p. 51:

> The land shall be secure and life giving. It is land where security does not need to be manufactured, where well being need not come by conjuring and calculation. Here security and well being are not from the grudging task-master, but from the benevolent manna come from heaven, from outside the history of coercion and demand.

[41]*Ibid*, pp. 34-35. Brueggemann argues that the Torah is given for land management and for honoring the covenant with Jahweh when occupying the land. p. 60.

[42]Leonardo Boff describes his visits to base ecclesial communities in the jungles of Brazil as a "soil" (and soul) regeneration process. He writes in his journal of those travels, *Theologie hört aufs Volk*:

> In the jungle one can take two perspectives: either one feels threatened, assaulted, frightened by the unknown in the primal forest like the smallest animal lost in an unending aloneness. Or one can experience bonding realizing that one is integrated into a larger reality, embraced by the secret of life, a brother of other living forms, an element of Mother Nature. Why should one be afraid? I felt myself as never before an ancestor of the holy Francis, the universal brother of all creation. In the end we are much more natural than cultural beings. In us a past is present that is revealed in the archeology of our present. Therefore, one can experience nature as house, home and temple. (85) [Translation mine].

[43]John Taylor, *The Go-Between God*, p. 128.

[44]Luther's suggestion that we die daily and return daily to our baptismal covenant is one of the many formulations of this understanding in church history.

[45]Cf. Santa Ana, Raiser, Duchrow, *The Political Economy of the Holy Spirit*, p. 60.

[46]Capra, *The Turning Point*, pp. 272-273.

[47]Gregory Baum, *The Priority of Labor*, p. 55.

[48]One of the most humane and creative national conventions that I have witnessed was one in which a group of actors were hired to be on call to provide comic relief during the tense moments of debate. They were like skilled "court jesters". They followed the platform debate closely and were ready to do improv theater when signaled by the chair. The convention was dealing with explosive issues that threatened to split the organization. But timely humor (or the prophetic word) turned possible insurrection into insight.

[49]During a visit to base ecclesial communities in the jungles of Brazil Leonardo Boff wrote in his journal that animals have more value than people. The steers are branded but many people don't even have a birth certificate. Therefore people can be killed with little attention paid by the authorities for whom they do not exist. They are not registered. *Theologie hort aufs Volk*, pp 90-91.

[50]Fritjof Capra in *The Turning Point* makes the following point:

> Machines are constructed, whereas organisms grow. This fundamental difference means that the understanding of organisms must be process-oriented. For example, it is impossible to convey an accurate picture of a cell by means of static drawings or be describing the cell in terms of static forms. Cells, like all living systems, have to be understood in terms of processes reflecting the system's dynamic organization. Whereas the activities of a machine are determined by its structure, the relation is reversed in organisms - organic structure is determined by process. (268)

[51]Cf. Riane Eisler and David Loye, *The Partnership Way: New Tools for Living and Learning, Healing Our families, Our Communities, and Our World* (San Francisco: Harper, l990) and Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and The Blade* (San Francisco: Harper, l987). Eisler calls the way of partnership between men and women, *gylanic.* She concludes her book (p. 203) with these words:

> For above all this gylanic world will be a world where the minds of children - both girls and boys - will no longer be fettered. It will be a world where limitation and fear will no longer be systematically taught us through myths about how inevitably evil and perverse we humans are. In this world, children, will not be taught epics about men who are honored for being violent or fairy tales about children who are lost in frightful woods where women are malevolent witches. They will be taught new myths, epics, and stories in which human beings are good; men are peaceful; and the power of creativity and love - symbolized by the sacred Chalice, the holy vessel of life - is the governing principle. For in this gylanic world, our drive for justice, equality, and freedom, our thirst for knowledge and spiritual illumination, and our yearning for love and beauty will at last be freed. And after the bloody detour of androcratic history, both women and men will at last find out what being human can mean.

[52]Sarah Evans, *Born For Liberty*, p. 67.

[53]Cf Granger Westberg (Ed.) *Theological Roots of Wholistic Health Care*, Hinsdale, Il., Wholistic Health Center, l979.

[54]E.W. Mueller introduced me to the notion of a "symbiotic" city build on the ecological character of its environment. He applied this concept to his work in the Center for Community and Area Development in Sioux Falls, S.D. Mueller believed, for example that the land settlement pattern for North America should have been along a North/South axis following the natural flow of the rivers rather than the [synthetic?] East/West pattern created by the railroads. In my reading of Emile Durkheim (religious symbolism and cognitive symbolism) and Jürgen Habermas (lifeworld and system) I find concerns for surrounding the idealisms of the individual with a larger more objective framework. Habermas' "lifeworld" is similar to what I mean by "primary". He sees the lifeworld as a boundary-maintained system. The care of the earth, I believe, teaches us the organic restraints and patterns that can help us rethink and rework our approach to social development on both a large and small scale. In theological terms this could mean a renewed focus on the First Article of the Creed as the common ground for faith communities and

public communities in our age.

[55]Emile Drukheim, *The Division of Labor*, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1947, p. 28.

[56]Emile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, l958, p. 63. A similar point is made by Jürgen Habermas in *A Theory of Communicative Action*, Boston: Beacon Press, l984, Vol. 1 p. xxxv, where he states the issue in these terms:

> It is not primarily a question of compensations that the social-welfare state can provide, but of protecting and restoring endangered ways of life or of establishing reformed ways of life. In short, the new conflicts do not flare up around problems of distribution but around questions concerning *the grammar of forms of life*.

[57]Rudolf Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, a study of canon law and its formation from the early church to the twentieth century. Sohm traces the movement from charismatic authority to legal bureaucratic systems. Cf. Max Weber, *The Spirit of Protestantism and the Rise of Capitalism*. Weber takes Sohm's thesis and develops it further into the idea of routinization of charisma.

[58]Numbers 13:25-14:10. Despite the pleas of Caleb the people chose not to listen to the minority report of the spies sent into Canaan . As a result that generation did not experience the Promised Land.

[59]Charles Elliot, *Inflation and the Compromised Church*, Belfast: Christian Journals, 1975, p. 145.

[60]Quoted by Dennis Goulet in *Moral Theology*, Vol. V, Mahwah, N. J.: Paulist Press, l986, p. 341.

[61] Walter Brueggemann, "The Covenanted Family: A Zone for Humanness," *Journal of Current Social Issues,* Winter, 1977, p. 18.