

COMMUNITY



CREATING
a SANCTUARY

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The simplicity of tribal life has been lost to us, the very ones whose lifestyle is taking more from the Earth than we need. We are the ones who need to be restored to Sanctuary, so we can deal with what makes us haywire.

CREATING a SANCTUARY



Just about everyone I show our farm photos to says the same thing, “Oh. Your farm is so beautiful. You are so lucky to live there.” They say it with a note of sadness and even a twinge of jealousy. I always tell people, “You can live there, too” but I don’t know if they believe me.

Several years ago, I was looking for a place to belong. There were so many beautiful places on the earth, but none of them were mine. Other luckier or more successful people owned land, but not me. It can be hard to even visit people who own very beautiful properties and certainly there are not many invitations to become part of what they are doing. People like their privacy and the space away from other people. I suppose that is why they bought their land in the first place.

My dream wasn’t to find a place of tranquil solitude. I just wanted a piece of land to take care of. How does a dream like that come to someone who grew up so disconnected from the land? Even though we might have our backyard gardens, we are internally so shaped and formed by the TV world of “Skippy the Bush Kangaroo” and breakfast cereal, and the 7 o’clock news that we

are profoundly disconnected from the earth. We are so much a product of our century and we have so little real-life understanding of creation, but still, we have a dream of buying some land and taking care of it, shaping it into a little paradise where birds will come and native animals will be welcome.

Have We Gone Way Off-Track?

This dream runs deep because it’s part of who we human beings are, since time immemorial. We’ve gone very off track with it, and instead of living in harmony with Mother Nature, responding to her needs and being content with what she would give us, we went ahead and made ourselves comfortable at the expense of other people, other animals and the environment. But if we are still in touch with our inner nature, even in a small way, the desire to be a custodian of our environment (expressing responsibility for the earth as a whole) is right there, waiting to be activated. Unless we have really erased it from our consciousness, it’s nearly like a default in us.

All animals have the instinctive desire to reproduce and to care for their offspring, but only

mankind has ever demonstrated the ability to care for others beyond the family or “flock” – especially on a universal or global level. That desire to steward and care for more than your own species actually came from God – the Creator. You can read about that in the Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories¹ where they speak of the Great Spirit or in the Bible². The first and primary thing we humans were actually created to do is to care for others – to govern and rule wisely in the affairs of our environment³. But we have messed up badly.

You can look way, way back in history (even back to the stories of the beginning of everything) and you’ll see a sad record of self-orientation. It seems that humanity has been divided for a long

time, fighting over resources, using and abusing along the way. The acute awareness of how brief is our existence and respect for other life has been supplanted by the desire to control, so we can have what “we” want at the expense of all else. It seems as if only tribal peoples have been actually able to live in harmony with the environment⁴. They sublimated any selfish or reckless urge in them due to concern for the delicate balance of resources. By living tribally and respectfully, they were able to receive food and shelter from the land without “taking over.” Some of those tribes disappeared long ago, while others are faltering today, as their environment is being demanded by the 21st century. For any kind of tribal life to continue existing, they would need a sanctuary, which also means



- 1 It was believed that before humans, animals and plants came into being, their ‘souls’ existed; they knew they would become physical, but they didn’t know when. And when that time came, all but one of the ‘souls’ became plants or animals, with the last one becoming human and acting as a custodian or guardian to the natural world around them. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreamtime>
- 2 Genesis 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
- 3 Genesis 1:26-28
- 4 Just being a tribe does not make a people environmentally friendly, but the success of tribal peoples’ ability to live sustainably in accord with their environment is extremely significant.

that there needs to be authority to protect them⁵, and allow them to flourish according to the way they have always lived. This separation would need to be not only physically manifested, but also intellectually, so that they could raise and educate their children with their own knowledge, faith and practice, free from Western education that infiltrates and infects them with the desire to have more than the land and their culture provides them⁶.

We can see very clearly the plight of the natives in Bougainville fighting the copper mine to regain control of their land⁷, but what about the rest of us, who have already lost our tribal heritage? Can we be restored to the simplicity of a tribal life?⁸ We are the ones who need a sanctuary.

Creating Human Sanctuary

Every one of us, man, woman and child, is being subtly interfered with on a spiritual level. We need a place where we can be protected from spiritual pollution and the effects of the 21st

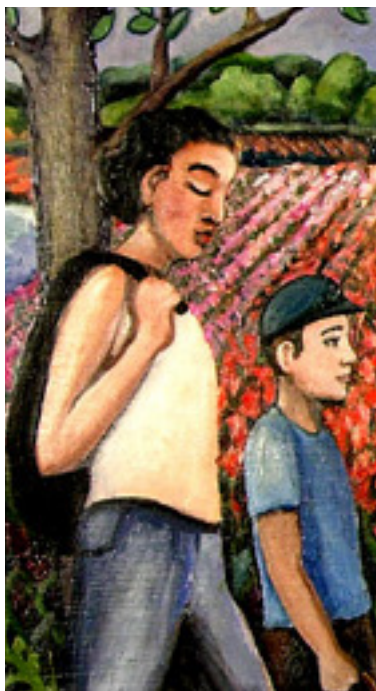
century madness with all its agendas for human engineering. If we were brought into a protective environment of care that could truly be termed a “sanctuary”, we would be like the many animals

who, on being released again into their natural environment, would return to their instinctive function. We could work with the environment rather than against it, and society, as a whole would experience a regeneration of human ethics and morality that have long been lost.

A sanctuary has to have all the means of providing for those it is caring for and protecting. You would think that if all their needs are met, strife would end and peace would reign in the hearts of those within. But, in reality, we crave more than we need and in so many ways we are really affected by guilt. One of the reasons that animals don't go off course like we do is that they do not acquire guilt. I don't think even animals that kill (in order to sustain their own existence) accumulate guilt because the spark of morality isn't there. Morality means the ability to make a choice⁹ based on a higher prin-

Every one of us, man, woman and child, is being subtly interfered with on a spiritual level. We need a place where we can be protected from spiritual pollution and the effects of the 21st century madness with all its agendas for human engineering.

- 5 A sanctuary is not a reserve that takes dispossessed peoples and gives them a territory that does not provide the environment for life as they know it. Aborigine reserves have isolated, confined and controlled indigenous peoples. Do not confuse the call for a sanctuary with what has already been seen with reserves. Even wildlife reserves cut through and limit the territory of the wild animals within. A sanctuary would not do that, but would provide the needed protection and boundary for the environment and life from within itself.
- 6 This is a real issue with indigenous peoples and cultures, where compulsory education imposed from the West is disintegrating the relationship between elders and the next generation. Somehow, Westerners think that their way of life has to be available to every one on the planet. It is an insidious arrogance.
- 7 Among many news reports or websites on this topic, “Voices in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, oppose dirty mining”. <http://antonyloewenstein.com/> gives a simple overview.
- 8 Tribalism implies the possession of a strong cultural or ethnic identity that separates one member of a group from the members of another group. It is a precondition for members of a tribe to possess a strong feeling of identity for a true tribal society to form. The distinction between these two definitions for tribalism is an important one because, while tribal society no longer strictly exists in the western world, tribalism, by this second definition, is arguably undiminished. People have postulated that the human brain is hard-wired towards tribalism, due to its evolutionary advantages. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribalism>
- 9 Moral agency is an individual's ability to make judgments based on some commonly held notion of right and wrong and to be held accountable for these actions. A moral agent is “a being who is capable of acting with reference to right and wrong.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_agency
A moral agent is someone who has the power to intentionally cause harm to another. <http://ethicsinpr.wikispaces.com/Moral+agent>



ciple than self-preservation. You might have thought morality only related to purity or defilement, but it means making a choice based on the knowledge of right and wrong and, in particular, being aware of consequences that come after such decisions have been made. That certain animals can remember the past is clear, but the awareness of the future and the re-

alization of consequence and of giving an explanation for why you did something - that belongs to you and me. That is where our morality comes from. If we are immoral, we are surrendering our humanity and becoming less than truly “human” - more like an animal. Being immoral is not just doing “bad things” but it is giving up the awareness that our choice will affect other people or ourselves.

Morality means the ability to make a choice based on a higher principle than self-preservation.

When we no longer care about how we could hurt others, we become, at best, like the cattle of the fields, just living our lives without sensitivity or consciousness. At worst, we become like sharks, continually preying on others and destroying their souls.

The Problem of Guilt

So, human sanctuary has to have a way to properly deal with guilt, because guilt (or whatever we call it) is the root source of why we have gone haywire. Evil is on the earth and it’s in people, not in cats and dogs or lions and tigers. Evil is in you and in me and the outcome of it is that we hurt others and are hurt by others. Guilt is what we can’t get rid of after the action or after the

words were spoken. We are still affected by what we did, even though it is in the past. And actually, the guilt of what we did to others often affects us even more than what others did to us.

Although, it is difficult sometimes to speak of guilt and we would mostly prefer not to have to think about sin and the judgment to come,

We are very reluctant to judge ourselves as materialistic and greedy, yet it is we who are destroying the earth by enjoying our “birthright” of luxury and independence.

when we think of a child molester, we hope there is a God somewhere who sees and who will bring justice. But, the extremes in others are easier to see than the subtlety of evil in ourselves. We are very

reluctant to judge ourselves as materialistic and greedy, yet it is we who are destroying the earth by enjoying our “birthright” of luxury and independence. And if you want to be simple, it is evil that we do not “give a damn” or care enough when the earth is obviously collapsing environmentally or when it comes to especially reaching out in love to your fellow man (who is just within arm’s reach) but you do not, because your heart is hard. Guilt would not even exist had we done what we knew in our better judgement we should have done. Guilt comes from knowing the right thing to do and NOT doing it¹⁰.

The presence of guilt signals that the right of conscience has been disregarded and silenced. However, upholding the right of the conscience being heard IS our very means of protection and safety within any environment. Whenever conscience is denied or militated against, then the hope of creating human sanctuary falters. Even the ancient Genesis story of Adam and Eve reveals that a sanctuary is fundamental to human existence, but when evil is introduced and given more weight than obeying the voice of God in your heart, then sanctuary (paradise) is destroyed.

10 James 4:17

11 Debilitate – to make someone very weak, to hinder or delay

The conscience that speaks on behalf of what is right and good is denied and the connection to what was sacred is lost. The sanctuary was lost and mankind thereafter has had to live in a lesser, disconnected state of existence where evil has exerted a great influence and power over us.

Thus, we need to see how desperate is our need for something or someone greater than ourselves to deal with this issue of guilt and the consequences of wrong-doing. If it was within our power to perfectly obey our conscience then the whole world would be a “paradise” – a beautiful pristine planet in harmony with man. But since this is not the reality, the most we can do is to be honest with ourselves. If we can open up to the reality of where our shame lies, we would deeply desire to be washed and healed of this debilitating¹¹ principle at work within our own nature.

Hence, this is why we, here at the Common Ground Café, have come back to the “beginning” – the beginning of creation in understanding our humanity, as well as looking to what Yahshua the son of God accomplished for us where we faltered and could not fully obey what we knew was true even within our own selves. For every act that is committed against our better judgement, there must be rectification and recompense¹². We have to pay for our own guilt, and payment can be very high, costing us our life, even eternally. Great mercy has been shown to us who were guilty in that we had One who willingly took our condemnation and payment upon himself – Yahshua the Messiah. In doing so, he has placed us under his spiritual protection and made for us a sanctuary in community, where we can freely obey what is right and turn away from what is evil. This process of healing in our own souls is something we

willingly give ourselves to daily and when the work is completed in us, amazingly, one day, as a spiritual nation of twelve tribes our Creator will have in us his very own Sanctuary for eternity¹³.

We are not ashamed to say we needed healing. Our neediness made us aware that we needed something outside of ourselves to bring the “cure.” Dwelling now in this protected place, reconnected to our spiritual Source, the sacred is being restored in the land as well as in our heart.

This clean, protected place is what we warmly invite you to. You don’t need to just look at photos and admire the restorative aspects in our gardens and fields. You can be part of what we are experiencing too! Just ask.

For every act that is committed against our better judgement, there must be recompense.



12 Recompense comes from the root word compensare ‘weigh one thing against another’. The Oxford dictionary says: to make amends to (someone) for loss or harm suffered; to compensate :offenders should recompense their victims; to pay or reward (someone) for effort or work; to make amends to or reward someone for (loss, harm, or effort): archaic punish or reward (someone) for an action: noun: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/recompense>

13 Ephesians 2:1-5, 2:22: Revelation 21:3

Beautiful Alaska – Layer Upon Layer?

There is a thought that Alaska is the “last frontier” of America, a pristine wilderness, being still in its original condition. That is why the movies, magazines and travel agents say, “Go to Alaska...” So people flock up there to experience the way things used to be — rugged, snow-covered mountains and wilderness. When we flew out to Egegik, where we were going to be salmon fishing for three months, it was tundra and lakes and rivers and green forests as far as the eye could see. From way up high, it looked very pristine. Then we got on the ground, and the first thing I thought was, “Look at all this junk!” The place was full of junk, like you can’t imagine.

My first inclination was to clean up around our place, get rid of that old rusting truck, and that ute, and that one, and that old three-wheeler, and that rusting outboard motor, and that broken-down boat. Man, there was trash everywhere. It was almost stunning. If you picked one thing up and kicked the surface a little bit, there was more underneath.

I walked down to where the water came in, one of those tidal deltas, and it was so green that I walked out on it. It looked as if you were going into some beautiful, pristine area, but as I walked, every step was crunch, crunch, crunch, and I started wondering what was under all this grass. It was the remnants of an old cannery that was abandoned years ago. There are layers and layers upon layers. When you look at the edge of the river bank, where the waves and the storms cut it away, it is not a strata of geological rock history you see, but of strata of junk poking out: tin, rope, plastic, bones, all kinds of stuff, and it is very deep. It seems as if you could never get to the bottom of all the rubbish that had accumulated

there.

Reckless, Careless Abandonment

This is the state of Alaska, from since the Russians came for the fur trade, and then it was the seal trade, and now it’s the salmon trade. Wherever man has touched the environment there, it gets built upon the dregs of what was left over. People don’t even consider or have a conscience to clean up after themselves. Nothing that goes into that place (as far as I could see) ever leaves there. Nothing. The territory is filled with a reckless, careless abandonment – without the slightest thought of the impact they are making upon virgin soil or its previously unspoiled environment. It is sadly overwhelmed and tainted by the marks of the fallen race of men.



Maybe, there are places where man hasn’t walked and it remains pristine still. But there is no way

for that Alaska to be really restored until the time comes that the Creator cleanses the earth. Literally, in that junk pile, human blood has been spilled. People have been killed and pillaged there for centuries and have disappeared simply over the greed for gain. In other words, you can get killed for fishing where you’re not supposed to fish or for telling someone not to fish in your area — and you’re “gone”, no one knows where. It’s all buried.

This is a real picture of humanity and the human experience. There is no hope for it to be fixed without a people who allow our Father to dig down deep and fix them from the inside out. Families everywhere in the world live with layers upon layers of misery (they each have their own stories to tell) but on top, it is glossed over as if everything is okay.

So there we were, thinking this fishing trip

was just going to be a way to get closer to Nature and to the Creator, and to work hard and build character, and all that. However, once we got into the realities of fishing, it was just like the Alaskan ground: if you scratch the surface a little bit, it isn't nice at all. We had to continually protect our lines from sabotage, be on guard against poachers, and keep away from confrontations and arguments out on the river.

Back on the land, while we were waiting for the salmon to start running, the boredom was very hard to deal with. Tension and tempers ran high and fights would break out in the other camps close by. It wasn't like there was anywhere to go that you could get away from it. The settlement was entirely surrounded by the most beautiful of scenery where I had thought I would be able to take a nice long walk and clear my mind. Reality was there were either three-wheelers buzzing aimlessly in a big circle around in big circles. Or if they weren't there, the grizzlies came right up to the camp, looking for garbage to eat.

Alaska really was like a microcosm of our world. A lot of people, including the government, have tried to clean up the Alaskan canneries and villages, but you just can't purify it while we are the ongoing source of the pollution. And it's that way with the rest of the earth.

The Way Back to Purity

The reparation of the earth can actually happen, but only if we allow it to happen to us first. We must willingly surrender to the Creator God and let Him burn away all that stuff that is in us from generations back and cleanse us. Then, we can bring hope to others, and ultimately to a new world. I suppose, though, if you were to start digging, it would be very, very hard, since it is hard to endure facing yourself. You actually need others united in the same cause and a real saviour who is serious about dealing with the deep fallen tendencies within us. Yahshua is a living man, not a mere Bible story figure. He actually saves people - the people who are serious about

dealing with the accumulative layers in their life.

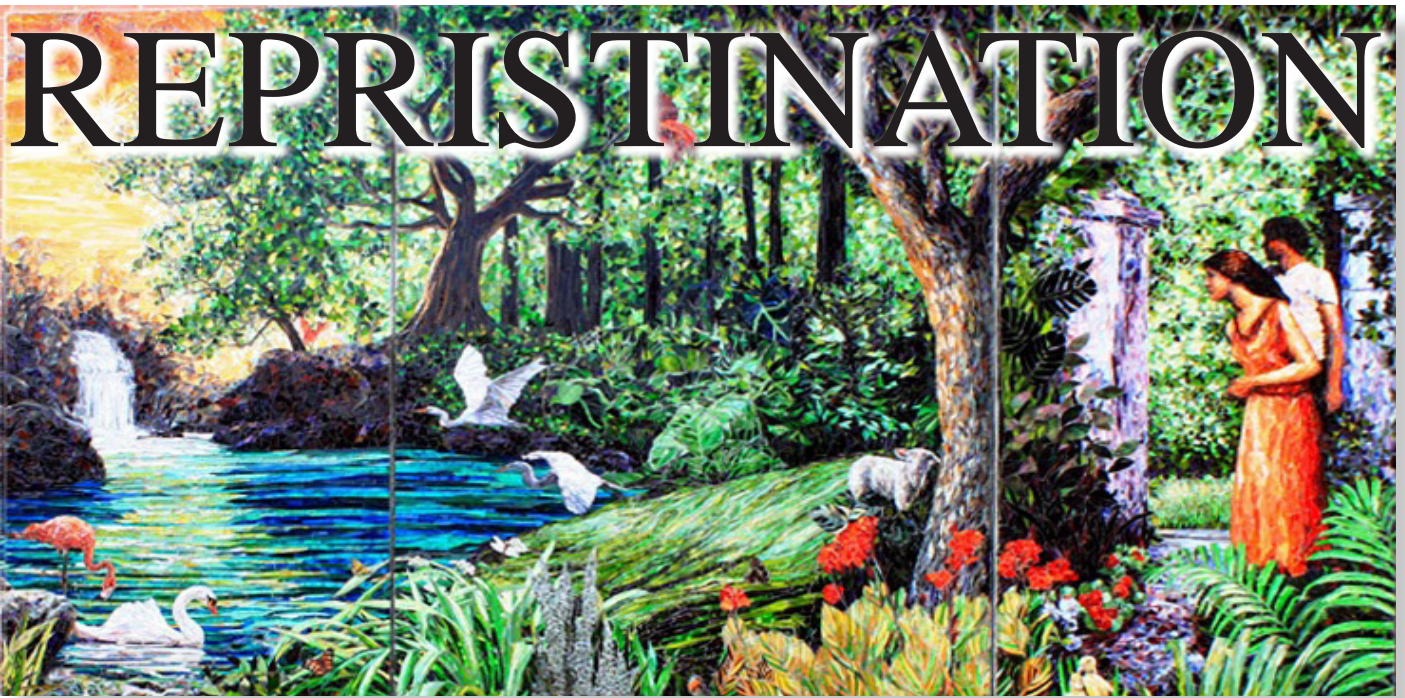
We can't go through life being a bunch of airheads who don't want to face "the real Alaska." Sure, we can take all the nice photos so we can let people think we had a great trip, and just think that life is great. Then other people tell you, "We went to Vietnam, and Thailand and it was so wonderful also." But really, the husband and wife fought the whole time and their children were running wild, causing havoc. That is "the real trip". A few people will look underneath what they walk on and be disgusted. But most people won't say anything; they close their eyes and just pretend they had a "good time" on their trip.



We could go on a campaign to clean up Egegik and countless other places on the earth, but the real problem is the layers and layers of a person's soul that have been so messed up. We didn't know there was a Saviour we could count on or really believe in, until we came upon a people who were being reparationated. Now, we know that "being saved" is real, not just a catchy phrase.

So we have decided to make a "pristine" place so that when people come to the Yellow Deli or Common Ground, they can scratch the surface and see that there is not just a bunch of grumpy, complaining people way in the back. The cooks and waiters aren't grumping around because they are dealing with things in their life, and they are real people. We are honest enough to say that there are layers we're walking on, crunching on, but we are dealing with it. We intend to continue the "dig." We're inspired to change - to dig down layer upon layer. It really is happening. Salvation isn't just a fairytale.

We're not pretending everything's O.K. We're actually very real people with very real problems, but the One we call Master is here, and we are with Him. So we are planning on seeing something pristine come out of each person's life. People don't need to have a fortress of insecurity around them anymore, because we're all dealing with these things - bar none. And we are finding results! Little by little, the "land" within us is once again becoming "unspoiled territory."



Repristination: to be brought back to the original purity, cleansed and restored so that what is now, is just the same as if it had never been touched.

Many Creation myths and the Genesis Story of the Bible describe the beginning of the earth as coming out of chaos and spiritual disorder into a pristine¹ state and that the first humans were deeply connected to both the spiritual world and the created world. In fact, the earth (and all the living creatures) were so intimately connected to mankind that it was profoundly and immediately affected by all that man and woman did. Many stories also explain that when ‘trouble’ entered the world the precious, sacred connection was lost.

It is because of self (or you could say, ‘sin’) that neither we nor the earth are in our original pristine state. The Aborigines understood that the land was made to be sacred, but we have made it common and profane, and defiled with bloodshed and blighted by pollution. The earth needs to be re-pristinated (returned to its pristine

state) and this process can only begin on ground that has been made sacred by the Spirit of God dwelling in a people, for the land of the human heart must first be re-pristinated before anything can happen in the physical realm.²

The Heart of Man

The realm of the heart is where repristination originates. The human heart is of such value to our Spiritual Father that it means everything to Him that He could regain that precious connection to humanity described in the Creation stories. The way that happens is expressed in the word “redemption,” but it is such a religious term that most of us can barely read it without flinching. The hollow words of people who are still living for themselves have put us off hearing what could bring remedy. It’s too bad, really, because it was through Yahshua dying for us that we can be re-pristinated and have the Divine Spirit come to live in our hearts, restoring the sacred to us in every aspect of our lives.

For repristination to happen on the earth

1 Pristine means, “original purity” A long, long time ago pristine was used to describe primitive or ancient things. It wasn’t until 1899 that the word grew to mean “unspoiled” or “pure.” Ecologists strive to preserve pristine rain forests, just as vacationers are always looking for a pristine strip of beach to lounge on. <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/pristine>

2 For everything we touch with a dirty heart becomes tainted.

and in our relationships, there has to be a change in our heart, so that what is holy and sacred to our Father becomes holy and sacred to us. It is pride that profanes us and hinders us from realizing that we are not yet really dealing with the bent inclination to regard our selves above all others. We are the ones who are actually profaning what is meant to be sacred, yet will we admit it?

From Sanctification to Sanctuary

In the Bible, the story describes how the first man and woman could not get back to that special place where they could talk with the animals and walk with God without shame. An angel barred their way back and he in his spiritual authority has been there ever since. So, although we may make beautiful and fruitful gardens and reduce our carbon footprint, we have not been able to retrieve that ability to trust or find a place where the rest of creation could trust us. We have to reckon with that spiritual authority before we can hope to return to the garden.

The source of authority is not from us, but from God³. You can argue against that, if you wish, but when you are faced with death, you realize that its authority is absolute and you are not able to negotiate with it. The nature of authority is that its terms must be met, not our own terms. That is why we have understood Yahshua in relation to his authority, not just his example of love or kindness, and so on. By willingly surrendering our sovereignty to him, we thus come under his order and protection. It is he who makes an entrance for us back to the garden, and it is he who is sanctifying⁴ us.

To sanctify something is to set it apart so as to be holy and protected. It is the root behind the word sanctuary⁵. Sanctify also means to purify, to cleanse and to make holy. When this process is in place, the outcome is sanctuary. A spiritual sanctuary is not defined by fences or borders, or by leadership, structure, organization or traditions and culture. It is the restoration of the connection between human beings and the Spirit of God, between men and women. Then the environment will follow suit, first in how we take care of the land now, and then culminating in peace in the animal kingdom and on all the Earth.

This is sanctuary and it is happening right now, in its earliest stages. This is the reason and purpose of the life behind the busy-ness of the Common Ground Café. We would not be able to serve with love, to work together and stay together except that this sanctifying is happening to us. Although it is still in some ways very small, we are starting to experience the power of this purifying process as our souls are being brought out of chaos and our ability to trust is being restored to us.

There is so much more we could explain, but without seeing the fruit of our lives laid down willingly to love one another daily, the words remain on the paper without the full effect of what you could witness by your own experience. And so, we invite you, if your heart is stirred by what we have written, to COME and SEE what love there is between us and by what power we are able to trust and live this life.

3 As many cultures attest: “The Dreaming..provides a moral authority lying outside the individual will and outside human creation” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aboriginal_mythology At the foundation of society and culture is a moral authority from God or the spirit realm. This moral authority forms the foundation of civil authority.

4 Sanctify -to set apart as or declare holy; make legitimate or binding by a religious ceremony; to free from sin; purify; to cause to be or seem to be morally right or acceptable. Origin: Late Middle English: from Old French saintifier, from Latin sanctificare, from Latin sanctus ‘holy’ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sanctify>

5 Sanctuary - refuge or safety from pursuit, persecution, or other danger; a nature reserve; a holy place Origin: Middle English from Old French sanctuaire, from Latin sanctuarium, from sanctus ‘holy’ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sanctuary>

The End to All Strife

The Earth gives and gives and gives. It is amazing how abundant life is on this earth. Look around you! You could not measure the abundance and variety of plants and insects, and LIFE! We must have thought it could never be depleted. That the earth has always given so abundantly is a witness of the nature of the Creator, to give and give more generously.

However, it is also a witness against us (as a race) that there is a shortage of what the Earth has. At one time there were tens of millions of bison and now half a million are protected. There were millions of passenger pigeons and now there are none. The species went from being one of the most abundant birds in the world during the 19th century to extinction early in the 20th century. These are only two examples in our face of the tremendous evidence of our greed. If we had allowed the conscience to reign as the predominate attribute of human society, it would always curb the inherent tendency to disregard the effect our lives have on others - taking more for ourselves than ever needed.

Faced with ecological warning signs, our social conscience is prompting us to find "environmentally sustainable" ways to keep our lifestyle, but are we facing our personal conscience? We could be trying to assure ourselves that we are not really hurting anyone and not hurting the earth, and all the while anxiously pursuing ways in which we can keep

ourselves insulated from any personal cost or accountability in regards to our own comfort. We only give a little bit, and we keep the lion's share for ourselves, and then criticize the evil of the multinationals.

But, when everything is judged, once and for all, it's not the evil of other people that we will have to give an account for. We are going to have to face our own laziness and lust. There is a default in us that wants to be safe in our comfort zone and it so often overrules the impulse to help or to deny ourselves for the sake of what is right. Bound up in our heart also is a craving or jealousy to have for ourselves what we see others are enjoying. These two urges are ever present as factors or motives behind what we do, making us restless and ever striving.

Sadly, for most, it is really only when we are dead and these urges no longer work in us that we awaken to an eternal state of awareness and can start to see ourselves for who we really are. There are many answers to the question, "How to stop this striving?" from Buddhist non-attachment to Christian self-denial, New Age self-realization and so on. But only when we are willing to experience complete denial, death to self, will it bring an end to self-centredness and egocentricity. And then we will be able to enter a place of true rest - and all ceasing of strife.

Spiritual Rest

Spiritual rest for many depends on removing outside disturbances (such as going to a tranquil place in the mountains far from the irritations of other people and circumstances) or the focus of your mind on something else than what is causing strife (such as meditation and the discipline of the mind). But neither of these describes the rest of being connected to other human beings - without the dividing wall of self. This rest is one of the hallmarks or characteristics of this spiritual sanctuary that is demonstrated in community, because the Spirit of God is once again in intimate fellowship with "us." It can be broken, this connection, but we are learning how to permanently abide in a place of rest, like a child who is tender.

Many try to create their own space and call it sanctuary. But the sanctuary I am communicating about is created through collective purpose, not an opportunity for strong selfish desires and self-interest to rule. So, please don't be confused by the word sanctuary as meaning solitary or individualistic. Like any sanctuary, it is made up of many creatures and animals living together harmoniously, but all are at peace with one another and contribute toward the whole environment. That is the miracle of it all when it comes to human beings. When you are alone or in isolation, you don't really see what human sanctuary is.

Sanctuary is a living environment where all work as one, building together, without the oppressive element of selfish-will and control.

For it is only demonstrated when you are together with others who fully contribute and partake of your life as you do theirs. It is not separation, but unification. In the most accurate sense - sanctuary is a confederation.

A confederation is an association or alliance of various members all working together for the same intent or common purpose. So it is with sanctuary. There is co-operation and rest between all who are gathered for this sole purpose and cause.

There is no division, strife or anarchy present. If that were the case, then all hope of creating a sanctuary and harmonious dwelling together would be lost. But as it is in a confederation, a league or alliance of nations, so there must be a commitment, loyalty, devotion and determination to the one cause.

Your individual identity is surrendered for a corporate identity and purpose that is far, far greater than self-regard. Sanctuary is meant to be a living environment where all work as one, building together, without the oppressive element of selfish-will and control. Creating this kind of environment has to originate from a spiritual motivation and direction in order to accomplish this. Otherwise, the inner, fallen nature in all human beings would soon become quite evident and the hope of sanctuary would soon cease to have any solid foundation in which to build upon.

Creation Beckons

Nature is a delicate construction¹ — full of little things and momentous forces at work.

The fluffy golden wattle blossoms that peep out from the background of other trees are the harbingers of spring.

When the countryside is splashed here and there with bits of gold, reflecting the rays of the sun and brightening the drab scenes, we know the cold bitterness of winter is fated to pass.

The annual appearance of this flower signifies something much greater, something so big that we can't really grasp it. It marks the return of the earth to a specific point in the solar system in its 365-day trek around the sun. We hardly think of it this way, though. Being such little people in such a large world, we don't walk around aware of the momentous forces that are at work, balancing and perpetuating one another. What we've been given to notice are the things small like us, such as the wattle. These powers have been masterfully woven together, thoughtfully and with precise care. Certainly, Nature is a delicate construction.

Let me try to paint you a picture of what I know about these “invisible forces.” It will probably turn out to be more like a finger-painting, knowing that the details of creation are unsearchable and vast.

Starting with the sun, it jars one to think that if the earth were an inch further or closer to earth (proportionally speaking) then everything would perish. All life would freeze instantly like statues or vaporize without a trace. Yet, here we are, perfectly set on some unseen track around the sun and have been for countless years, somewhat like an acrobat walking a tightrope without a net underneath him.

The sun warms the air, but here we're talking about all at once, in massive global quantities. From the equator to the poles and back down again, fearfully powerful streams of atmosphere that we only detect as a soothing and pleasant breeze have been set in unyielding motion, carrying the dandelion seed, giving graceful flight to the birds, ushering in the spring rains. Without the wind to carry moisture, all the rainfall would dump right back into its point of origin, (the ocean) and the land would be perpetually dry.

Without the wind, the landscape would be a still and silent nothingness, but indeed, it is the vehicle that carries rain to us for our crops as if it was always considering our need. So the sun

revisits day after day, recalling the dew from the fields and delivering it on the wind back to the ocean again in its perpetual cycle.

The atmosphere is astounding. The wind churns and mixes it like a special brine that all of earth's life borrows from. The right proportions of gases not only give us our vital breath, but also blanket the entire planet, capturing its warmth until the sun emerges again just in time before things cool off too much. We owe the timely reappearance of the sun to the rotation of the planet.

Who is it anyway that set the well-calculated spin on the earth? If it were too fast would it fling us off like a slingshot or knock everything down? It's remarkable, the perfect size of the planet. Its density keeps it rolling along, but also swaddles the gaseous atmosphere to itself by the force called gravity. It gently holds all things to its surface, which if it were a little different we would all be flat — or nowhere to be found.

And, of course, the moon affects earth's gravity. It exerts its own pull, powerful enough to make the earth slightly bulge like a water balloon, being that our planet's interior is liquid at the core. Now consider the ground you securely walk around on. It's just a shell, like that of an egg, suspended on this unstable substance. Yet, all this violent pushing and pulling doesn't break it all to pieces. This crust, aside from the flight of birds and the dives of fish, houses a thin veneer of life, teeming and

swarming with several millions of plant and animal species. All of them are affected in their habits and attitudes by these forces that balance and harmonize each other and life as we know it.

As unnerving as these forces beyond our control may seem, we live our short lives in trust. Most of us only experience a certain gentleness in Nature. We take it for granted, as if by chance over millions of years it just worked out that way. But can you find the spirit behind the science?

The fury of the sun we behold as royally-coloured sunsets, and its terrible flames we feel as its morning rays caressing our skin are a witness of the Creator's warmth and affection.

The moon's mighty grip we comprehend as the crashing of the ocean waves. Seeming so aggressive, yet once they've pounced upon the shore they shyly slide back into the deep. Although loud and strong, we never feel threatened by the tides. They are a witness of the Creator's strength, but gentleness toward us.

These are signs that everyone can read, no matter what language one speaks, literate or not. So, listen to what they're saying. Creation is beckoning you to take notice, not of itself, but of the One who watches over us all. He's aware of you.

A Special Place of Rest

We are those who used to be restless, wandering and wanting to know who we were and where we were going. We had no inner rest or confidence about our life and purpose. We did not fit into society although we got along well enough with most people. And though we grew up in society, we were still looking for a home in the deepest sense. We were sometimes even ill at ease in the natural world, although it was so beautiful and restful, simply because we knew there had to be something greater. We needed a special place where we could come to rest. There is a word for a place where some created thing can find rest, safety and protection. Such a place is called a sanctuary.

A sanctuary is a set apart place, where the natural state of rest is protected from outside interference that would bring unrest. Our whole life is devoted to bringing such sanctuaries into existence. We are part of a tribal people, the Commonwealth of Israel...a spiritual nation who live together and are located in communities around the world (ten countries at present). We believe in true religion, which is taking care of those bereaved in life of husband or wife, as well as those who are spiritually orphaned and alone - that pretty much sums up everyone.

So, true religion creates sanctuaries where all and any can live and find rest in the truest sense of the word. Religion means "re-linked" or "re-connected" to the Creator God. Perhaps, that is why we could not find true rest, as most of us sensed our "disconnect" within ourselves. Sanctuaries are spiritual environments where we find that "connect" once again. Sanctuaries such as this are places of "rest-oration." It is the only place we know where we can be in the world, but "not of it" and keep from being stained by all its spiritual pollution (James 1:27). In that protected place of rest, we can grow to know who we are, fulfil our purpose in life and in our souls return to an untainted state of purity.

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