



PHP POST

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World Food Day

Pope Francis' Encyclical Calls Us to Harmony with All Creation

Jed Koball, Mission Co-worker, Joining Hands Peru



Photo Courtesy of Jed Koball

“A misguided anthropocentrism¹ leads to a misguided lifestyle. . . . When human beings place themselves at the center, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative.”

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* (122)

Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si," addressing global environmental deterioration as the greatest crisis humanity as ever faced, not only affirms the ecumenical efforts of Joining Hands in addressing the root causes of poverty in the context of a globalizing world, but also challenges us to consider the greater breadth and depth of our work.

Identifying and working to overcome systemic political and human behavioral challenges to a more just world are part of God's mission for us. We recognize a principle theological challenge, from which such injustices flow: the broken relationship between humans and nature that is rooted in a "misguided

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An eco-centric theology places the balanced relationship between humans and the rest of nature at the center of theological reflection.

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Letter From the Coordinator

By Ruth Farrell, Coordinator, Presbyterian Hunger Program

WOW! All I can say after reading the articles in this PHP Post is that I am inspired. After reading Ashley Goff's piece (page 8) I want to run home and stir my compost realizing that it is resurrecting, literally "turning ordinary into holy". Before listing what excited me in each article, let me tell you why I see so much coming together and am so privileged to be part of this world at this time. In my work, I get to witness transformation and I want to share two of those stories.

Many congregations take mission trips to Haiti. "Go, Join, Act" is the mantra of our Joining Hands network through which Presbyterians get involved in addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty globally. And recently a congregation "Acted" post-mission trip experience in a new way that made me really smile.

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Asheville, North Carolina visited farmers in Haiti and saw the "Road to Life Yard Garden". They learned about local food economies, the impact of climate change and the constant work farmers do to build up their soil and stop erosion. In fact, they listened and worked alongside Haitian farmers so well that when they got home, they knew their mission could not end with the Go. They created "World

Garden" modeled after the Road to Life Yard Gardens they had seen in the yards in Haiti. Yes. It looks like Haiti from the old recycled tires and types of food produced to the techniques they are using to mix soil, make bio-char and set up a low-tech water system. I couldn't stop smiling – instead of their teaching Haitians, they implemented the techniques they LEARNED from Haitian farmers. (You can see their World Garden at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvfJHCRZms4.)

If that mission trip team listened to, learned from and appreciated their Haitian farmers/teachers for the yard garden, I know they also learned that these farmers are among the 20,000 members of MPP, the Peasant Movement of Papaye, who are intentionally working together to feed their families, create a vibrant local food economy, and protect and build up their soil. In a country where the majority of farmers do not have title to the lands they have farmed for generations, farmers see these gardens and small plots as a significant contrast to land grabs which are happening at alarming rates in which large tracts of land are bought up to produce biofuel or mono-crops for export. This congregation is a mission partner who will join Haitian farmers' efforts to address these issues

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Staff Spotlight

Valery Nodem
Associate for International Hunger Concerns



Photo Courtesy of Valery Nodem

Valery Nodem has served with PHP as the Associate for International Hunger Concerns for the last 4 and half years. A human rights lawyer in Cameroon before joining the PHP staff, "Working against poverty and for justice is not a JOB, but a CALLING and a PASSION. Growing up in a poor family, there were many nights that I went to bed hungry. Now that I see the opportunities (bounty) that the world can provide for all, I pray that my efforts will help others, especially children, to break the poverty cycle and enjoy prosperity."

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The Effect of Conflict and Disaster on Hunger and Poverty: Ebola in West Africa and Boko Haram in Cameroon

Valery Nodem, International Associate for Hunger Concerns, Presbyterian Hunger Program



Photo Courtesy of Valery Nodem

The refugee camp of Mindawao in northern Cameroon, is currently home to more than 40,000 refugees.

War, civil conflicts, displacement and natural disasters are among the main causes of hunger and poverty. We have experienced it many times in our work with PHP, most recently in two regions in Africa.

We saw it during and after the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and Liberia where we have partners through the West Africa Initiative (WAI). For the last nine years, as part of the WAI, a program supported by the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, communities in both countries have been trained on agricultural techniques and have been growing nutritious food for themselves and for sale in markets. They have received initial capital and training to start micro-projects, and have been organizing themselves to become self-sustainable. But the Ebola outbreak changed all that.

This dangerous and fast moving disease killed more than 10,000 people in both countries. As a result, restrictions such as imposed quarantines, closing of schools, and banning of meetings were established to restrain the population's movements in order to try to contain the spread of the virus. Added to that was the fear of even going to church and potentially being in touch with sick people, shaking people's hands or giving big hugs despite such traditions in these countries. As a result, it was impossible for people within their communities to farm together as they used to, to exchange food and support, and to be there for one another.

More than one million people have become poorer and are at serious risk of going hungry in both countries.

We also saw a similar situation in northern Cameroon where the terrorist movement, Boko Haram from Nigeria, has been killing

hundreds of civilians in the last two years and is spreading huge fear and panic in both Nigeria and Cameroon. Between 20,000 to 30,000 people in Cameroon have been internally displaced due to the attacks, while more than 40,000 Nigerians have fled the

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» GIVE

Communities in these countries are asking for our support as they are rebuilding their lives after the tragedies that they have been through. What they have lost is the capital, not the organizing and training, which will stay forever. In Cameroon, they need to replenish their stocks to be able to survive during war times, and to expand the program to neighboring communities. Please visit www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/H000128/ to support this program.

Food, Climate Change, and COP 21

Rebecca Barnes, Associate for Environmental Ministries, Presbyterian Hunger Program

Food (varieties, production, consumption, access and more) around the world is connected to, and affected by, climate change. In addition, it is the people who work in the lower paid areas of the food chain and people who live as subsistence farmers who are most heavily impacted by climate change. The increasing severity of droughts, fires, and floods that affect global food, and the economics surrounding food, are a part of climate change.

Meanwhile, as explored in the Spring 2015 PHP Post, the energy it takes to transport food and to maintain an industrial and global food system leads to greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change grows from the industrial agriculture system, and the industrial agriculture system leads to increased climate change. And both food injustice and climate injustice hit the poor the hardest.

This November and December the international community will gather in Paris for the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change "Conference of the Parties" (COP) 21. Many climate justice advocates are hoping that this year will be notable: the COP at which the world's major governments finally make a concerted effort to deal effectively with the climate crisis.

Last year, President Obama and the Chinese President Xi Jinping both agreed on greenhouse gas reductions in each country that, if indeed committed to and acted upon, will be a huge stride forward. Already, the deal that they reached was heralded by many as historic, since the US and China are key players in international climate change negotiations.

Some of the hoped-for voluntary U.S. commitments that will be pledged at COP 21 are already showing up in the US news



Photo Courtesy of Rebecca Barnes

Members of the PHP sponsored delegation joined global partners in marches during last year's COP20 in Lima, Peru. Climate discussions from the COP 21 will impact the future of food, and debates over greenhouse gas emissions will certainly cover industrial practices, including agriculture.

media. Recent strong EPA guidelines to curb power plant emissions (called the Clean Power Plan) began to be heavily discussed and debated in August. Also over the summer, budget debates in both the House and the Senate included the inclusion (or not) of a U.S. contribution to the Green Climate Fund, an international fund that will help poor countries mitigate and adapt to climate change. Presbyterians working for climate justice hope that state governments will enact the Clean Power Plan as proactively as possible, and that our country will approve President Obama's first pledge of \$500 million towards the Green Climate Fund.

Climate discussions from the COP 21 will impact the future of food, and debates over greenhouse gas emissions will certainly cover industrial practices, including agriculture. To read more about climate change and COP 21, to take action, and to follow on-the-ground reports from any Presbyterians at the COP 21, go to the Eco-Journey blog' climate resources tab.

We know that when we consume or grow food locally, we limit the "carbon miles" of food. Local food economies and sustainable farming practices are healing for both the earth and for human communities. Likewise, when we use energy conservatively, we help curb carbon emissions that could endanger global food supplies. Thoughtful consumption, attentive living, and daily discipleship are a way we can embody Christian faith during this fall season of Food Week of Action and COP 21 negotiations.

Pope Francis in this summer's papal encyclical on the environment (*Laudato Si'*, see more on page 1) strongly urged the connection between social and ecological issues, connecting people's health and well-being to that of the whole earth. Particularly Pope Francis urged us to consider the impacts of climate change and environmental devastation on the poor. This encyclical resonates with Presbyterian stances at General Assemblies and in local congregations, as we try to be mindful of what we consume—food, energy, and more—for the good of God's world.

The Importance of Seed Saving

Jared Zystro, Research & Education Assistant Director, Organic Seed Alliance

Seed saving has been part of human societies since the beginning of agriculture. When our ancestors began saving seed from wild plants, we began a co-evolutionary relationship with plants that is central to our culture. Seed represents an amazing, dynamic thread that traces back through thousands of years of human effort.

We save seed for many reasons.

First, we save seed to preserve a connection to our past, handing down heirlooms to our grandchildren that we have received from our grandparents. We save seed so that these varieties become adapted to our climate, soils, and gardening and farming practices. Second, we save seed to be independent from agricultural monopolies that have little interest in meeting our local needs and in supporting organic and other forms of sustainable agriculture. Third, we save seed because doing so allows us to deepen our relationship to the plants we grow for food and see the complete life cycles of our crops.

In recent decades, however, there has been a dramatic loss in the base of knowledge and skills necessary to steward and improve seed in an ecologically and ethically sound manner. If you talk with most people who lived or worked on a farm prior to 1950, they might describe for you the area of their house devoted to seed storage and organization. They might also describe their process for selecting the best seed from the best plants.

They understood that plant varieties were not static, but changeable, and needed constant care to maintain and improve their integrity.

Today, farmers and gardeners, once the primary seed savers around the globe, rarely participate in this form of plant conservation and improvement. We have abdicated our role as seed stewards. We need to reclaim this important role.

The first step to reclaiming control over our seed is to realize the importance of it as a living, natural resource. When you open your seed catalogs in the winter, ask yourself: Where does this seed come from? Is it organic? Are your seed purchases supporting independent seed companies, or are they contributing to an increasingly globalized and consolidated industry that puts shareholder profit before the health of people and the planet? When you shop at farmers markets, ask your farmers the same questions.

The second step is to increase your own seed knowledge and skills. Organic Seed Alliance (OSA), is an organization that advances the ethical development and stewardship of seed. We regularly teach seed saving classes across the U.S. and provide a free seed saving publication on our website.

The third step is to get involved in your community. One way to do this is through

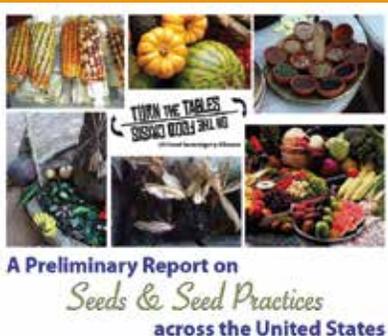


Photo Courtesy of OSA.

Seeds displayed on a swap table at the national Organic Seed Growers Conference.

seed libraries. There's a good chance there's one in your region, as hundreds have popped up over the last decade alone. Seed libraries allow people to "check out" seed to grow with the hope they'll return some seed from their harvest at the end of the growing season. These initiatives aim to protect and expand seed diversity at a community level, while adapting these varieties to local climates. Community seed initiatives like these are an inspiring response to seed industry consolidation, intellectual property protections (like patents that restrict seed saving), and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). These initiatives are a direct way for people to take back control of their food supply.

Over the years OSA has expanded our seed saving education across the U.S. This means we are educating more farmers, gardeners, university students, and seed and food companies to increase the quantity, quality, and diversity of organic seed. We are also involved in more participatory plant



Report on Seeds and Seeds Practices across the US: PHP worked with US Food Sovereignty Alliance and partners to carry out a survey of seed savers and seed advocates in the United States. The results are described and charted in this report, and starting on page 16, you can find action recommendations aimed at defending seeds from privatization and preserving them for the common good, as well as a Resources section. <http://bit.ly/seedreport>

CELEBRATE

World Food Day

Actions of Solidarity for 2015



With Farmworkers! Begin by boycotting Sakuma Berries boycottsakumaberries.com and support Familias Unidas por la Justicia in their struggle for a union contract. Continue supporting the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) by visiting www.pcusa.org/fairfood.



With Family Farmers! The Trans-Pacific Partnership will likely hurt small-scale family farmers, the environment and democracy. Learn more and stay tuned for actions at www.pcusa.org/foodweek.

Global Food Week of Action

October 11-18, 2015

Our faith calls us to work for a world where everyone has sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food and those who produce and prepare the food are fairly compensated, respected and celebrated! One opportunity for Christians and others around the world to act together for food justice and food sovereignty is coming soon. Global Food Week of Action includes World Food Day (October 16) as well as the International Day for Rural Women (October 15) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17). Visit www.pcusa.org/foodweek for more information and to download promotional materials



With Food Workers! Watch for workers organizing in your area and support them. The United Church of Christ has a great list of groups and ways to 'Stand with Workers' at www.ucc.org/justice_worker-justice_stand-with-workers.

Also available online

Worship & Theological Resources

- Food Week Liturgies
- Liturgy for Food and Farming
- World Food Day Prayer
- Sample Sermons for Inspiration

Educational Materials

Agroecology: Putting Food Sovereignty Into Action

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance–Nourishing the World Sustainably: Scaling Up Agro-ecology

Food Chain Avengers: A Food Justice & Worker Justice Comic Book

Climate and Food Center Spread from the PHP Post (Presbyterian Hunger Program Justice Journal) Infographic on how climate change impacts hunger and poverty.

International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development



For Climate Justice! 2015's Climate Negotiations are critical to the health of the planet and the livelihoods of tens of millions of people. Learn about climate & food/farm connections and take action at www.pcusa.org/foodweek.

Compost and Resurrection

Rev. Ashley Goff, Church of the Pilgrims, Washington D.C.

Genesis 2:7

Moving from talking about soil to making some of our own (via compost) was making the leap from abstraction to practice. The health of our soil, along with scale, sustainability, and purpose, set the framework for the creation of our garden. The compost was more than just a utilitarian endeavor. Compost was going to let us get our hands on resurrection. It would let life and death rest, crumble, and flutter off our hands. Compost would let us take what was once alive and let us experience its aliveness in death. This is the context from which we would eat and share our veggies with the poor and hungry---an interconnected, web of stories of humans, food, and microbes that come together, rise-up, and create the essence from which we are made.

As Christians, as we compost, we are also called to find a deeper meaning, to experience the ordinary as holy, and to literally look below the surface of our actions and see where the values of the Gospel are being called forth and held incarnate.

When our hands are covered with the dark, rich soil and compost of our garden, we are, in essence, covered with the resurrection. Our bodies touch transformation. Our skin cells are feeling the fusion of life and death. Covered in compost, the resurrection is literally getting under our skin. When we have that experience, of being covered in the resurrection, something happens to us, transformation happens. The planet's soil is already within us, even if we scrub as hard as we can, with soap and water, to get it off.

From this birthing place, we can discover that "earth is not a planet we live "on" in some temporary role acted on some temporary stage. Earth rather is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and the only

place in all the universe attuned to the kind of creatures we are."¹

When life and death are embraced, as two holy births, we see the parallels between our garden and theological beliefs. Composting is Biblical mimicry of the resurrection. In composting, we cannot disengage from this symbolism that we are embedding on our skin as we dig in the dirt. As we form our raised beds with compost we are connecting our Genesis nature with the pulsating life and death of the resurrection, claiming there is an alternative, powerful way of connecting with the planet that's infused with mutuality, intentionality, and connection.

Compost is a practice of resurrection.

Weaving it Together

World Food Day calls us to live into all the mixed-up, shared relationships God has created, including the food, leaves, egg shells, worms and microbes that create compost.

At Church of the Pilgrims (PCUSA), where I have been serving as one of the pastors since 1999, the starting points for our garden are the rumbling stomachs of our neighbors. We use our garden to create food for ourselves and for Open Table, our lunch for hungry neighbors on Sundays. We have 4 raised beds, 4 honeybee hives, a root vegetable garden, an herb garden, a host of native plants, 2 apple trees, a pear tree, 3 blueberry bushes, and 6 raspberry bushes. What's also essential to our garden is compost: two rotating and one worm composting bins.

Pilgrims' compost has been created from our own web of relationships: vegetables and fruits from our Sunday coffee hour, members schlepping their household scraps to church, leaves from Rock Creek Park, D.C's urban forest right across the street from Pilgrims, and from veggie and fruit castoffs from college and high school groups staying at our Pilgrimage, our in-house seminar center where groups come to participate in faith-inspired service learning and education. Our compost bins allow those things which our culture calls



Photo Courtesy of Andrew Satter

Compost is used during worship services at Church of the Pilgrims in Washington, DC.

A Reflection on the Mega Biodiverse “Universe” Under Our Feet!

Stephen Bartlett, Coordinator for Advocacy and Education for Agricultural Missions, Inc (AMI), member of the Earth Care team of Crescent Hill Presbyterian Church, Louisville, KY.

Soil is miraculous! For some, soil is simply a mixture of clay, silt, sand and organic material. It is where food comes from and what we must wash from our fingernails and clothing in order to feel “clean.” However, a closer look reveals how much we do not know about soil. Soil is in fact a vast microscopic wilderness residing beneath our feet, with an ecosystem far more complex than the one we can see with our own eyes. Perhaps the complexity of the tropical or temperate rainforest can begin to hint at the even vaster complexity of the healthy soil ecosystems of this planet. If this is not clear to you, here are some statistics and facts about soil.

One handful of soil contains: Hundreds of billions of microorganisms! (Not millions but billions!) **Thousands of species of bacteria, most unclassified.** Working together these bacteria create enzymes! **Hundreds of species of fungi and protozoa. Dozens of species of nematodes, mites, and microanthropods!** This does not even touch upon creatures we are more familiar with such as earth worms and other critters we observe. The combined work of this micro-ecosystem has been characterized by soil scientists as: **“Exceedingly Complex.”**

The stable 5% of soil components, or humus is composed of: humic substances,

polysaccharides; non-humic substances; and humin, which has a **half-life of centuries.** Enzymes help create the chemicals in humus, including humic acids and fulvic acid, which helps break down contaminants.

Even this “stable” humus is dynamic! It increases absorption of minerals and organic compounds, increases the water holding capacity of soil, increase the soils buffering capacity (pH range for take up of minerals), and it darkens the color of the soil.

If one were to add to this already complex picture the inscrutable chains of chemical reactions in chlorophyll as it transforms solar energy into sugars for the use of plants, one is faced with interrelated wonders to the nth degree. And of course, the work or creatures that emerge from soil are absolutely, breathtakingly beautiful, from the monarch butterfly to Michelangelo’s David. In this the UN designated year of soils, it is beneficial to think deeply about soil and what we the two-legged primates at the top of the food chain might owe to soil. We need clarity on how we should really feel about soil and its creatures.

Many of us, of course, are alienated from daily contact with soil. Most of us wear shoes and socks, walk upon wood, carpet or concrete the whole day, and only view the plants and

creatures of soil from a distance, usually from inside a metallic container rolling along on wheels and propelled by the geological fuels produced by tropical soils of antiquity dug up by transnational corporations for our convenience and their executives’ and shareholders profit. Biblical stories of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, soiled by ordinary walking of that time, are not a daily mindset we carry around, unless we are farm workers or farmers, or hike and camp in the wilderness, or grow big gardens, or bathe out of a bucket in pursuit of a simple life.

I am acutely aware that soil fertility is a divine gift, and that it is my work to farm or garden in a way that will preserve or increase that fertility. Today we are faced with the obligation to dramatically refine our cultural practices and basic economic activity and beliefs, in order to save ourselves from irreversible climate catastrophe. And the first step in doing so is to hold a handful of soil, to gaze upon this excellent soil and its beautiful life and allow ourselves to feel the emotion of awe and wonder, and humility. In short, we need to pray and listen to the God’s presence and grace as it is revealed in soil. Only God can create such fertility. Only God brings the increase! All the rest, as the wise bard of Ecclesiastes would remind us, is vanity.



anthropocentrism.” A move towards an eco-centric theology is a necessary effort we must make to live into the beloved community of all creation that God wills for us. Our global partners can help us do just that.

Much of Christian theology is an attempt to define relationships: God and humans; Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit; woman and man; landowner and tenant; debtor and creditor; Jew and gentile; among so many others. In the work of defining them, some relationships are prioritized in doctrine and/or in praxis. The great commandment to love God with all your heart, soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5), and a second commandment just like it to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:28-31, Matthew 22:36-40, Luke 10:27-28) give credence to the ranking of the relationships between God, human and his/her neighbor as chief among them.

However, it is our own anthropocentric lens, which we bring even to reading the Bible that guides us to make leaps such as “neighbors” are only human neighbors. So often marginalized among the web of relationships that shape our existence are the relationships between God and nature and humanity and nature that are absolutely fundamental to abundant life. Such is the way of an anthropocentric theology that fails to consider the equally “good” value of all parts of creation, from light to water to living creatures, and even humans themselves: “God saw everything that he made, and indeed, it was very good.” (Genesis 1).

Pope Francis is clear in his encyclical that “a misguided anthropocentrism need not necessarily yield to ‘biocentrism²’ (a predecessor to eco-centrism³), for that would entail adding yet another imbalance, failing to solve present problems and adding new ones. Human beings cannot be expected to feel responsibility for the world unless, at the same time, their

unique capacities of knowledge, will, freedom and responsibility are recognized and valued.” (118)

While defining a distinct role for humanity based on unique capacities is paramount to confronting the present situation in which we find ourselves, I fail to see how it precludes the move towards an eco-centric theology in which the relationship between God and all life systems stand at the center of theological reflection.

An eco-centric theology is crucial for the promotion and preservation of equality in value and a subsequent balance and harmony in the functioning of all of creation. In theological terms, abundant life is the hope and promise for all of creation, not just humans. And when we fail to recognize both the purpose and the right of nature to glorify God, then we lend ourselves to a misinterpretation of Scripture in which “dominion over... every living creature on the face of the earth” becomes a license to usurp the place of God, create hierarchical structures, and dominate over nature in the name of development and progress – a very slippery slope that leads not only to the destruction of the natural world but also to the de-humanizing of others: sexism, racism, slavery, genocide, etc. Yes, a distinct role for humans must be shaped and even prioritized in our theological work, but it must be a theology that centralizes the distinct role of natural ecosystems that support life.

It is this very struggle for harmony that shapes the practices of our Joining Hands partners in Peru. In the context of its ecologically mega-diverse territory in which indigenous spiritualities evolved, we find today the beginnings of a movement expressed politically in such issues as a moratorium on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in order to protect bio-diversity, zoning laws to protect headwaters and watersheds, and an effort

to promote the rights of Mother Earth herself.

Deeper still, we find the theological work of reconciling Christianity with the indigenous spiritualities it once tried to obliterate. In every time and place, Christianity has interacted with culture (for example, translating holy scripture into local languages), so while it may be startling for Western Christians to consider the wisdom in other spiritual expressions, our brothers and sisters and mission workers around the globe have experienced a faithful Christianity that embraces local context. This may be particularly true when it comes to learning afresh what a Christian ethic of caring for creation can be.

Gaining insight from our brothers and sisters around the world and in our mission partnerships, we find a new ethic of respect, mutual learning, and care that includes human neighbors as well as all creation. Until we join in this spiritual and faithful work, our efforts on the political and human behavioral level may be in vain. The peoples our religious predecessors once tried to silence may be the very ones who can teach us something more about the beloved community of all creation God wills for us. May we all move forward, together, towards the abundant life offered by God to all people and all the earth.

1. Anthropocentrism: the belief that human beings are the central or most significant species on the planet (in the sense that they are considered to have a moral status or value higher than that of other lifeforms)
2. Biocentrism: a political or ethical stance which asserts the value of non-human life in nature.
3. Ecocentrism: a point of view that recognizes the ecosphere (ecosystems and the interconnectedness of all life) as central in importance, and attempts to redress the imbalance created by anthropocentrism

The Effect of Conflict, continued from page 3

insurgency in Nigeria and are now refugees in the far north of Cameroon. The region, already known for its high rate of food insecurity, is experiencing growing pressures on its food supply as the conflict continues to escalate and spill over from Nigeria into Cameroon. With a recent history of severe droughts and floods, that have devastated crops and resulted in poor harvests, grain stocks have dramatically declined over the past six years. This makes the lean season, which runs generally from June to September each year, more difficult for communities. The Ministry of Agriculture estimates that there is currently a deficit of 100,000 tons of grain in northern Cameroon, exposing nearly two million people to famine.

In 2006, RELUFA, the Cameroonian Joining Hands network of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, started community cereal grain banks in 18 villages in the Far North Region of Cameroon. The grain banks allow families to borrow grain during the lean period and reimburse it during the harvest period, with a small interest of grain in kind. Over the years, the program has expanded to 42 villages and constructed 27 grain storage facilities. Most communities that received an initial stock of 60 bags of grains have been able, through their own efforts and local mechanisms to increase their stocks and reach more people within

or out of the villages where grain banks are installed. RELUFA estimates that more than 25,000 people are impacted either directly or indirectly by this project.

Since the Boko Haram insurgency, food security in the far north region of Cameroon has been negatively impacted, making reimbursement of grain borrowed from grain banks difficult. In Ribidis and Wampa villages, families have not been able to reimburse the 36 bags of cereal grain borrowed during the lean period last year (2014). The inability to reimburse cereals has left the grain bank empty. In 2014, there was an overall deficit of 189 bags (18,900kg) of cereal incurred by 29 out of the 42 community grain banks. This is unprecedented. With the influx of refugees in the region as well going from house to house begging for food, the pressure on local communities is even stronger.

In Cameroon, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the correlation between health crisis, civil conflict and hunger is very clear. What is also clear and comforting in all these places is to see that communities with whom we have worked, even when they are hard hit, are better off because years of good community organizing and strong programs rooted and run by communities themselves prepared them for difficult times.

Compost and Resurrection, continued from page 8

garbage, dead, and waste to be transformed into life-giving nutrients to help our Sacred Greens garden grow.

World Food Day reminds us that as we carry the prophet's words on our lips, we carry in our veins the blood of holy revolutionaries, we see with our eyes the visions of the dead and the living all mixed up together, our hands can hold the essence, the soil, the place where the Spirit creates life and death.

¹ Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*, (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2013), 85.

Seed Saving, continued from page 5

breeding projects than ever before. Our current organic plant breeding projects span 10 states, involve 10 universities and dozens of farmers, and focus on more than a dozen crops. As we expand our research and education on the ground, we foster regional networks that represent a national movement of seed stewardship.

Be a part of the growing seed stewardship movement today. Learn more about our work at www.seedalliance.org.

Letter From the Coordinator, continued from page 2

through advocacy in the U.S.

Last week I talked with a sophomore in high school who has a carbon-free lawn service. Yes, he uses a solar panel to charge his electric mower and trimmer and he rides his bike to his jobs pulling his equipment on a cart. A simple idea that could become a viable business model for others which could become the rage and produce lots of small carbon-free businesses for young people who limit their businesses to a bike-riding, community-sized radius. Actions abound!!!!

This PHP Post highlights World Food Day (October 16) and offers Food Week of Action which includes Climate. These articles lift up who we are in relationship to God, earth and one another -- not binary relationships but as complex as the soil, climate change and the many other things unseen (experiences in West Africa) that are real nevertheless.

May you be blessed, inspired and join your actions with ours as we recalibrate these beautiful and complex relationships so that hunger and poverty are no more and we thrive with earth to glorify God.

» PLAN AHEAD

Each season brings with it unique opportunities and challenges. What it means to live justly at one time may look radically different from what it means to live justly at another time. All of us strive to live in accord with God's word, and how each person engages in practicing lifestyle integrity will vary.

If you feel called to celebrate differently this year, talk with loved ones and explain why you have made a switch. Be gentle in your explanations and invite others to journey with you through the process. We need God and the people around us to assist on the journey. Learn more about preparing for the holiday season at www.pcusa.org/justliving.



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» Join

PHP Food and Justice Webinars

The second Monday of each month at noon (Eastern); 11am (Central); 10am (Mountain); 9am (Pacific). Visit pcusa.org/phpwebinars to register.

» GO

The Presbyterian Hunger Program is promoting experiential trips which analyze the root causes of hunger and poverty while calling participants to engage in solidarity actions with our local and global partners. To learn more about the available opportunities visit pcusa.org/trips.

» Give

Your financial support enables the Presbyterian Hunger Program to witness to the healing love of Christ and to bring hope to communities and individuals struggling with hunger. Give online at pcusa.org/hunger/give.

Or you can write "H999999 Hunger" on your check and send to:
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Thank you for your continued support!