

Terry Havens began the February 9 general meeting by showing us how the primordial wisdom of humanity supports the concept of trusteeship rather than private ownership of land. This wisdom is expressed through creation-stories rather than through abstract theory, and varies according to the social structure.

In matriarchal societies the land is revered as Mother. In Zuni creation-myth the original people emerged out of a series of "wombs" deep in the earth. "How can you tell us to sell our Mother?" asked many Native Americans when forced to surrender title to their lands. When the Cayuses were asked to cede their lands in the Washington Territory, their chief inquired: "WHAT DOES THE GROUND SAY?" "The land is sore" when torn by bull-dozers. We unconsciously use the same metaphor when we speak of "the rape of the land."

In patriarchal societies, the image is different. A Father-God has created the earth and is its sole owner. No human being has unconditional ownership rights. Widows and orphans have gleaning rights, for example. God declares:

"The land shall never be sold in perpetuity,
for the land is mine." Leviticus 25:23

In modern capitalist societies the predominant metaphor is the machine, even in dealing with human minds. The land likewise is treated like a factory-so much nitrogen in, so many more bushels of corn out - or a commodity to be bought or sold for profit. People assume this model without question. Who asks "What does the ground say?"

To change such deep-lying assumptions we need to reach people's imaginations with a more organic vision, such as that of an interwoven WEB of living forces from sun to micor-organisms in the soil, which cannot belong to a private owner but to which we all belong!

Note: An expanded version of this talk, with references, is in preparation and will be available from the VCLT office for xeroxing costs.

Initiation of the Land Search effort began at the last meeting with a burst of energy. Several leads are being followed and the Montague property was explored by some more member builders and a forester. If you know of any potential land, contact Patricia Greene in Whately, 665 4621.

The Lease Committee is presently concerned with the questions involved with land. And the Membership Comm. is continuing to organize the general meetings and edit this newsletter! When we have enticed some folks to join us, we hope to put together a slide show and/or begin speaking in other circles about the VCLT. Interest you? The Board is trying to fill in the gaps left by Jodi and John's resignations. It's been difficult and we do miss them. But then we all can't go to all the meetings all the time! Meanwhile, Steve Morgan has agreed to serve as acting treasurer and Chris Winne as secretary. Next month you will probably be considering some by-law changes which seem necessary.

Finances: As of March 1 we have \$151.91 in the bank. Since we have decided on a trial period with no paid staff person doing the land trust work, we should now be in a position to build up our balance for expected land acquisition expenses during the summer. The appeal for newsletter expense costs and supporting membership donations brought in some needed funds.

To help with the money situation, we will host our first benefit Contra Dance with Ladies' Chain playing and calling on Saturday, March 11, from 8:30 to Midnight, with a beginners' workshop from 8:00 to 8:30. The place is the Hadley American Legion Hall, on Route 9 a few hundred yards East of the Route 47 light in Hadley. There's a cannon out front and plenty of parking; you can't miss it. This hall should prove to be the best dance hall in the Amherst-Northampton area. We hope all of you will be able to come (\$2.00 donation at the door) and that you will urge your friends to support our first dance.

NONVIOLENCE: OUR SURVIVAL? March 10-12 Woolman Hill Deerfield 7739065
Wally Nelson will lead this conference. The conference will deal with living in today's world with a philosophy of nonviolence. An initial session will examine definitions along with some historical perspective. Small and large groups sessions will then explore practical applications of nonviolence related to such questions as:
*To what extent do we all support and benefit from an economy based on violence?
*Can individual attempts at living n-v lives lessen the competition for wealth and resources and, therefore, violence in the form of war and economic injustice?
On Sunday the 12th there will be an open meeting at 3:00 on The Nukes and N-V. Featured will be folk singer Charlie King, recently released from New Hampshire jail for occupying Seabrook.

Finally--The next general meeting will be Thursday, March 16, 7:30 at Greenfield Community College. We hope to have an Earthbridge lessee to answer all our questions.
See You There.....