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The Vanguard

Lutheran Human Relations Association of
America

1990

The Vanguard (Vol. 36 [37], No. 6 [1]), Nov-Dec [Jan-Feb] 1990

Lutheran Human Relations Association of America

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The Urban Stake in Rural Issues

by Merle W. Boos
ELCA Director for
Rural Ministries

*Woe to those who devise wickedness
and work evil upon their beds! When
the morning day, the perform it, be-
cause it is the power of their hand.*

*They covet fields and seize them;
and houses and take them away;
they oppress a man and his house, a
man and his inheritance*

Micah 2: 1-2

During the mid-1980s, the Rural Crisis Issue Team of the National Council of churches worked with several Inner-City Church Groups on the loss of land experienced by farmers, especially black farmers, and the changing food system and Rural-Urban Connection Conferences across the country. It was evident by the attendance at those events that urban dwellers were not too concerned that farmers were being forced from the land but some participants registered concern over the quality and price of food stuffs.

When we assess what is happening in rural America and what our food system is like today, we realize it is

a striking departure from a biblical vision of justice and stewardship. All people—rural and urban—should join together to alter the way things are going and work together on the vision for sustainable land, communities and ministries.

The U.S. Office of Technology Assessment Report on "The Structure of U.S. Agriculture," in 1986 predicted that 75 percent of our agriculture production would come by the year 2000 from 50,000 large farms, which divided equally, would be an average of 1000 super farm per state. Loretta Picciano-Hanson, Staff Associate for Food and Agricultural Policy with Interfaith Action for Economic Justice, Washington, D.C. contends that "...exactly how many of what kinds of farms we will have at the end of the next decade is perhaps less important than the fact the directions predicted in 1986 are holding true."

Since 1920, the peak year for the number of farms in the U.S., almost 94 percent of all Black owned farms have been lost.

There were 926,000 black-operated farms in 1920, when one-seventh of all farms were owned by Blacks.

see Boos on page 2



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MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Thinking Back in the Black Community for Justice

by Barbara Major

We mentioned education as one of the preliminaries for changing what's happening. We have to get in the black community and make us think back. And we don't have to go that far back. I know I don't in terms of the number of generations in my family that have left the land in Louisiana. In dealing with the generations after me in terms of what the land means, I think that there is a hint of what the land means, I think that there is a hint of that awareness, for instance, at family reunions. I know it's gotten to be really big in the South and what that means in coming back to our roots.

When I was thinking back and understanding a little more of what institutionalized racism is and how it impacts us in this country, I clearly understand that it is by design that our land is being lost as such a phenomenal rate. It is by design because it is not only the strength that our black farmers have in our community, but it is in so many instances the only stable thing left in the black community in America, not just in the black rural South.

And I think of culturally what that means to my community, then I have to think of historically those of us who have moved to the city and sometimes our values have changed.

Some folk would say I'm very much into my Afro-American culture. The earth is very much a part of that culture and I've been called back to take my responsibility in terms of stewardship of that earth and what that means to my community.

Racism is a special problem in America. We honestly have to begin to confront each other on what it really means; how we as Afro-Americans

have internalized that oppression and even participated in it; how those as Euro-Americans benefit from it either unknowingly or willingly. I call back into question the responsibility of the church. Do we leave these issues to the responsibility of the church that, in a lot of instances, is the oppressor in charge?

There are a lot of unanswered questions. Yet sometimes we have to move not having the answer and maybe we move wrong but it's important we move because it is just as wrong to sit. We learn by making mistakes.

Just like the crisis of our land loss will not go away, racism will be around as long as I, and even my son are on this earth. It will take more than federal regulations to get rid of racism. There've always been laws to guard against racism, but are we as a people willing to press and make sure the laws are enacted or are they put there to sort of satisfy us?

As I see it, we as individuals have some serious cleaning up to do in our own community. Many of us become the gatekeepers because we get put in charge of some of these agencies. So we have to deal with ourselves. Do you understand? We have to open up the process. There are some folk you can touch that I can't reach and there's some I can touch that you can't reach. Everybody has a part to play! You'll learn what that part is. Some of us may already know. But in the process, you'll learn from those who have a history of working in this area. The stewardship is your responsibility.

We have to make the black land loss a priority on the urban agenda. I live in New Orleans and work with many

folk in public housing who know nothing about the black land loss issue. How do we creatively bring that message back to the community? At this point, nobody's really bringing that information in terms of "How can I help?" One response is a black farm peace tour in this country going into the cities and let our relatives know what's happening to us. We have to deal with the federal government, but we also understand the dilemma we face with the local governments in charge. There's not one but a thousand things that have to be done. There are thousands of us who are willing help. Those of us who know what to do can help the others learn what to do. It will take a lot of patience and time. But right now all they're giving us is time. We sure don't have much else.

I think the leadership of the movement will come out of the rural South. But we're going to have to wake up our sisters and brothers in the cities. I'll tell you why, the leaders really open their eyes when they get some restless folk in their cities. And we mush touch hands some way because we're disconnected from each other.

I have relatives that live in the country and I go out there and eat plenty of fresh greens and peas. But never once have I dealt with the fact that my family may be losing their land. What can be done with that land? And it doesn't really come up in conversation a whole lot, but I know that there are ways I can bring it up. My aunt's little garden club is active in politics and that's just one place I can bring it up in a creative way. We all have a lot to offer. Find out a place where you can help.

Before we address the land loss cri-

sis, the drug problem or any other special problem in the black community, we got to be honest enough with each other and deal with the question of racism. One of the problems is segregation. We are very much black farmers in the South and white farmers in the Midwest. In some way we're connected but white farmers in the South haven't really heard that yet. And the reality is it's going to be a long time before they do hear that. I know because I'm from Louisiana and they don't listen to me and it's not because what I'm saying is wrong. It's very difficult for white folk to listen to black folk in Louisiana and I doubt it's any different in Georgia, Alabama or Mississippi.

We have to move with what we have. And hopefully, one day, they'll wake up. But the reality is I, that is the collective "I", can't wait for them to wake up. We work with who we have and we move. And people do get on board a moving train!

Reprinted with permission from the booklet *Slipping Away: the loss of Black owned farms*. Copyright 1987 Glenmary Research Center, 750 Piedmont Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA, 30308

60 WEEKS SINCE
LHRAA CALL FOR
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SOUTH AFRICA

Rural-Urban Justice

The Rural and Urban Connection

Women Build Better Bridges

2,8

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Agribusiness or Family Business

4-5

An American Crisis

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Rural life touches urban life touches rural

by L. Shannon Jung, Ph.D.
Director of Rural Ministry
Program Center for Theology
and Land

Wartburg Theological Seminary

It is a strange illusion but many U.S. citizens who believe that all the nations of the world are interdependent still seem to think that urban

has nothing to do with rural life. Cities that are globally interlinked to every center of the planet seem to their inhabitants to have a Teflon immunity to rural conditions.

This illusion is not only curious, it is also dangerous. Our Christian concern for refugees from Central America may assist us in ignoring the formerly-rural homeless now sleeping on the streets of all U.S. cities. The point is not that we should "take care of our own first," but that a concern for poverty and injustice cannot overlook rural Americans who have been characterized as a colony within their own country. Their ghettos may be more spacious than those of their inner-city neighbors, but a greater proportion of rural Americans now have poverty-level incomes than do inner-city residents. Most significantly, for the Christian there is no age, race, gender, place of residence, religious, ethnic, or physical ability distinction which justifies excluding any from the category of "neighbor."

The linkage between urban and rural residents affects both, and it affects us all. I can only touch on three or four of these linkages.

Rural people breathe the air polluted by urban production. Urban people drink the water from farm chemical runoff and ground water contamination. The environmental interconnection of city and countryside is perhaps most vivid, currently, in the search for landfills and nuclear waste disposal sites. Though rural residents produce their own wastes, they are no longer sanguine about being the toilet into which urban dwellers flush their disposable diapers, toxic waste, and plastic bags. Indeed, environmental justice will involve sustained and sustainable reform in both city and town.

Increasingly we eat the same food,

no matter where we live. The price, nutritional quality, and safety of the food supply are equally at risk for all who live in the United States. The increasing concentration of corporate control over such basic foods as wheat, beef, and poultry—especially in the processing phase—involves an instability in price and the temptation to ignore safety standards. (The increase in the price and decline in the quality of chicken is one current indication.) Growing practices and the use of heavy inputs of pesticides and fertilizers threaten nutritional value.

Urban hunger and joblessness, in addition to other strains on urban welfare systems, are the result partially of the continuing loss of farms in rural areas. As most small towns shrink and only a minority benefit from economic consolidation, the quality of life in those towns declines. Young people are taught to become urban because, realistically, that is where the opportunities are.

There are other issues of economic and racial justice. The impact of food and farm policy on rural people

tries.

Though I have focussed here on negative impacts, there are clearly other positive interconnections: environmental beauty, recreation, and talented people flow to the benefit of the city; medical and social services, and technological benefits flow to the countryside.

The Rural Ministry Program at Wartburg and the University of Dubuque theological seminaries is set up for the purpose of strengthening rural churches and their communities. The bulk of its efforts is directed towards the education of future rural pastors and the continuing education of those who are already at work in rural parishes.

membership rural churches, and a seminar in the theology of rural life. In addition we offer traditional courses and informal rural experiences.

“Urban hunger and joblessness are the result partially of the continuing loss of farms in rural areas.”

This March, 4-6, the Program will sponsor its ninth annual Rural

Ministry Conference for pastors and laypeople. Highlighted will be a major statement on rural church life by Bishop Herbert Chilstrom, as well as an assessment of the future of the rural community by Marty Strange, Director of the Center for Rural Affairs.

The conference will feature as well a summit on rural ministry, especially rural evangelism and creative pastoral staffing. Top denominational officials from Lutheran, Pres-

byterian, Methodist, United Church of Christ, and the Roman Catholic Church will hear testimony from rural laypeople and pastors concerning evangelism. They will report back on what they consider the most helpful suggestions and directions.

The Rural Ministry Program also attempts to be as directly involved in rural life as it can be. For example through the parish nurse program, community organizing, economic development and con-

sultations on emerging issues (the drought of '88 and rural poverty).

The program works in partnership with a wide variety of groups and individuals. If there are appropriate ways to work with your group or concerns please call us at 319/589-3117 or write to the Rural Ministry Program, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 333 Wartburg Place, Dubuque, Iowa 52001. *^^^*

Challenge to engage in dialogue

Boos from page 1

According to the 1978 census of Agriculture, only 57,271 farms were owned by Blacks and since that time, Black farmers are losing land at a rate two and one-half times that of White farmers. At this rate of loss there will be virtually no Black farmers in this country by the end of the year 2000.

Approximately two million people have left rural America the past five years. Whole sections of the nation are in a depression due to the collapse of the farm and natural resources sectors (mining, forestry, etc.). A good majority of those that out-migrated from rural area are now in our cities where the numbers of the homeless continue to rise.

Agricultural policy makers and agribusiness industry representatives are

quick to reassure those of us distressed with all farmers losing land and the changes taking place in the food processing system that we will still have the safest, cheapest and most efficiently produced food in the world. The Lutheran Church, along with other denominations, would challenge urban and rural congregations to engage in dialogue around that very subject.

The South Central Wisconsin Synod, ELCA, passed a resolution at its last Assembly that promotes Rural-Urban connections. Several urban congregations in Wisconsin are linked with rural churches and, thereby, becoming better informed about the economic, social, personal, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life and communities—rural and urban. *^^^*



Stephanie Hansen, age 5



vanguard

(ISSN) 0042-2568

Volume 36, Number 6, Nov/Dec

Copyright 1993 Lutheran Human Relations Association of America. Published Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug, Sep/Oct, Nov/Dec by LHRAA, 2703 N. Sherman Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53210, 414/871-7300.

Michael Cobbler, East Orange, NJ, president; Sharon Metz, director & editor; David Knox, associate editor.

LHRAA is an independent association supported by individuals and congregations from all Lutheran Church bodies.

Our mission is to challenge and enable Christians to carry out an active witness to Christ's life and love, and to overcome racism, sexism and other forms of injustice. Vanguard is sent to LHRAA members. Tax-deductible membership contribution: \$15.00 or more.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Vanguard, 2703 N. Sherman Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53210. Second-class postage paid in Milwaukee, WI.



Farm Women Must Lead Crisis Response

by Carol Hodne

Farm and rural women who are confronting today's farm crisis face many common problems and are beginning to organize to address them. Many of farm women's problems are structural, chronic problems shared by all raw material producers in a system which is built on extraction of cheap raw materials and cheap labor. Other problems of farm women are common to women in general, stemming from their traditional roles as caretakers and underpaid, "invisible" workers. As the farm crisis continues, all of these economic, social and psychological problems continue, placing farm women on the front lines of their families' and communities' battles for survival.

Many farm women feel their major economic problems stem from low farm prices. Women's unpaid or underpaid labor on the farm is a key part of the exploitation of family members in the family farm system when the federal government sets farm prices well below production costs.

Rural pink-collar ghetto

As the gap between production costs and farm prices received widens, increasing numbers of farmers are forced to seek employment off the farm. Sixty percent of all farm income now comes from off the farm jobs. Farm women generally encounter a job market full of dead-end, low-paying, unskilled jobs, e.g. nursing home aids, store clerks, fast food chain workers. Their reward for service in this rural "pink-collar ghetto" is an average of 44 cents to the dollar made by rural men.

Federal and state policy makers too often design and use public funds to support rural economic development programs which primarily serve industrial interests at the expense of larger community interests. Much rural development is short term and exploitive of people, natural and community resources.

Women's work is never (done) recognized

Despite the fact that farm women handle incredible work loads on their farms and are increasingly viewed as equal partners, Social Security and property laws perpetuate a second-class status in various ways. Not only are farm women robbed of just economic compensation for their work through low farm prices, but

also through Social Security policies which consider them dependents, depriving them of greater financial security in their later years and their dignity as their contributions are made invisible. Farm women are challenging various types of credit discrimination and patronizing and intimidating practices by loan officers.

The lack of recognition of farm women's economic contributions also manifests itself in local boards of cooperatives such as those of grain elevators and the Farm Credit System. Women are seldom treated as equal decision-makers regardless of their significant labor on the farm.

Economic Imperatives to be "Superwomen"

The economic imperative to take off the farm jobs means that many farm women have the equivalent of three jobs as wife-homemaker-childrearer; farmworker; and off the farm worker. They face problems shared by many "superwomen" who have job and family responsibilities. A study of Canadian farm women, who confront a farm depression very similar to the one in the U.S., revealed "estimates of the amount of time spent on child-rearing and homemaking, farm work, and off the farm work vary from 80 to 101 hours weekly...Fatigue from long hours of work strains family relationships. Women, if they are parents of young children and work off the farm, may carry an exceptionally heavy burden."

Isolated, privatized work

One of the primary barriers to recognizing and challenging economic exploitation is the increasing isolation suffered by farmers in general and farm women in particular. The historic isolation of the farm women has become even more extreme as they are forced to work increasingly long hours at labor which has become increasingly privatized. Nearly gone are the days of shared community work such as crop harvesting, food canning and freezing, and child rearing as neighbors have dwindled and large-scale, industrialized production has substituted large machinery for human labor, including that shared by neighbors.

In addition, shared work among farm women has declined as farm families have become reliant upon commodity purchases of basic staples once produced through family and

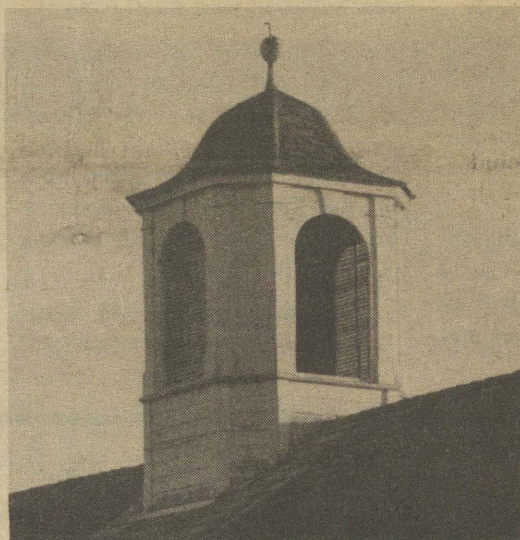
community endeavors.

This increased amount of privatized work has left less time and fewer opportunities for shared work and leisure time to socialize, making it difficult for farm women to talk about their everyday lives and problems, much less identify common sources of common problems. Compounding this are customs of keeping quiet about "personal" problems and seeking only individual solutions to problems.

Tapping our roots: creating new visions from traditional values

Farm women's role as caretakers, especially emotional caretakers, offers opportunities to make the connections between personal tragedies and the public policies creating them. As farm women identify and discuss their financial and emotional hardships, they take the first step to solving them.

The fundamental political importance of farm women sharing their personal pain was expressed by Anne Kanten, former Minnesota Assistant Ag Commissioner and grassroots activist, when addressing Wisconsin farm women activists in 1985, "Believe in yourself and have courage. That has to start at home. Women must become the catalysts around our own table. It has to be all right to talk about what hurts. Say it. Wherever you are, tell the story and let people know."



The crisis of culture and the impending destruction of traditional agrarian values is at once the source of farm women's deepest pain and the road to their potential freedom. This is the historic juncture for people of the land and their friends. Now is the time to choose family farms or corporate agribusiness. Farmers and their friends will either allow their values and dreams to be buried along with the "dead farmsteads" razed to the ground and plowed over by new owners or they will take the opportunity to forge their traditional values into a new vision of a just, equitable agriculture and economic system.

Robin Morgan writes in *The People Together*, "The political struggle for economic justice is a cultural struggle for restoring agrarian values and social justice. The struggles are inseparable—they stand or fall together."

Common ground shared by rural and urban women

Defining leadership styles which incorporate "feminine" leadership strengths, such as group decision making and emotional caretaking, is one of the areas where rural and urban women would benefit by sharing experiences and skills. In addition, feminist organizing principles of self-help, consciousness raising, and "the personal is political" could be powerful tools of farm women with the help of feminist activists who have tended to be urban-based.

The far-reaching impact of the farm crisis on issues of concern to urban women—falling tax revenues leading to human service cutbacks, unemployment, militarism, hunger, etc.—have begun to provide a fertile common ground for joint education and organizing among farm and urban women. They have begun working together on these issues through conferences, legal advocacy, protests, and rallies.

Yet this potential remains largely untapped. The importance of developing the potential for progressive, grassroots-based coalitions of rural and urban women cannot be overstated. Coalitions between farmers and others are strategically important, because the farm crisis derives from economic policies and structures whose effects are similar outside the farm sector. It is highly unlikely that the farm crisis can be

eliminated independently of attempts to resolve other major social and economic injustices.

Farmers and others working for justice must develop long-term strategies for building progressive grassroots coalitions, not just coalitions at the national or elite levels. Coalitions need to be grassroots-based in order to tap the fighting spirit of grassroots people, to build broad bases of support and to build grassroots leadership for the long haul. Women, Blacks and other minorities are still often locked out of state and national leadership levels of various organizations. Yet women dominate the grassroots foundations for progressive organizing on several constituencies. So building grassroots links among rural and urban women is essential in implementing successful long-term strategies to achieve peace and justice.

Reprinted with permission from the North American Farmer, January 1989. Copyright North American Farm Alliance Educational Project, Box 176, Ames, Iowa, 50010.

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The 1990 Food Security Act, Farm Bill, is coming up for debate in the next session of Congress. It is expected that the bill will reach the floor sometime this summer. Representative Timothy Penny (D-1st District MN) expects there to be no dramatic changes from the 1985 Farm Bill.

The issues surrounding the Farm Bill are complex and

confusing. Considering, however, that over 400,000 farm families have left the land since 1985, we need to make an effort to understand the 1990 Farm Bill. Join the LHRRA WorldWatch team and keep close tabs on the latest news from Washington.

Details on page 8.

Action
Alert

The Church and the

by Rev. David L.

The Urbanization of Agriculture

The shaping and control of American agriculture—especially in the post World War II period—has increasingly been in the hands of those who do not work the soil. Today, questions about “who will farm” find their answers not among the people and communities of the countryside, but among the people of the cities and suburbs. Today, decisions made in urban financial and political power centers have as much impact on the vitality of agriculture as the weather itself. Control of capital, of domestic and international markets, of agricultural support and supply industries lies there, and people who never set foot on the land make decisions daily that determine the future of those farm families that constitute the backbone of our food production system.

During the rural crisis of the '80s, there has also been ample evidence that public policy decisions about or affecting American agriculture are being made not on the basis of benefits and costs to farm and rural people, or to agriculture itself. Rather, these decisions seem to occur as a result of political and economic factors that either do not take into account their impact on the farm and rural economy, or that may be directly geared toward a continuing shakeout of commercial family farm units. For example, as McKinsey also indicates in his discussion on the economics and politics of agriculture, by maintaining a low tax structure and introducing high interest rates, the burden for controlling inflation was placed on those who borrow and typically are involved in long pay-off periods, “Farmers,” he states, “constitute one of the largest and most vulnerable groups in that category.”

The inevitable consequences of such unbridled, myopic decision-making will be staggering for all rural America:

The bigger is better mentality will prevail, in spite of a vast body of research documenting those points at which economies of scale are

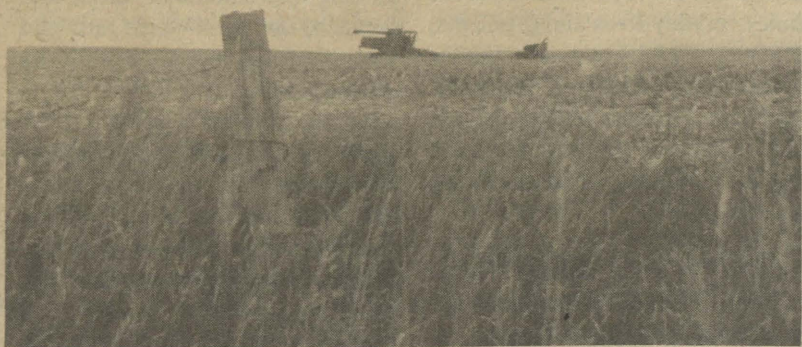
exploited, owned, obtained and accumulated for the primary benefit of the self, of individuals, and not for the benefit of the broader community. If residual benefits accrue to others as a result of the use of land, all the better. But it is the principle of individual ownership of land that has dictated public policy and personal decisions about the use and dispersal of land.

The social benefits and consequences of such policies and decisions have taken, at best, second position, unless they have to do with the maintenance of the nation's cheap food policy, or the enrichment of large farm operators or corporate interests.

For the most part, the lingering “wholesome” values associated with life on the farm and in rural America have helped this society cover up the destructive, operative values in the countryside. For example, we glorify the family, its hard work and good life on the farm while we ignore or support the very policies that have been destroying that life for years. We see and believe television commercials depicting the “simple beauty” of family farming, presented by multi-national corporations intent on economic dominance of agriculture and elimination of family farm agriculture. We are concerned about what we hear and see happening to family farmers in the 1980s, but we really don't want their income to go up if it means the price we pay for food will go up. We speak of farming as “a way of life,” while industrial agriculture makes it a straight-out “business.” We want to keep untarnished our pastoral images of rural America, while the

unleashed mentality of “efficiency,” and “good management” pushes farmers toward all-out production and maximization of profit at the expense of families and the land. Get bigger, get better, or get out!!

The present farm and rural crisis is rooted not only in decades of agricultural policy oriented toward ever-larger farm operations, but also in a lethal combination of low commodity prices, high interest rates, declining land values, and ever-mounting debt loads that has rolled across the American countryside since the late 70s. Add to that combination tax policies that are structurally geared toward benefiting large operators and non-farm investors, and government programs that skew the most help to those farms that need it least, and on begins to understand the daily reality of American family farm life: farmers have little or no control over their lives and little or no say over their own livelihood. Moreover, when issues of race and racism are added to this mix, it becomes clear why minority farmers—and especially Black farm operators—face the very real possibility of total elimination by the turn of the century.



The Present Crisis

Our present period of crisis is unparalleled since the days of the Great Depression. An economic crisis in agriculture—one result of decades of public policy aimed at displacing people from the land—hastens the demise of our family-owned and operated farms. Ownership and control of our rich land base is being consolidated at an alarming rate, and the loss of farms and people from the countryside is causing serious economic problems in our rural communities. Our cities are experiencing high unemployment rates among workers associated with agriculture-related industries. The economy of our states and of the nation itself is deteriorating because the foundation of that economy—agriculture—is suffering extraordinary losses.

From “Rural Crisis: A Call for Justice and Action,” Message adopted by the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., May 17, 1984.

The last two decades of the twentieth century may mark the virtual completion of a process begun by Europeans upon their arrival and settlement in North America: the continuous displacement of people from the land and the concentration of control over the land by an ever diminishing number of

owners and interests often unrelated to its actual operation. From the uprooting of Native Americans to forced living on reservations; to the massive displacement of Blacks from the South to northern cities in the century following the Civil War; to the contemporary farm crisis resulting in the liquidation of thousands of white farmers in the Midwest and Plains, land distribution and control in this “bastion” of Jeffersonian democracy has been rooted not in the most fundamental religious values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but in the fundamental tenets of unbridled free market economics and raw political power. These economic and political tenets were and still are often justified by “religious values” as manufactured or interpreted by those with one foot in the Christian community, and the other displacing people who stand in the way of “progress” and the fulfillment of “Manifest Destiny.”

From the time the Early Europeans began settling North America, there existed a conflicting and often ambiguous view of the continent as a lush and glorious garden where God's will would be carried out by the “chosen people,” and as a threatening wilderness that had to be cleared and conquered to assure the survival and prosperity of those so “chosen.” As early as the 1670s, worldly ways and the accumulation of land and wealth had firmed its grip on pietistic New England, and the fears of the founders themselves—that to land-hungry Englishmen the prospect of vast tracts of land to be had for the clearing might eclipse all other visions—were being affirmed. In 1676, Increase Mather could write, “Land! Land! hath been the Idol of many in New England,” and that whereas the first settlers were satisfied with small plots,

how many Men since coveted after the earth, that many hundred, nay thousands of Acres, have been engrossed by one man, and they that profess themselves Christians, have forsaken Churches, and Ordinances, and all for land and elbow-room enough in the World.

In the ensuing decades and centu-

“It is highly unlikely that the farm crisis can be eliminated independently of attempts to resolve other major social and economic injustices.”

ries, Mather's warning went unheeded. By the middle of the 19th century, religion and technology had formed something of an unholy alliance. As greater value was placed on practical science and technique, the need to use God to account for the forces of history and of the natural environment diminished. In fact, God no longer accounted for the society and its progress; the society and its progress accounted for God, and was identified with God's plan, which included the conquering of the land through westward expansion, settlement, industrialization, and control.

By the 1880s, Increase Mather's concern about the coveting and control of land, with God increasingly out of the picture, would be even more serious.

To this day, Americans have, for the most part, looked upon land as simply another commodity to be used,

Covenant of the Land

Ostendorf

reached. Those who wish to make a full-time living off the land will be compelled to expand in order to survive.

Conservation of the land and water resources will be secondary to cash flow, and economic pressures will build to produce more on both prime and marginal farm lands, regardless of the resource impacts.

Reflecting the rise in the number of large and small farms, and the decrease in the number of middle-size farms of 50-500 acres, the action will move rapidly toward a two-tier structure of agriculture. Larger and more highly-capitalized farms will produce more of our food supply, while commercial family farms of medium size will be eradicated or forced to rely heavily on off-farm income to survive.

There will be increased separation of ownership and operation (labor), and tenant farming and sharecropping will increase. Opportunities for new and beginning farmers will be limited, especially if they wish to own the land they farm.

"Gentrification" of the countryside—as of the cities—will increase as those able to buy land for "country living" or second homes will do so—especially as the value of land declines in the current economic crisis.

Control of agriculture and of rural America will shift dramatically to financial institutions, investors, speculators, industrialists, and politically powerful blocs. Farm and land management decisions will be made and handed down from afar.

It seems that we are already far down the road to becoming this kind of nation. Many of us who are but one or two generations removed from the land ourselves have lost our roots in the land and among its people. Values and convictions rooted in past generations that lived from the land seem to have no place in contemporary urban and suburban society. Even the term "family farm" is

scoffed at and derided; it is now a business, and in order to survive and be successful, one had better learn the new language ("agribusiness") and live by the new rules. If one loses the farm, one should not expect much support from the rest of society. For as McKinsey states so well,

One function performed by the family farm structure in U.S. agriculture is the disguise the exploitation of labor in a socially acceptable way. Labor unions protect some level of compensation to laborers while they work. Some social responsibility is forced on both large companies and government at the time of large plant closings. But low or no compensation to labor on family farms, and the closure of the business are accepted, socially, if not socially accepted.

Combine that "social acceptance" of family farm losses with a prevailing societal notion that "rural" still equates with "backward," and it is easy to see why failing farmers are perceived as "inefficient" or "unable to make it" in the "real world" of today's agribusiness. We still hear the "hick" and "hayseed" stereotypes of farmers, rural business people, rural pastors, working people and others. The people who feed the nation are often depicted as rough, crude, backward and not too bright, especially if they falter or fail. If they manage to survive, they are just as likely to be depicted as shrewd, cunning, greedy and selfish. In the same breath, the people of the land can be condemned and romanticized, judged and praised, put down and lifted up. Usually though, they are just irrelevant, being outside the scope of our daily experience—even as we trace our own history to the land, or when as we go to the grocery store or sit down and eat.



Who Controls the Land

Every nation and every society has a stake in how its land is controlled and by whom. A democratic society especially needs to be vigilant to assure that control over its land does not fall into the hands of the few, thereby weakening the most fundamental social and economic relationships and structures of the democracy. Such a society must, in fact, take special care to assure that land is justly and widely distributed, and that the rights of minority landholders and other small and middle-size farmers are protected and enhanced. Unfortunately, 20th century America cannot claim an enviable record in maintaining this vigilance or in protecting these rights.

In fact, the nation today seems propelled toward a highly-skewed system of concentrated control over its land and its food production system—with more and more land in fewer and fewer hands, and a food production, processing and marketing system dominated by non-farm interests. The haunting specter of a "landed elite" in this country may not be that far from reality: the concentration of land control documented in a 1978 U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin underscores the seriousness of that possibility and the trend leading toward it.

No one understands or had experienced the grim reality of such a destructive process of land control than this nation's minority people's. The European takeover and settlement of the North American continent was predicated on a sense of divine mission that sanctioned the displacement of native peoples and the "conquering" of the wild land. Between the colonial settlements and the westward expansion to the Pacific, it was supposedly the "manifest destiny" of those with power to take the land, and to rid it of its original inhabitants.

Jefferson's ideal of the "small landowner as the most precious part of the state", did not extend to the people of color, especially if they stood in the way of settlement and expansion.

Now is the time [for public and elected officials to be called to account for their seeming neglect and disregard for rural American and particularly for Black landowners]. The implications of continuing land loss and land concentration for rural America and all America are serious, and drive to the heart of the democracy itself. In the long run, those who control land control people. When people are driven from the land or lose the opportunity

to establish a landed economic base of power and self-government, the demise of democratically-run institutions follows, and power accrues to the few. We must recognize that land is one of the most basic social properties and responsibilities of any society. Even though it may rightly be owned by individuals, its use, control and preservation for the whole of society and succeeding generations is the responsibility of all people and of the democratic institutions that should represent them.

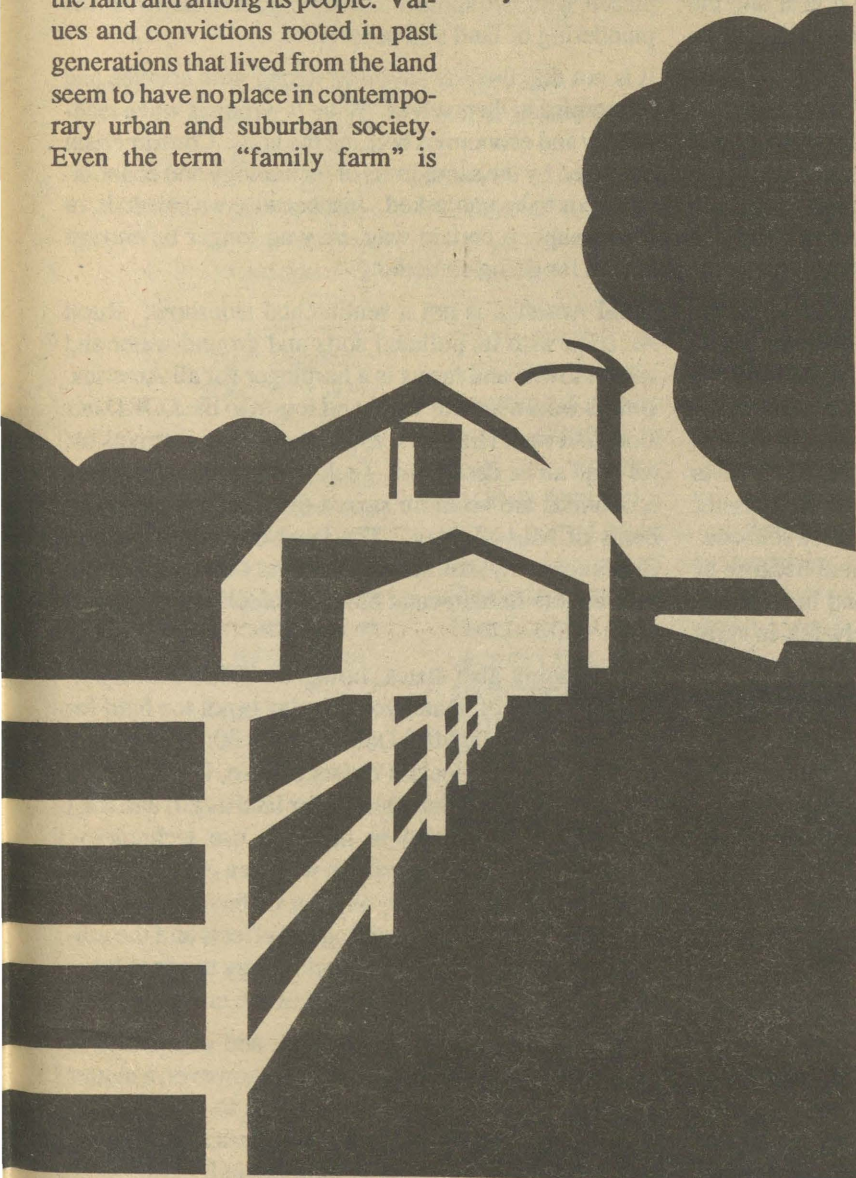
Inaction now may guarantee the loss of Black farmland by 1994, and the virtual elimination of medium-size family farms by the turn of the century. It may guarantee that large, non-farm corporations and investors play a growing role in U.S. agriculture, even as they do now in California, Arizona, and Colorado, as well as other western states. It may guarantee U.S. department of Agriculture projections that indicate by the year 2000 there will be only 1.8 million farms averaging 600 acres in size, and that the largest 50,000 farms will farm 50% of the land.

It may also guarantee the emergence of a structure of land control in the U.S. analogous to that of Central American nations. In a major report issued in March of 1986, the Congressional office of Technology Assessment, stated with regard to the structure of agriculture in the California-Arizona-Texas-Florida (CATF) region that:

As agricultural scale increases from very small to moderate farms, the quality of community life improves. Then, as scale continues to increase beyond a size that can be worked and managed by a family, the quality of community life begins to deteriorate. Increasing concentration in this region results in increasing poverty, substandard living and working conditions, and a breakdown of social linkages between rural communities that provide labor and the farm operators.... The most extreme poverty in CATF counties is found in those counties with the most concentrated and productive agriculture.... Increasingly, the rural communities in CATF agribusiness areas are not local in the sense of participating in U.S. social and cultural traditions. Instead, they resemble Honduran plantation communities more than their rural counterparts in other areas of the United States.

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Editorial

by David Knox, associate editor and Lutheran Volunteer

Sometimes it's hard to care—especially about the farm crisis when I've never stepped foot on a farm. Even after reading some of the articles in this issue of the *Vanguard* and knowing how city folk and rural folk are interconnected, how the very strength of our democracy relies on distribution of the land, how farmers have been the victims of consumer demand and hype, and how I tend to blame the victims as poor managers, the problems still seem abstract and distant.

Maybe I'll follow the action alert on page 3 and write a letter to my representative in Congress. But in a couple of weeks, I will have forgotten about the rural crisis again.

My problem is, that as a white, upper-class, liberal I have the desire to espouse great pleas for societal change, but will not adjust my lifestyle so those changes are possible. I shout for equality and desegregation, yet when Blacks and Hispanics move into my neighborhood, I move to the

suburbs. I deplore violence and love Rambo. I want the family farm to survive and thrive, yet I can't seem to stay away from the cheaper prices of the large grocery stores.

The farm crisis should not be an intellectual subject for me, where I devise certain theories and move on to the next challenge, it should be everyday and it should be emotional.

My first step is to find a food co-op in my city which buys its produce from local farmers. It helps the farmers, reduces transportation costs, saves the environment, and improves my own health because the farmers are not forced by economics to spray phosphates, nitrates, or irradiate their crops. Everyday I begin to work for change quietly and effectively by living out my beliefs and preparing locally grown vegetables.

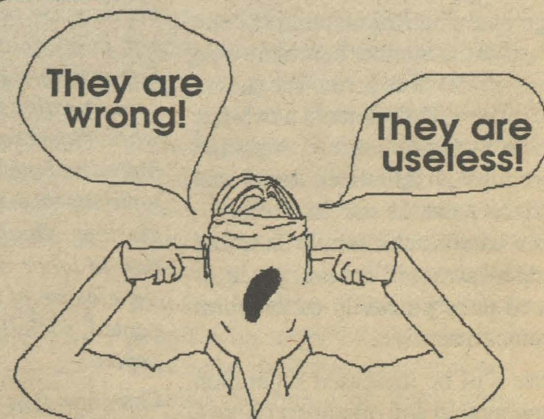
Yet I find that there is more that I must do. I begin to tire of taking the solitary bus ride to go to the food co-op across town. Nobody witnesses my commitment; there is no gratification or recognition of the work that I do. I am beginning to lose my original vision and commitment to justice and it's because there is no love. Only love can give me the

strength to not give into the daily grind.

When I speak of love, I am not referring to some sort of romantic love between two individuals or of a love of freedom or justice. My love may include the desire for freedom and justice, but manifests itself in the specific. I borrow my definition of love from Wendell Berry who said, "Love is never abstract. It does not adhere to the universe or the planet or the nation or the institution or the profession but to the singular sparrows of the street, the lilies of the field, the least of these my brethren." Love is not, but its own desire, heroic. It is heroic only when compelled to be. It exists by its willingness to be anonymous, humble, and unrewarded. The older it becomes, the more clearly it understands its involvement in partiality, imperfection, suffering, and mortality. Even so, it longs for incarnation."

If love is the answer, then I must learn to love. I must foster the connections between myself, my beliefs, and my neighbors. I can

talk to my pastor and see about the possibilities of setting up a link with a rural or urban congregation. I can use LHRAA to find out about more resources which might help me make these connections lasting and valuable. As I get to know farmers, I may begin to understand more fully my involvement in partiality, imperfection, suffering and mortality. Even so, my desire to give my beliefs, to give my spirit, life will grow. I may even find the bus ride across town enjoyable, and consider it a chance to write a letter to a new found friend.



Judging people is only easy when I don't understand.

Filtering People: understanding and confronting our prejudices. New Society publishers, 1990.

Theological Reflection

by Mark U. Ziemer, pastor
Saint John's Lutheran Church
Marion, Wisconsin

Opinions come easily when reflecting on the rural situation. The changes in rural America are so dramatic that they beg for radical interpretation, but those changes are also so many that nearly any radical statement can find some audience and some proof. Perhaps what most complicates any analysis of the rural situation, is the wide ranging interests and perspectives—from the corporation investing in biotechnology to the farmer trying to survive to the hunter to those clinging to childhood memories of the good old days.

What is needed is clarity amidst the misty-eyed nostalgics and the bleary-eyed technocrats. Such clarity, if there is to be any, needs to come from other than the singular perspective of the agriculturist, naturalist, economist, sociologist, or romanticist; or perhaps, more accurately, a perspective which includes all of the above. That means a perspective that is as concerned about the owners as the workers, as the land and animals, and as the generations yet to come. Such a holistic and farsighted view is yet to be found.

Except, perhaps, for a certain book which lists the laws and values a certain landless people carefully devised in order to prepare them for the specific time when they would own land. Indeed, these laws were meant for a whole nation, for all time, and to preserve and prosper everyone in that land. These were laws developed over an arduous period of 40 years in which the people were prepared psychologically and socially for that awesome responsibility of owning land.

Indeed, all of the Torah, the first 5 books of the Old Testament, are closely related to land. The creation stories, the promise to Noah in Genesis B, the great Covenant to Abraham and Sarah, the renewal of that Covenant to the generations after them until the move to Egypt—in all those stories the land is of great importance. Abraham believed that God would give that land to his descendants even though the only plot he ever owned was the plot in which he and Sarah were buried. The vision and promise of that land is what kept Israel's identity in Egypt for 400 years.

But nowhere is this relationship so clear and profound as in Deuteronomy where Moses recites the history of God's favor for Israel and the meaning of all that has happened as preparation for their going in to possess the land. The danger is that we often claim only the moral law as applying to us and the rest we put aside. But

perhaps there is an economy of God present here. That though the specifics do not fit, yet the underlying principles may have much to say to us concerning a just governance that provides for the future.

"Take heed lest you forget the LORD your God ... lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness ... Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth." Deuteronomy 8: 11-18.

"When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." Deuteronomy 24: 19.

These passages which are quite representative of the message of Deuteronomy, understand land as a gift from God and sacred trust. If we lose sight of land as a gift and claim ownership instead, or if we use land for personal gain alone and fail to show concern for the weakest members of society, then our society has lost its soul and is digging its own grave. Rural America is not unique, but perhaps because of the almost self-contained economies of rural communities and because of the closeness to nature, the inequities and injustice of our American economy are more acutely felt in rural America.

The aftermath of World War II brought a tremendous change with the consolidation of farms and many other rural institutions and the exodus of many farmers to the cities. Science and technology were the reason and justification for that change. Each farmer could work more land and feed more cattle and the result was less manual labor and cheaper food. One could hardly question that and following WWII science and technology were nearly gods.

As technology continued to grow in influence there seems to have been a shift in values where land was no longer seen as gift and God as provider. But land became a commodity and technology became the provider, that through fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides, hybrid seeds and mechanization provide the wealth.

Indeed the American farmer today can claim in concert with their agribusiness partners, "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth."

The 80s with Reaganomics brought a tremendous crunch to the rural scene like nothing since the Great Depression. Pollution was casting doubt upon the sanctity of science and technology, but this time economics was raised as the reason and justification why many farmers and small town businesses had to go. Never mind the emotional cost, that was only sentimentality; economics was seen as cold, hard truth. Thus the value of land and wealth as sacred trust also vanished and was replaced with economics as sacred justification for the plundering of land and people.

It is not that there is anything wrong with science and economics in themselves. What is wrong is when technology and economics become the gods. Consumerism bolstered by the sacredness of technology and economics needs to be unmasked. Just because we can do it, or it is cheaper a certain way, may no longer be enough reason for doing something.

Rural America is not a sentimental sideshow. Rural America with its polluted soils and ground water and vacant towns and farms is a harbinger for all America. Unless we amend our ways and return to the LORD our God, and seek His ways, as Deuteronomy instructs us, we shall all be destroyed. Technology and modern day economics are no more sacred than the Ashterah and Baals of Moses's day. The laws of God, including God's economy, still stand. Land and wealth as gift and trust are the fundamental building blocks for any society.

Deuteronomy also states, however, "This commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off." Deuteronomy 30: 11. A proper economy is not hopeless or impossible, it is simply a matter of factoring our concern for land as gift and trust into what we pay and in how we use technology. Perhaps from whom and where we buy a product needs to be taken as significantly as what we buy and what we pay for it. Perhaps the sociological effects and the ethics of biotechnology and any technology needs to be as much a matter of public concern as the end product.

Regaining control over technology and economics is not a matter of eternal salvation. It is, however, a matter of justice and a matter of faithfulness to God's economy. Indeed, the survival of rural America depends on it, and the rest of America is right behind.

The promise of the land

PUBLICATIONS



The Family Farm Networker, published 10 times per year by Interfaith Action for Economic Justice, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington DC 20002, 202/543-2800.

North American Farmer, published monthly, provides news, analysis and policy decisions of the movements to save family farming in the U.S., Canada, and other countries. Complimentary sample copy or \$10 for yearly subscription. North American Farm Alliance Educational Project, Box 176, Ames, Iowa 50010, 515/232-1009.

Land Stewardship Letter, quarterly publication featuring articles on current events affecting sustainable farming, updates on Land Stewardship Project programs and reviews of books and films on topics of importance to those interested in conserving America's farmlands. \$15 per year. Land Stewardship Project, 512 W. Elm, Stillwater, Minnesota 55082, 612/430-2166.

Small Farm Advocate, quarterly publication reporting on public policy biases against family-size farms, advising farmers and their representatives on ways to deal with these policies through legal and administrative means, and providing a national overview of regional small farm issues by serving as a clearinghouse for articles and activities of family farm groups across the country. \$10 per year for individuals and non-profits. Center for Rural Affairs,

P.O. Box 405, Walthill, Nebraska 68067.

Common Ground and Earth Matters, each published quarterly by National Catholic Rural Life Conference. \$25 for 4 issues each. National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 4625 NW Beaver Drive, Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

Christian Social Action, Vol. 1, No. 3, March 1988, a special issue devoted to US agriculture and rural communities in continuing crisis. \$1.25, single copy. Christian Social Action, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

JSAC Grapevine, Vol. 20, No. 9, April 1989, and Vol. 20, No. 4, October 1988, both issues focus on rural America and the rural crisis. Available for 50 cents with SASE from Joint Strategy and Action Committee, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 450, New York, NY 10115

The Anvil, irregular quarterly publication. For a sample copy send \$3.00 to: P.O. Box 37, Millville, Minnesota 55957.

Gaining Ground: the rural newsletter of the Wisconsin Conference of Churches. Published quarterly to help facilitate the flow of information about rural concerns in Wisconsin's religious community. Wisconsin Conference of Churches, 1955 W. Broadway, #104, Madison, Wisconsin 53713.

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION ON RURAL ISSUES

For reprints contact:
Lutheran Human Relations Association of America
2703 N. Sherman Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53210
414/871-7300

WORSHIP



The following worship materials were prepared by the Upper Great Lakes Synod Social Ministry Committee. It is intended for use by both urban and rural parishes. The liturgy combines two themes: solidarity with those who produce our food and fiber, farmers and ranchers who may be experiencing the crisis in rural America, and a rite of blessing of seeds and soil.

Opening hymn:
LBW 320, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Prayer of the Day:
O God of all creation, be with us now and bless the fruits of those who labor in the fields. Grant us faith to know your gracious purpose in all things, and continue your blessings to us through the bounty of your creation; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Lesson:
Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Litany:
Leader: We are all the children of God. Yet, those of us who have no direct exposure to the problems of rural families appear from the outside not to care.
People: We have always given credence to the myth that those who have appeared privileged do not need our compassion.
Leader: It is hard for us to believe that rural children are suffering malnutrition, that some of their parents are committing suicide, and that their families are being forced to move from the land of their ancestors to the streets of America to join the unwanted non-persons of our society.
People: Now the truth looms large before us as we read daily their plight in our local newspaper, as we watch the farm auctions on TV.
Leader: If we are one in Christ, then their pain is our pain, their anger is our anger, their struggle is our struggle.
People: Merciful Creator, hear us now as we proclaim that we can no longer close our ears to the crisis of our rural sisters and brothers in the midst of their stress and dislocations.
Leader: In the midst of hard times and unempathetic public policies, we must be the voices, the hands and the bearers of hope to those who cannot muster the courage to believe in the possibility of a brighter day.
People: Guide us, O Lord, and fill us with unending streams of compassion. Energize us to take on the yoke of true solidarity with our brothers and sisters in their wilderness wanderings. In us, and through us, may your presence be made known and your will be done as we become true neighbors.

Psalm 146

Second Lesson:
2 Corinthians 9:6-13

Gospel:
Matthew 25:34-40

Hymn of the Day:
LBW 362, "We Plow the Fields and Scatter"

Prayers:
Leader: O God the Father, who created the good land; O God the Son, who once walked in vineyards and fields of grain, and pastures of cattle and sheep; O God, the Holy Spirit, who with water and the Word liberates us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ;
People: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Remember not our sins against the land, and deliver us from our neglect of those who keep it with care,
People: Spare us, good Lord.
Leader: From greed and selfishness concerning the land,
People: Deliver us, good Lord.
Leader: Help us find just and equitable ways to compensate those who labor to grow food for our tables.
People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.
Leader: For those who suffer, that we may know how to reach out to them,
People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.
Leader: That we may stand together with one another, no matter what the cost,
People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.
Leader: For bankers, lenders and others who advise farmers, that they may be granted the gifts of wisdom and good counsel,
People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.
Leader: Bless the seed time and the fields, good Lord.
People: Bless the flocks and the herds, good Lord.
All: Bless the land again, that it may bring forth its abundance.

Closing hymn:
LBW 409, "Praise and Thanksgiving"

RURAL-URBAN CHURCH PAIRING PROGRAM



The following program description has been developed by Colorado Coalition to Save Rural America. This program is currently being revamped to also build stronger links between different rural congregations. For further information on the program, contact: Colorado Coalition to Save Rural America P.O. Box 231, 101 North Washington St., Colorado 80743303/246-3414

Through the work of the Community Resource Center (Denver), Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Denver), the Colorado Coalition to Save Rural America, and through the endorsement of the Colorado Council of Churches the pairing of urban and rural churches throughout the state has been done. The inter-dependence of rural and urban people ought to be the self-evident reality; unfortunately, that is not always the case. City people sometimes forget that their food and fiber products originate on the farm; rural people sometimes forget how necessary to their well-being are the services provided by our urban centers. What better way to see this than in a paired situation.

With current economic crisis being experienced among many family farmers and ranchers and rural communities, the need of such a program to make those vital connections was established. Here are some ideas for starting a rural-urban pairing program in your area:

1. The connection between a rural church and an urban church or suburban church may originate in several ways: -pastors or laity who already know each other -pairing assignments by denominational offices -connections that develop through inter-denominational associations

PRINT



INSIGHTS INTO THE FARM CRISIS:

The Family Farm: Can it be saved?

Shantilal P. Bhagat, Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, 1985. 74 pages. Provides a historical overview and examines the changing structure of agriculture in the U.S., applies biblical and ethical insights to the problems farmers are facing and suggests badly needed policy changes to help the family farm survive. Each chapter concludes with questions and ideas for discussion and action possibilities. \$2.95 plus postage

Brethren Press
1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120

Is There A Moral Obligation to Save the Family Farm?

edited by Gary Comstock, Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1987. 427 pages. A collection of essays that examine the history, current state, and future of the family farm in the United States. \$12.95

Iowa State University Press
2121 South State Avenue
Ames, IA 50010

Family Farming: A New Economic Vision

Marty Strange, University of Nebraska Press and Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1988. 311 pages. Challenges the assumption that bigger is better, critiques the technological base of modern agriculture, and calls for farming practices that are ethical, economical, and ecologically sound. \$18.95

Center for Rural Affairs
P.O. Box 405
Walthill, NE 68067

Soil and Survival: Land Stewardship and the Future of American Agriculture

Joe Paddock, Nancy Paddock and Carol Bly, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1986. 217 pages. Makes clear how farmland issues are linked to many of our pressing social concerns and forges a practical model for preserving farmlands and caring for the earth. \$19.95 + \$1.50 postage

The Land Stewardship Project
512 West Elm
Stillwater, MN 55082

Who Will Stand Up for the Family Farm?

Lowell Bolstad, Prairie Farm Press, 1987. 80 pages. Includes a discussion guide and suggestions for action as it presents factors causing the loss of the family farm, offers ideas to preserve the family farm, and presents a challenge to join the struggle to stand up for the family farm. \$2.00 + \$.95 postage (prepaid)

Prairie Farm Press
Box 102
Prairie Farm, WI 54762

Green Isle:

Feeding the World/Farming for the Banke

Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center and Farmer Labor Education Committee, 1983. 58 pages. Stories of farmers from Green Isle, Minnesota give a personal look at the economic issues facing today's farmer, including state and federal policies and the interconnections between the farm and the city. \$3.00

Crossroads Resource Center
P.O. Box 7423
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407

Food for Tomorrow?

C. Dean Freudenberger, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1984. 173 pages. Divided into three parts, the book explores "The World Food Crisis", "The Needed Ethic for a New Agriculture", and "Toward Solution". The final chapter suggests some ways that Christian churches can contribute to the solution of the problem of agriculture. \$11.95

Augsburg Publishing House
426 S. Fifth Street, Box 1209
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

Shadow on the Land

National Toxics Campaign, 1988. 44 pages. A report which lays out a program aimed at supporting the family farmer and reducing pesticide use by 50 percent over the next decade. Includes an assessment of the farm crisis as well as the environmental crisis and identifies the barriers family farmers face in the adoption of a low chemical program. \$10.00

National Toxics Campaign
29 Temple Place, 5th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

No Place to Be:

Farm and Rural Poverty in the United States

Prairiefire Rural Action, 1988. 36 pages. Describes the devastation of the public policies of the 1980's on rural people and communities in the U.S. Includes specific policy recommendations. \$6.00

Prairiefire Rural Action
550 11th Street, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

The Church and The Challenge of Rural Concerns

Kathleen Daugherty & Foster McCurley, LCA Division for Mission in North America, 1986. 60 pages. Overview of the nature of the rural crisis, its theological foundations, and implications for the church. Can be used as a study document with discussion points in each chapter. Free (Order #67-1004)

ELCA Distribution Service,
426 S. 5th Street, Box 1209
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

Family Farm or Factory Farm? A Time to Choose

Lowell Bolstad, Prairie Farm Press, 1989. 72 pages. Identifies and discusses current issues that rural people face both from a micro as well as a macro view. With discussion questions, it can also serve as a resource for urban people who are beginning to feel the effects of the economic and environmental changes on their lives. \$2.00 + \$.99 postage (prepaid)

Prairie Farm Press
Box 102
Prairie Farm, Wisconsin 54762

THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAND:

The Land

Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977. 203 pages. In looking at the history of Israel through the perspective of the meaning of land, this book can bring new understandings of the meaning of land and landlessness to present history. \$8.95

Augsburg Publishing House
426 S. Fifth Street, Box 120
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

2. Start with an invitation from the rural congregation, however initiated. The rural church will know when visits will be most convenient for them in relation to farm work. Urban folks can reciprocate as hosts.

3. Focus on the personal. Keep formal meetings/presentations, etc. to a minimum. Concentrate on providing informal, direct, opportunities for city people to see how food is produced and to learn to know the people who produce it. Brief tours of farms, visiting over coffee in farmhouses and overnight stays all offer ways for city dwellers to hear about farm issues in personal terms.

4. Provide background information. Brief written materials would be helpful to inform urban people before they make a visit. (See resource and organization lists for study materials and further information)

5. Include specific church activities in pairing events. The church provides a broad spiritual and theological context for understanding and responding to the economic and spiritual crisis in rural America. Rural-urban pulpit exchanges, exchange of adult and children's education programs, and joint worship are all possibilities.

6. Include congregational leaders in paired events. Sending a group of city youth to the country for a weekend may be a good trip, but alone it is certainly inadequate. It is important that council and board members, educators and other lay leaders participate.

7. Let the relationship evolve naturally. Make a commitment to the LONG HAUL. Build a partnership relationship that could continue for years, not just months.

MINISTRY RESPONSES TO THE RURAL CRISIS:

Mending a Broken Heart Land

Joyce Barrett, Synergy Publishing Group, Alexandria, Virginia, 1987. 101 pages. A comprehensive study of what's being done to help rural communities in distress with reference to more than 100 successful programs. Extensive lists of resources and contact people to aid churches, advocacy groups or anyone working in rural areas.

\$8.00 + \$2.00 postage

Joyce Barrett
1906 N. Madison Street
Arlington, Virginia 22205

Renew the Spirit of My People:

A Handbook for Ministry in Time of Rural Crisis

Rev. Karla Schmidt, ed., Prairiefire Rural Action, Des Moines, Iowa, 1987. 99 pages. A collection of articles by persons on the "front line" of rural ministry which provide practical models of response to the many human crises that result from the broader economic crisis, and present a solid socio-economic analysis and understanding of the larger issues behind the problems facing farm and rural people today.

\$11.00

Prairiefire Rural Action
550 11th Street, Suite 20
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

With My People: A Handbook for the Farm Crisis-

Mike Hoey & Sr. Margaret Mary O'Gorman, Missouri Catholic Conference, 1986. 58 pages. Suggestions on how parishes can respond to the needs of farm families and others facing the devastating effects of the current farm crisis.

\$2.00 (prepaid)

Rural Life Task Force
Social Concerns Dept.
Missouri Catholic Conference, P.O. Box 1022
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Neighbor to Neighbor

Roger Williams, University of Wisconsin-Madison, revised, 1988. A guidebook of ideas for starting Neighbor to Neighbor outreach groups plus materials for leading 10 group meetings.

\$1.00/Wisconsin;

\$6.00/other states

Health and Human Issues Outreach
University of Wisconsin-Madison
610 Langdon Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Peer Listening Training

an LSS program offering assistance in using a person-to-person method of responding to the rural crisis.

Contact Karen Geiken or Sandy Simonson

LSS

3200 W. Highland Boulevard
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208
414/342-7175

Farm Stress - Learning to Cope

Nancy Edmonds Hanson & Chris Paulson, Mental Health Association in North Dakota, 1982. 44 pages. Contains insights and suggestions for coping with the unique stresses faced by farm families.

Mental Health Association in North Dakota
Box 160
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Planting Seeds to Harvest Hope

Iowa District, American Lutheran Church, 1986. A six-part Bible study on issues of the rural crisis and resources of the Christian community in ministering to those caught in crisis. Participants' materials and leaders' guides available.

.Free

Lutheran Communications Center
630 Highway 18 West, Box 45
Clear Lake, Iowa 50428

Justice Issue: The Rural Crisis, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1988. 16 pages. From the Division for Congregational Life/Congregational Social Ministry, this action/reflection guide focuses on the nature of the rural crisis and consideration of what the church can do.

Division for Congregational Life
Congregational Social Ministry

ELCA

8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631

Strengthening Our Rural Communities

Rev. Lowell Bolstad, Prairie Farm Press, 1988. 96 pages. For church and community leaders, this book is a call to action for people of faith who are concerned with food, justice, land and rural environment issues. Includes discussion questions.

\$2.00 + \$.99 postage (prepaid)

Prairie Farm Press
Box 102

Prairie Farm, Wisconsin 54762.

THE FARM CRISIS FOR PERSONS OF COLOR:

Slippin' Away: The Loss of Black-Owned Farms

David Dyblec, ed., Glenmary Research Center, Atlanta, Georgia, 1988. 66 pages. The proceedings of a Home Mission Forum co-sponsored by The Catholic Committee of the South and the Catholic Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky with stories of black farmers, community activists, organizers and church workers.

\$4.50

Glenmary Research Center
750 Piedmont Avenue NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

WORSHIP RESOURCES:

Rural Life Prayers, Blessings and Liturgies

Victoria M. Tufano, ed., National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 1989. A booklet including music resources for rural life celebrations, prayers and blessings from a rural perspective, a service of the word, meal prayers, litany of Saint Isidore and suggested intercessions.

\$5.00

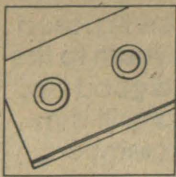
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
4625 NW Beaver Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50310

Chapter 4 in With My People:
A Handbook for the Farm Crisis
(see reference above)

CHURCH STATEMENTS:

The Land: God's Giving, Our Caring

a study document on the theology of the land adopted September 10, 1982, by the Eleventh General Convention of The American Lutheran Church.



From This Valley . . . On Defending the Family Farm

A 20-minute film presentation produced under the sponsorship of the Rural Crisis Issue Team, Division of Church and Society, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. It is an ecumenical resource exploring the farm crisis for use in rural and urban congregations.

\$20 (filmstrip) \$25 (VHS videotape) Office of Interpretation
General Assembly Mission Board
Presbyterian Church (USA)
341 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30365

Cradled By the Hand of God,

A 30-minute program which explores a creative new ethic of land ownership and use appropriate for the United States, featuring comments by C. Dean Freudenberger, Dom Helder Camara, Walter Brueggemann, Robert Bergland, et al.

\$39.95 National Catholic Rural Life Conference
4625 NW Beaver Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50310

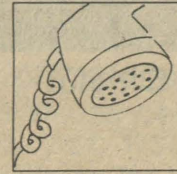
Another Family Farm

Program 1, 28 minutes; Responding to the Farmer in Crisis, Program 2, 17 minutes. Deals with the economic crisis affecting rural areas; from the viewpoint of those experiencing it, and those attempting to respond.

Extensive users' guide.

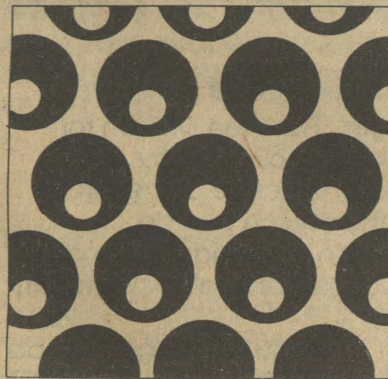
Seraphim Communications, Inc.
1568 Eustis Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108
612/645-9173

LEGISLATIVE INFO



Interfaith Action for Economic Justice
Legislative updates: 800-424-7292

ORGANIZATIONS



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Division for Outreach,
Director for Rural Ministry, Merle Boos
Division for Congregational Life,
Program Specialist for Rural Ministry,
Dr. Barbara Johnson
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631
800-638-3522

Responds to the needs and concerns of those who farm the land and live in rural communities, and also endeavors to educate and build bridges of understanding between urban and rural people, to effect positive change.

Rural Ministry Program/Center for Theology and Land (Shannon Jung)
2000 University Avenue
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
319/589-3117

A three-fold mission to become more self-conscious and systematic in training ministers for smaller, rural churches; to provide continuing education courses and workshops for clergy and laity in rural churches; and to assist in the strengthening of the position of rural communities and their churches.

Prairiefire Rural Action (Dave Ostendorf)
550 11th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
515/244-5671

An educational, organizing and advocacy organization focused heavily in Iowa, but working with religious organizations, farm groups and coalitions in states throughout the nation. Catalog of resources available.

Center for Rural Affairs (Marty Strange)
P.O. Box 405
Walthill, Nebraska 68067
402/846-5428

Nonprofit organization devoted to strengthening rural communities and smaller farms.

National Council of Churches
(Mary Ellen Lloyd)
475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 572
New York, New York 10115
212/870-2307

Interfaith Action for Economic Justice
(Lorette Picciano-Hanson)
110 Maryland Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202/543-2800

National Catholic Rural Life Conference
4625 NW Beaver Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515/270-2634

Broad-based membership organization serving rural life advocates throughout the country providing worship resources, newsletters, workshops, coalition building and ecumenical efforts.

Rural Coalition
2001 S Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20009
202/483-1500

National alliance of over 140 member organizations dedicated to the development and implementation of public policies which will benefit rural Americans, especially low-income people, people of color, and their communities.

Land Stewardship Project
512 West Elm
Stillwater, Minnesota 55082
612/430-2166

Helps foster a renewed commitment for conservation-based sustainable agriculture through a variety of educational programs, materials and activities. Primary focus on upper Midwest.

Federation of Southern Cooperatives
P.O. Box 95
Epes, Alabama 35460
205/652-9676

Addresses the special concerns of minority farmers.

North American Farm Alliance
Box 176
Ames, Iowa 50010
515/232-1009

Provides grassroots organizing assistance, leadership training, farm movement information clearinghouse, speakers' bureau, legal advocacy and Women's Organizing Project.

Rural North America Task Force,
Joint Strategy and Action Committee Inc
475 Riverside Drive, Room 450
New York, New York 10115
212/870-3105

Project Self-Help and Awareness:
Wisconsin-Mississippi (John Kinsman)
E2940 Hwy K
La Valle, Wisconsin 53941
608/986-3815

Exchanges of people and assistance between Wisconsin and Mississippi to promote better understanding. Materials available on the discrimination and struggle of black farmers.

Edwin Vincent O'Hara Institute for Rural Ministry Education assistance to rural ministers, workshops

Wisconsin Rural Development Center
(Denny Caneff)
Box 504
Black Earth, Wisconsin 53515
715/223-2894 or 608/767-2539

A non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the family farm system of agriculture, to foster land stewardship ethics, and to nurture healthy community values.

Colorado Coalition to Save Rural America
101 North Washington, Box 231
Otis, Colorado 80743
303/246-3414

Advocate for rural interests and support development of communication links between agriculture, rural mainstream and urban communities. Model of successful program of urban/rural church pairing.

Dick and Sharon Thompson,
Thompson On-Farm Research
R.R. 2 Box 132
Boone, Iowa 50036
515/432-1560

Two practical farmers engaged in regenerative agriculture motivated by their faith and their sense of stewardship. They have materials available, including a technical piece on Regenerative Agriculture and a theological paper "There is Hope".

Loren Hedstrom
RR 1, Box 175
Scandia, Kansas 66966
913/335-2578

Farmer exchange with black farmers.

Black Farm Loss: Farm Crisis or American Crisis?

by Jim Dunn

Jesse Jackson touched people in his elegant style and said we must go another way. And you hear "right ons" and applause all over the country. And we think it's important what Jesse said, but somebody at some point must decide which way. There's an African proverb that says if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. So what we need to do is get clearer not only on what we have to do but also where it is we're going.

What kind of changes are we talking about? As I sit here and listen to the farm crisis, it's very similar to what I heard a few days ago when I listened to poor people in California talk about the crisis of not having a home.

We cannot understand nor solve the farm crisis without understanding clearly the American crisis. It's a crisis in society that goes much deeper than just the farm crisis.

And what is that American crisis? It's a crisis where the federal policies are throwing more and more people into poverty. We live in a affluent society where literally millions of people go to bed each night malnourished, while thousands have no bed to go to. The American crisis is millions of people living in substandard homes with rats and roaches. The American crisis is one where we have literally a generation of young people who have no hope and that's why they turn to dope. For one reason or another, one out of four blacks in this society will not live to see the age of 25. That's a crisis when we're killing our youth. Never before in the history of this country has black youth committed suicide at the rate that it's happening now and killed each other at the rate they are now.

How does all this relate to the crisis of black land loss? I think Eddie Carthan said it very eloquently when he said without land you don't have freedom. So we need to say to those folks out there singing freedom songs, "Your music is good but let's talk

people that went through this first back then, taking the chances. Then the others came on board. We need change in this society, we don't need reform. We need a whole value system that says that human beings are more important than bombs and highways. And I don't think we do it by chipping at it here and chipping at it there. I think we need a plan if we need to understand how it got put together.

When European settlers first came to this country and ran up on the Iroquois Indians, it was about land and resources. When we go around the world dealing with people, it's always after their land and resources.

The Hopi and the Navajo Indians have lived peaceably for thousands of years in an area called Big Mountain in Arizona. All of the sudden, Peabody Coal Company finds out there's coal and some uranium on that land that they want. So right now there's a bill passes to take those People off their land under the guise they're fighting each other.

So the connections are there and all we need to do is make those connections because I tell you the people on Big Mountain are not going to save their land, the homeless people aren't going to get a home, the people living in raggedy housing aren't going to have decent housing and hungry children aren't going to have full bellies until we create a movement in this country to turn things around and none of us, not even us farmers, can do this on our own. We can only do that when we build a movement that can address those broader issues. We must understand that or we're wasting our time because it's important to seize the moment and look where we are in this society today. Because of all this hell and suffering that we've been talking about all of today, not just the farmers, but all the things I've been outlining.

I came with bad news, but I've also come to bear some good news. I wouldn't dare talk about all that pain and suffering without talking



about that in relation to land because without land you don't have any justice. Without land you have no independence, you have no peace." It's very crucial that we remember the Sixties. It was the farmers, the landowners and the independent

about some hope. Let me tell you what the hope is, there's much.

The good news was the march in Forsyth County, Georgia where 20,000 people showed up to say no to racism in a county where racism has been a policy for 70 years. And

Congregations Can Help

In a survey of the 64 Covenant Congregations, none identified themselves as a rural congregation. The issues of rural congregations, however, have an impact on a much wider population and are of concern to the wider church. The following article reflects that concern. This article is reprinted from the May 1989 newsletter of Ascension Lutheran Church in Burlington, Vermont, A covenant Congregation since February of 1985.

Rural America and many of Vermont's farm and rural families are experiencing severe financial and emotional distress. The church's role in helping these individuals is to provide support and assistance by gaining a better understanding of the situation and the people involved.

It is essential that those seeking to help troubled farmers realize that most farmers in severe distress became that way because of factors beyond their control. Most of these individuals are hard workers and good business people who are caught in the middle of an economic and political picture that is extremely difficult to comprehend. It is no wonder that the financial stress is often accompanied by bitterness and resentment.

For families experiencing tough times, knowing or being told that God loves them is not enough. A study conducted in 1985 at the University of Missouri-Columbia revealed that 55 percent of the farm families interviewed said their churches had not been supportive of them during their failure in farming. Others expressed feelings of isolation and misunderstanding.

There is a need to realize that farmers in crisis need sympathy, understanding, concern and awareness, just like anyone who is experiencing a crisis. It is not necessary that the pastor or congregation know a lot about agriculture, per se, but that they use their skills in human relations.

Seek ways to relate to the family. Continue to visit. Say, "We know you are in trouble. We know you can handle it. How can we help? The biggest disservice is to avoid the issue and the family."

Families suffering financial distress or those in the process of losing the farm need to go through the grieving process. Not only is the business in jeopardy, but so is their lifestyle, their jobs, their

a lot of white folk were out there who never demonstrated before.

I think we overlook the most exciting things and we don't play these up. We talk about the pain, but we don't talk about the good things that are happening.

Montgomery, Alabama is another example. An all-white jury found the Ku Klux Klan guilty of racism. Now the Klan has to come up with \$7 million to give to that murdered boy's mother. That's good news in our justice system. It says something else is happening out there. We must understand that. Get our ears to the ground and see what's happening.

Homeless people decided that they have rights too. So they organize national homeless unions. They just had a convention of homeless people in New York City where they proclaimed their rights to housing. Our children don't have to go to school and give their address as a city park or a city dump, they stated in some cases. Tenants all over the country are demanding decent housing. There is a big march coming up where they're going to deal with that.

And for you farmers, the backbone of this country, soon we'll begin to hook up your struggle for the right to keep your land.

The Native American that I have been getting to know over the past few years see the notion of owning land as foreign. They ask, how can you own the land? It would be like



home and their family connections to the land, often from generations back. Sometimes they need to talk about the situation, over and over, as part of the healing process.

Remember that for almost every farmer going through tough times, there is a family experiencing stress also. Youth of rural communities need support more than ever before. Likewise, farm spouses should be offered support and ways of venting their concerns and frustrations. And the farmers have a network among themselves, feed and equipment dealers, etc. who need support.

Joan Blundall from NW Iowa Mental Health Center offers these added suggestions to assisting farm families:

- Provide places for people to gather and talk about the rural crisis
- Create new rituals to share the loss of farms and business
- Develop crisis teams between clergy and lay people to reach out to those who are hurt
- Set up support groups and peer listening programs
- Take part in mediation training and volunteer hours in creating alternate methods of resolving conflict
- Provide for basic needs of those who are currently unable to provide for themselves
- Make visible the hurts in the total community and the implications of those hurts to the community

Hopefully, these suggestions will help you and your congregation in reaching out to rural families in need. Farm families who receive this support will experience a living example of the power of the church. ***

owning the air. If air could be bottled, that would be on the market too. I bet there's somebody working on it as I'm talking. That's the kind of mentality behind making a profit. There's no devotion or dedication to people's needs. So we must look at this in the context of a broader issue. Do we as human beings have the right to fulfill ourselves in a society that says we have those rights?

You know, I never saw a tractor or even a farmer until I met Eddie Carthan. I was one of those folks who thought greens did grow in a supermarket! I wouldn't eat anything unless it came in a cellophane wrapper! Then when I met Eddie and rode on his tractor, it turned me around, it was a revolution with me. Now that I've seen that and understand what's going on in this country with farmers, I have no choice but to be involved in the struggle to save farmland. I don't see losing one's land as any different than any other suffering that falls upon humans.

So I think the answer to the questions we're dealing with is in our hands. We can't expect to get that answer from our enemies. And we need to put our heads together and quit playing around and develop the kind of strategies and direction that will get us out of this mess.

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Across the Field Across the Block --Rural/Urban Link

by LeRoy Zimmerman
Vice President
Community Services Division
Lutheran Family and
Children's Services of Missouri

Hunger hurts as much in the country as it does in the city. Urban poverty is often very visible because of its density among neighborhoods. Rural poverty is as real even though it may not be as visible or intense. Yet two of the worst poverty areas in the United States are Hayti Heights, MO and Pine Ridge, SD, both rural communities.

For most urban dwellers and rural residents the city and country are two distinct worlds that co-exist within a milieu of suspicion, indifference and criticism. Urbanites are critical of increased food prices. Rural persons fear the city with its impersonal relationships and crime. Both views reflect a broad sweep perception. Diversity is as present in most rural communities as in metropolitan areas. A recent United States census survey reported that only eight percent of rural residents lived on farms. This means that ninety-two percent of country persons live in small towns of less than 2,500 population.

Urban and rural communities have so much in common and are so interdependent. The farm production is as crucial to the economical health of the rural town as it is to the inner city and suburbs of any metropolitan area. Employment is the strength of any community. Loss of it is devastating. Urban plant closings strongly impact neighborhoods as does loss of family farms. For every six farm foreclosures in rural communities one business is lost. The impact of economic instability has widespread effects. Family stresses, domestic violence and health problems know no boundaries. Personal pride is as

affected in economically troubled farmers as it is in unemployed factory workers.

Quality of life and culture are at stake with economic instability. Intergenerated skills and vocational interests are disrupted with the loss of work that means so much to community residents. The higher the incident of individual financial difficulties, the lesser the interest in community support. Self-survival takes precedence over concern for others. Transition is commonplace

urban life struggles, dispelling misconceptions and strengthening planning possibilities. Environmental issues can serve as a special common ground. Pollution is widespread in both metropolitan areas and across rural lands. Chemical waste from industrial dumping is of grave concern. The heavy usage of chemicals for farm production has an environmental long term negative impact. One answer to the volume of urban waste is seen to be in using rural dumping grounds which has a high probability of poisoning the water and decimating the productive viability of farm lands.

A narrowing of the distance between the two worlds of rural and urban can take place by team work efforts to reduce poverty and hunger. One model is being tested in Missouri where emergency food distribution is a major challenge. In St. Louis along there are one hundred seventy-one food pantries within the St. Louis Food Pantry Association. A recent survey indicated that more than \$75,000 are used each month by member pantries to purchase emergency food to supplement the donated food received. Planning is underway to develop ways and means for emergency pantry food to be produced in Missouri to help family farmers who are facing economic difficulties. This would be a direct relationship between farmer and food pantry persons. Food pantries in rural areas would also participate to strengthen the rural economy and to assist families there with nutritional needs.

Common ground issues are the essential aspect for national urban-rural linkage opportunities. The quality of life in communities across the United States can be strengthened when positive interrelatedness is promoted and shared.

^^^

“*Congregations can be the common ground for urban and rural linkages.*”

with families striving to maintain sufficient income. Most farm families have to acquire off-farm jobs. Two income breadwinners are necessary in most financially unstable urban families.

The church is directly affected by both rural and urban economic instabilities. The congregation that once was the place for breadwinners to talk of their successful work or crops becomes the place to be avoided. Failure is not seen to be a virtue and surely not discussed in the weekly congregational worship gathering. Difficulties with financially troubled parishioners because unemployment and foreclosures are painful reflections of personal failures.

On the other hand, congregations can be the common ground for urban and rural linkages to occur. For example, common ground Sabbaths with “pew exchanges” can be exciting interchanges of information, enhancing understanding of rural and

Work toward
justice and peace;
work toward
understanding.

Attend the 1990 LHRAA Summer Institute on Racism

July 27-29th
Washington University
St. Louis, MO
Write LHRAA for more
information.

Welcome Lily Wu, New Board Member

The LHRAA Board has received with regret the resignation of Rev. Lydia Kalb. Rev. Kalb has submitted her resignation as a board member because of career and personal reasons. Replacing her on the Board is Lily Wu.

Lily Wu has worked for the Lutheran church nationally since 1976. After several years of writing and conducting research for the Lutheran Church in America, she joined the staff of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, where she is now associate for communications. Multicultural ministry and intercultural education have been among her major interests for many years, and especially since 1981 when she took part in the Lutheran Transcultural Seminar in Chicago and was drawn to the vision presented there. The Board and staff of LHRAA are pleased to welcome Lily as a Board member.

^^^

Thank you to Deb Pipkorn!!

Deb has delivered her talent and time again this year to design the 1990 Racial Justice calendar. The results of her work are impressive, often stunning and powerful, from the profile of Martin Luther King, Jr. to the crucifixion scene. We appreciate the fine work that you do.

Deb also works hard consistently designing and laying out the *Vanguard* every other month. It takes a lot of time and energy, and we thank Deb for her commitment to justice and LHRAA.

Introducing...LHRAA World Watch: a weekly newsletter on social justice issues.

Hello. I am Dave Knox, the new Lutheran Volunteer at LHRAA. In putting together the last two issues of the *Vanguard*, I have learned much about Refugee and Farm concerns, but I feel that learning about issues is not enough and that my concern for these problems ends when the *Vanguard* is off the presses.

Therefore, I have conceived of the LHRAA *World Watch* weekly newsletter, in which I research the latest news in Washington and provide updates on the progress for a more socially just world. I will also report on the many recent activities among the LHRAA staff.

Since this is a new idea, I need your help. If you want to keep a closer tab on events, like I do, then please let me know what type of news you want me to track. I have come up with the following list:

- *El Salvador elections
- *Nicaragua
- *Farm Bill updates
- *Home town clippings, where members contribute local progress
- *State of the environment
- *Recent releases of social conditions, i.e. report on the condition of education in the U.S.

If you are interested in receiving 25 weeks of *World Watch* and are a member of LHRAA, please tell me your ideas and send \$7.00 for the postage and paper costs. If enough people are interested, the first issue will be sent February 15 and will continue weekly until I leave.

Yes, I want to become an LHRAA member. Regular membership is \$15. Amounts over that will be used to furnish VG's to Lutheran Seminary graduates & to supplement Senior Citizen & Low income rates(\$7).

☐ \$25 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$

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