Caretakers of the planet

> Human beings are now confronted with the fact that we share a planet together.... No matter what else we may be, we are also *planet* people, part of the Earth's living biosphere.
>
> Planet Drum Foundation

In the landmark film *The Powers of Ten,* one of the finest attempts to help people understand the levels of natural organization, the viewer is taken on a journey that begins with a person lying on a beach, continues outward up a series of steps through the solar system to the theoretical edge of the universe, returns to the person on the beach and then descends a staircase through the body to the lilliputian world of the electron.

It is absolutely mind-boggling to try to grasp the ideas of the vastness of the universe and the minuteness of the electron at the same time. In the middle of the macro/microcosm is the person, the zero point for all human-comprehensible scales of large and small. Complementing the unique perspective of one person is the singular whole that encompasses us all, our one earth. The meaning that author Theodore Roszak has telescoped into the phrase "person/planet" [the title of one of his books] is represented by the astronaut circling the moon and emotionally exclaiming, "I can hold the earth in the palm of my hand." Each of us does, indeed, hold that fragile jewel in the cup of our hands.

From our perspective here at the computer, we find it difficult to remember that we are just tiny specks on the planet, two of the now four and a half billion people who populate the 10 percent of the earth on which people live (about a person for each year of our planet's evolution). That recognition of the interconnectedness

of everything, an ancient truth of many religions, gives rise to a vast network that girds the globe, linking climatologists with local environmentalists, horticulturalists with corporate CEOs, peasants with princes.

Ever since the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's terrifying book *Silent Spring,* which revealed the impact of chemical pollution on our rivers, streams and oceans, networks have been forming around the ideas of clean environments, ecological balance, the responsible use of the earth's resources, creating technologies that are life-enhancing and in proportion to what author Kirkpatrick Sale has identified as *human scale* in his book by that name. These networks appear to be singularly adept at holding together and celebrating the incredible powers of the earth to provide us with everything from grapes and electricity to yurts and flight to whales and rainbows.

Were it not for the oddly forgettable fact that everything *is* interconnected, the exploitation of natural resources might have been relegated to a list of concerns that could be dealt with later. However, what "the caretakers of the planet" tell us is that we have to change our patterns of resource consumption and develop new resources or be prepared to die on a desolate, barren, spoiled planet. We cannot strip the Black Hills of South Dakota without disturbing the ecology of the entire region and ultimately the world. Nor can we ignore the question, what is nature's response to the decimation of whole species, whether tiny snail darters or gargantuan whales? According to some ecologists, the November 1985 "volcano eruption" in Colombia was actually a mud slide aggravated by soil erosion due to improper planting of coffee bushes—which could have been planted ecologically.

Chroniclers throughout history have documented the development of humanity's mastery over resources—from the Prometheus legend that describes him stealing fire from the gods to matriarchical studies (such as that of Elizabeth Gould Davis) which credit women with the discovery of tools and fire. Fire, one of nature's gifts, illustrates how such gifts may be *used* or *abused.* Fire can be used constructively for cooking, heating and lighting, but it can also be awesomely destructive. As entrepreneurs dismantle whole mountain ranges in order to turn shale into coal and coal into gas, the abuse of gifts hundreds of millions of years in the making seems staggering.

Because the term "resource use" itself has a connotative tinge of exploitation, it reminds us that virtually all ecological/energy choices have harmful side effects or are restricting to someone or something. As *"sapiens",* we are not yet wise enough to fully grasp the ramifications of our personal and social choices as they relate to the bioplanet. As inhabitants of the Invisible Planet, we strive to do the best we can, acting more like "caretakers" than "visitors"—which is how the Community Congress of San Diego describes itself:

> "Caretaker" is a term used by Edward E. Sampson to describe those individuals who value and care for the earth they live on, the people they live with, and the other life forms which surround them. Sampson contrasts "caretakers" with ''visitors'' who when visiting different locations stop long enough to exploit the territory, taking things of value and leaving their cast-off debris and garbage.

Environment

The environmental movement got its start in the US in the 1950s and 1960s when outdoor adventurers caught wind of the fact that developers were moving in on their territory. Born principally as a network of concern among mountain climbers, backpackers, bird watchers, and other nature lovers, these people began to coordinate their efforts and eventually joined long-standing outdoor recreation organizations such as the Sierra Club to work around conservation issues.

With roots reaching back to the turn of the century, the Sierra Club is the grandparent of the early conservation movement. (The Sierra Club headquarters in San Francisco was one of only two buildings to survive that city's 1906 earthquake.) During the Depression, the Sierra Club was the leader in a number of conservation battles, opposing such outrageous plans as a federal government scheme to flood the Grand Canyon and turn it into a lake!

Before long, conservation became too narrow a term to describe the problem: the issues went much deeper than the felling of redwoods for the purpose of building highways. As the conservation movement gathered steam, so was a parallel group concerned with the quality of air. "In 1964," writes futurist Hazel

Henderson in her book *Creating Alternative Futures: The End of Economics*, "I joined with some other worried citizens and mothers of small children in New York City to form an organization called Citizens for Clean Air. I soon learned that if the air was to remain breathable and the environment life-sustaining for my infant daughter during her lifetime, I and other citizens would have to commit ourselves to a process of learning about the complex, interdependent, urban industrial societies in which we lived and about the basic assumptions on which their technical and economic systems were founded."

For a number of years, the two branches of the movement remained separate. Henderson recalls writing to conservation-oriented environmentalists in the early 1960s, asking if they were concerned with urban environmental issues such as air pollution and lead contamination. She was shocked when the reply came back: "We see no connection."

Eventually, however, the rural conservationists and the urban environmentalists did meet, and over the next few years Henderson-type thinking attracted a large, committed following that worked on many local environmental issues, culminating in the first national environmental action in the US, in 1970. On 22 April of that year, people with these broader environmental concerns came together to celebrate Earth Day in Washington, DC, and sites throughout the US. Earth Day attracted tremendous media attention: The image of the earth as a brilliant blue-and-white-swirled ball hanging in black space became a widely recognized symbol, and before long "ecology," a word previously reserved for biology classes, became commonly used.

Ecology and a clean environment have great appeal. It's difficult to find anyone who will consciously speak against clean air or clean rivers. Yet, being in favor of clean air and doing something about it are two quite different matters. Out of the large inactive network of implicit environmental concerns have arisen a number of action-oriented groups working in different ways to preserve the planet and its many levels of physical, biological, and human complexity.

Breaking off from the Sierra Club in the late 1960s, Friends of the Earth (FOE) serves as a cornerstone of the environmentalist movement. One of the largest groups currently active in the movement, FOE has evolved into an activist environmental lobby,

working on legislation and mounting public campaigns around such issues as nuclear power, clean energy, clean air, wild lands, and wildlife. FOE also maintains contacts with independent sister groups in twenty-three other countries.

FOE's greatest impact may be a few years in the future, as the Innovative ideas of physicist Amory Lovins, once FOE's London representative, and his wife lawyer Hunter Lovins, receive wider publicity and are actively applied. Working from their passive solar Rocky Mountain Institute, the Lovinses have put forth their plan for "a route to reliance half a century from now based solely on renewable energy sources—solar energy and its derivatives, including wind and water power, and the conversion of organic matter into fuels. Energy conservation and frugal use of fossil fuels will get us through the transition period," Friends of the Earth literature explains.

One of the Lovinses' greatest achievements may be in persuading people who are deeply committed to preserving "wilderness" to recognize the interconnectedness of open space and the greater issues of how we are going to use all our resources.

"Wilderness is a strictly civilized concept," says Roger Dunsmore in *Wild Idea. . . Wild Hope,* a pamphlet published by Planet Drum Foundation. "The fact that we see natural areas as 'wild' and call them wilderness is an indication of the extent to which we are removed from our own natural state. It must be completely unimaginable to indigenous people that we could call their life-sphere a 'wild' place. Wilderness is a home. It's a home for whatever species are there and it's the original human home."

Planet Drum publishes a variety of innovative materials about different "regions" of the planet. Unrestricted by form or content, Planet Drum gathers together whatever it needs in the way of material to understand a region of the earth, transforms it into resplendently designed media—which include, variously, maps, charts, poems, diaries, newsletters, and essays—calls it a "bundle," and mails it off to members.

A bundle from Planet Drum on the Rocky Mountains called "Backbone—The Rockies" includes a conversation between the group's review *(Raise the Stakes!)* editor, Peter Berg, and goehistonan Robert Curry; "Rockies—The Source," a study compiled by residents of the Slocan Valley, in British Columbia; "Rocky Mountain lifetime," an amazing information wheel about the region; "A

house at 8000," a journal excerpt about life in a solar-heated house in the Rockies; *Wild Idea... Wild Hope,* the pamphlet mentioned above; and "The eye in the rock," a poem celebrating the beauty and spirit of the Rockies. A beautiful map delineates the spine of the Rockies from north of the Peace River and east of Slave Lake, in the Canadian Northwest Territories, to the valley carved out in the southwestern United States between the Colorado and the Rio Grande and carries this description:

> Think of the Rocky Mountains as a sunburst or a star. Its rays are patterns of water and soil moving across North America. Soil fertility from the cornfields of Indiana to the delta of the Columbia in Oregon is owed to nutrients eroded from the Rockies by wind and water.
>
> People in the Rockies live in the heart of the star. People living in the Mississippi Delta, on the edges of the Bering Sea and the Gulf of California, around the Hudson Bay, people at the far reaches of the rays, all watch Rockies water go by.

When we saw the Rockies in this pattern, we knew that we had yet another image of a network to add to our mental collection.

Eco-consciousness (ecological consciousness), such as that purveyed by Planet Drum, is mind-expanding; it transcends national borders, legislative actions, and economic gaming. "There is adequate new evidence for considering the Rockies as a whole and continuous biotic province or biogeographical province: a neutral natural zone whose real survival is based on biological and geological processes rather than on the priorities of nations, states, or provinces, and corporations whose boundaries and self-interests run willy-nilly throughout the region."

Whereas one stream of the environmental movement works at the legislative and regulatory level (such as FOE and Environmental Action) and a second stream works to network information (such as Planet Drum), yet a third stream of the movement is focused on action.

Greenpeace, an international direct action environmental organization, has engaged in some of the most dramatic and effective campaigns to protect the planet and its denizens in this century. "We attempt to spotlight ecological atrocities by nonviolent physical protest at the scene," said former San Francisco Green-

peace Director Tom Falvey. “Thus we have placed our bodies between harpoons and endangered whales every year since 1975 in the Pacific, the Atlantic, off Australia and Japan. We go up to the Newfoundland ice floes every March (since 1976) and confront the sealers who club newborn seals to death for their pelts.

“In 1971, 1972, and 1973 we sent ships into both the American and French nuclear weapon test zones during the actual explosions(!) to interfere with, and provoke public protest against, these test runs for Armageddon.” In *1985,* Greenpeace made front-page headlines in newspapers around the world when its maiden vessel *Rainbow Warrior* was blown up by French secret service agents. The explosion which took the life of Fernando Pereira, a Dutch photo journalist, occurred while the ship was moored in an Auckland, New Zealand harbor, slated to sail into French nuclear test zones. The French defense minister resigned and two of the French agents were charged with and pled guilty to manslaughter.

Later in *1985,* the ship *Greenpeace* sailed from New Zealand to establish a base camp in Antarctica. “The *Green peace* is going to claim Antarctica for all peoples of the world,” explains Peter Bahouth, chair of Greenpeace USA. “We want to show that Antarctica needs to be preserved as the last unspoiled continent on the planet.”

Greenpeace is a no-frills organization, distributing only that information that is directly relevant to what it is doing. Its one-page information sheets on topics such as “Of whales and whaling,” “Nuclear disarmament,” and “Toxics” are succinct, fact-filled statements about these problems.

The poignant image of Greenpeacers in their rubber dinghies rolling over ocean waves as they protect sea mammals from their would-be executioners is the stuff of which myths are created, material sufficient for the awe-inspiring book *Warriors of the Rainbow* by Robert Hunter. Even the names they chose, Green-peace for the movement and *Rainbow Warrior* for the vessel, carry a planetary survival message. While soldiers have for forty centuries identified themselves with minute, arbitrarily defined patches of the earth’s surface, fighting humans to “protect” humans, these terrestrial guerrillas identify with the planet as a whole, indeed, with existence as a whole, transcending human chauvinism. Greenpeace lives the belief that the planet and all its creatures are one.

Renewable energy

Nowhere is the concept of "opportunity in crisis" so clear as in the energy field. Renewable (also called "alternative") energy is the summary title for a number of initiatives—what Amory Lovins calls "the soft energy path" (see his 1977 book by that title)—or what could simply be called "the soft solar network", since all energy sources ultimately derive from the sun. For practical purposes, it is helpful to make some distinctions within the soft energy field, since each of the "paths" encompasses its own network of people and projects that interweave and exchange resources. Some of these paths are:

? The (specifically) *solar* network, the largest, best-known, and most universally applicable of our available, energy options;
? The *wood* network, growing primarily in the forest-rich, generally northern and mountainous regions;
? The *wind* network, appropriately positioned chiefly at water's edge;
? The *water* network, tapping the available power coursing by our two ocean coasts, by scores of mighty rivers, and by thousands of backwater streams that already have dams.

Along with the groups that stress the values of conservation, cogeneration (using energy ordinarily wasted in energy-conversion processes, such as drying clothes in wood-stove-warmed rooms), and waste conversion (such as is involved in the production of methane gas), these organic, noninvasive, self-renewing energy networks stand in sharp contrast to the fossil-fuel industries, which were born of a worldview in which more is better, waste creates profit, side effects are trivialized, and the past (fossil) and future be damned. Even the names of these abundant resource networks sun, wood, wind, and water—have an elemental poetry about them.

Obtaining our energy by deliberately digging into the earth with mines and wells instead of receiving it with open arms directly from the sun makes us look like ridiculous energy ostriches. What could be better than obtaining our energy from the sun—our boundless, inexhaustible, everlasting, completely free local furnace? Perhaps the greatest obstacle to solar energy exists not in the

technology to tap it, which ranges from absolutely nothing to sophisticated photovoltaic storage cells, but rather, in the fact that no one can own the sun. Unlike the moon that America planted old Glory upon, the sun eludes ownership. Imagine affixing the American flag, or as has been done with most of our other natural resources, a corporate logo, to the sun.

The solar network has been by far the most effective, even though precariously balanced and potentially threatened, of all the grids in the renewable-energy field. Perhaps because solar-generated heat and power are so potentially competitive with their fossil-fuel rivals, the solar solution has been back-burnered, budget-cut, and research-reported nearly to death. Yet solar energy is a practical, economical, available technology that could be put into place almost overnight. Indeed, the slogan of the nuclear power industry, "safe, clean, and cheap," by rights belongs to the sun. In three stunning pages in *Human Scale,* Kirkpatrick Sale summarizes the solar argument. Using such concepts as economical, conservational, democratic, decentralized, efficient, and adaptable, Sale demonstrates that solar technology is the appropriate energy source for now and the future, consistent with the needs and values of the Invisible Planet.

The use of wood for energy began hundreds of thousands of years ago and has continued unabated to the present. In Third and Fourth World countries, wood is at the basis of both survival and ritual. A typical family in western Africa spends 20—30 percent of its income on firewood; in Thailand, a father's role at his child's birth is to keep the fire burning with special wood he has gathered during the ninth month of pregnancy. Wood may have lost some of this traditional magic in America, but its use is on the rise, with about *1.5* million households having converted to wood in the 1980 season alone and an estimated 15 million households heating with wood in *1985*. The smell of burning apple wood and the quiet heat of the fire, coupled with independence from expensive and noisy oil-powered systems, draw people to heating with wood. Publications such as *Wood N' Energy,* the newsletter of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and the *Wood Burning Quarterly,* in Minnesota, keep wood burners up to date on the latest tips and developments. However, one of the more sobering developments was the quick realization by wood-stove

manufacturers and users that this form of combustion is a heavy pollutant itself. Hazel Henderson states the problem frankly:

> Wood-burning is becoming a significant air pollution problem releasing many carcinogens, particulates, *and* Dioxin (as in Agent Orange). New England wood-stove romanticism is about finished. All stoves are polluters and will have to be redesigned or retrofitted.

Similarly, wind power is hardly a universal panacea for energy generation; yet, in the appropriate location, wind is both sensible and economical. On Cuttyhunk Island, off the southern coast of Massachusetts, for example, a single windmill is supplying half the electric requirements for the island, not an inconsiderable reduction in a community dependent on the importation of diesel fuel by barge that has driven the local utility rates 20 percent higher than those of New York City. But even that unlikely spot, New York City, is the home of a commercial scale windmill, built by local teenagers, and now supplying all the electricity to an apartment building on the city's Lower East Side.

Clearly, windpower is on the upswing, and although the US wind industry is a distant relative of our travelogue image of Holland's windmills, "the winds, they are a'blowing" with the promise of locally generated power.

The potential for hydroelectric power generation is great and widespread. Dams need not be the size of the gargantuan Bonneville Dam, in Washington, or require bureaucracies the size of the Tennessee Valley Authority, to generate electricity. Literally thousands of rural river runs are rushing water past people blind to the power available to them. In New England alone, more than 250 sites are under consideration for development of hydrogenerated power.

Recognizing the potential in our riverways, as well as in the oceans themselves, water-generated-power groups have been spreading the word about this nonpolluting form of energy. "Most of the nation's water potential is unused, but enough unused backcountry dams exist in the US *right now,* according to the Federal Power Commission, to supply the entire annual electrical needs for a population of 40 million people—more than the Rocky Mountain and Pacific regions combined—if only they were equipped with generators," writes Sale. While most of the projects are being

developed by renewable-resource-minded entrepreneurs, support for water power comes through conservation groups concerned with other issues, as well as from industry groups such as the National Alliance for Hydroelectric Energy, based in Washington.

Sun, wood, wind, water—the sources of power for human civilization since its origin. An inventive spirit motivates the reclaiming of these power sources for future human civilization, a spirit which merges often with the creative forces behind appropriate technology.

Appropriate technology

Small Cat, a wise old ancestor, sat on the windowsill, basking in the sun. "But she's not small," people would say when they asked her name. "She may not be small," we replied, "but she is beautiful."

Our cat's name is one of many fanciful, affectionate uses to which the name of the famous book by the late British economist E. F. Schumacher has been put. *Small Is Beautiful* introduced people to the idea of the human side of technology, of tools that could be seen as *appropriate* to living in harmonious balance with the earth.

Appropriate technology has had as many descriptions as it has had applications, ranging from very fuzzy notions of sometimes crazy-looking contraptions to more generalized, value-oriented definitions such as the one offered by the Southern Unity Network/ Renewable Energy Project (SUN/REP): "Appropriate technology is any technology—old or new—which is decentralized, labor-intensive, small-scale, accessible to rich and poor, and safe."

Appropriate technology conjures up images of windmills, waterwheels, compost heaps, organic gardens, wood stoves, solar panels and bicycles. For those who have made the study and invention of appropriate technologies their life work, the concept embraces many kinds of tools that people can use on a human scale. Appropriate technology has broad appeal in a world in which people are overwhelmed by buildings that are so tall that they sway in the wind, by planes that fly so far overhead that we only hear them, and by traffic that becomes so jammed at the end of the workday that people can actually *save* time by *waiting* to leave until rush hour is over. Appropriate technology is based on the decentralized

use of tools in contrast to that overapplied informing principle of industrial civilization: centralization. Centralization has rendered many institutions, services, and approaches ineffective, frustrating, unresponsive, and alienating, by making them too big and too abusive of critical balances.

With the awareness that locally originated and point-to-point services are often the most sensible means of solving local technical problems, the appropriate technology movement has been strongly attracted to the idea of networking. Indeed, among the first groups to create networks in the 1970s were the AT centers, and, unlike other networks that have chosen words such as "movement,'' "group," "association" and sundry other nouns to sum up their collectivity, nearly all the AT groups have at some time called themselves or one of their offshoots a "network."

One of the first and longest-standing AT initiatives is *Rain Magazine.* Begun in 1974 as a newsletter for sharing AT information in the Pacific Northwest, the Portland-based publication now enjoys international readership. The magazine quickly brings the reader up to date on what's happening in AT; each issue includes book reviews, "how to's," excerpts from reports, interviews, essays, and short new blurbs. *Rain* has also given birth to several books (notably *The Rainbook)* and to primers on various subjects.

By the mid-1970s, the *Rain* office had become one of the highlights of the AT circuit, attracting everyone from college students doing term papers on AT to governors and corporate executives. As success is often measured in notoriety, it could be said that AT efforts had met with tremendous success. This success produced an identity crisis of sorts in the AT community, one that typically faces successful networks. A January 1980 essay in the "Raindrops" column of *Rain* sums up the predicament:

> Appropriate technology, whether called that or not, has been receiving increased recognition and gaining national and international prominence as a key component in the transition to a more ecologically and socially balanced world. At the same time, the recent whirlwind of attention has precipitated a kind of "growth" in appropriate technology not unlike the ''growth'' we've been discussing the limits of for so many years—an undifferentiated, somewhat out-of-control growth

that's happening so far and so wide and so fast it seems nearly impossible to keep track of until it's already become history.

One thing we've learned from the "limits of growth" debate is that "growth", like "development," is a word with many connotations. As far as the growth of appropriate technology, we have to ask *what kind of growth* are we working toward? And further, *what kind of movement* should the appropriate technology movement become?

There are hard questions to be answered. What does it mean after being on the outside for all these years to find ourselves on the inside? What does it mean to have a surge of public attention, corporate interest and government support (though still a piddling amount when compared to things like nuclear power and defense) on our work toward local self-reliance? Some pretty important distinctions are getting blurred—do we need to draw the line?

AT projects are numerous and inspiring, and visits to some experimental centers are like time travel into Utopia. New implementations of R. Buckminster Fuller's famous phrase "doing more with less" are being developed at locations such as the Farallones Integral Urban House, in Berkeley, California—where rabbits replace lawn mowers and garbage disposals take the form of sawdust buckets. At the New Alchemy Institute in Falmouth, Massachusetts, fish are farmed in indoor solar-heated pools. Such sophisticated and beautiful projects could be called appropriate *art.* Adaptations of these ideas are being tried elsewhere as the AT network reaches from the high-tech United States to the jungles of Guatemala to the food-short nations of Africa.

One international node in the AT movement is in a tiny village in the mountains of Maine, barely twenty miles from the Canadian border. It is from Rangeley, Maine, that TRANET, the Transnational Network for Appropriate/Alternative Technologies, conducts its business.

TRANET got its start at the 1976 HABITAT Forum of the UN Conference on Human Settlements, in Vancouver, Canada, and has grown to be a membership organization of 1200, exchanging information with nearly 500 magazines, newsletters and journals, and maintaining files on 1500 AT or "new age" groups and 10,000 names and addresses of interested individuals. This organization

is known primarily through its quarterly newsletter/directory, an excellent distillation of information about activities and articles relevant to its membership.

"A network has no center," TRANET coordinator/executive director William Ellis, a no-nonsense former physician born as the fifth generation Ellis in Rangeley, told us at the start of our conversation. Hence, a network does not need imposing facilities and urban amenities. "I inherited this house, where I was born, from my parents. And this is where our family is practicing self-reliant living. We grow our own food, cut our own wood, and have fitted our house with solar collectors. We feel that if we espouse self-reliance, we should practice it. The only time we drive the car is to take our useless garbage—mostly plastic to the dump."

Having just returned from one of his frequent trips around the world, on which he had spent time with "UN and government bureaucrats who talk appropriate technology from their high-lifestyle penthouses." Ellis was nonetheless feeling very optimistic. "Five years ago, the Nepalese Government thought that 'appropriate technology' was really our second-hand stuff. Now they understand what AT is all about, and they're eager to learn what's happening in Guatemala, in Africa, wherever."

For Ellis, Rangeley, Maine, is a perfect spot from which to reach around the globe. "Most of our international work is done by telephone, and the communications system here, the phones and the mail, are excellent. In fact, the phone service and mail is probably better here than it is in New York."

Beyond its valuable information services, TRANET is also developing and espousing a philosophy of transnationalism grounded in networking. "AT goes way beyond windmills and conservation and cutting your own wood, way beyond the hardware and the software," Ellis says. "AT has also to do with the way our world is organized, which is why we have formed a network" (see Chapter 10).

TRANET's unfolding ideas about our preparation as global people to leap beyond national boundaries are presented in the Fall 1979 newsletter in a short essay, "A second level of world governance

> Nation-states have governed world affairs for only a very brief period of human history. These autonomous governmental

> bodies have divided the land of the earth into a crazy-quilt chess board with little concern for culture, languages, religions, races, or ecologies. Both within and between these meaningless boundaries weird games of politics are played with the resources and lives of people. It is time to ask to what extent this world governmental system is to be changed if we are to reach the full potential of human development....
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> People in all parts of the world are recognizing that big business, big government, big technology, and other centralized organizations cannot alone solve local problems or develop local potentials, only the people themselves can. And, people in all parts of the world are recognizing not only that small is beautiful but also that small is possible and small is happening. There is a worldwide revival of human rights, human dignity, and individual initiative.... This decade may be hailed as the beginning of the future because people-to-people networks initiated a more creative approach to world welfare—a complementary alternative to the UN—a second level of world governance.

Toward which end TRANET is working. In 1981, TRANET initiated the first of its people-to-people exchanges through its Associates Program in which skilled technical people from AT groups in one part of the world make three-month site visits to AT groups in another part of the world, an idea that Ellis believes has its long-time precedents in the international Sister Cities program (Boston, Massachusetts, and Kyoto, Japan, for example) and the US-based Experiment in International Living, which sponsors high school student exchanges.

Even TRANET's governing-board structure reflects its philosophy. Its twenty-five board members come from five geographic regions: Africa (presently represented with directors from Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria and Tanzania); Asia and the Pacific (India, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia); Latin America (Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala and Chile); Europe and the Middle East (the Netherlands, England, France, Iran and Switzerland); and North America (United States and Canada). Further, the annual meetings are rotated among the continents as is the presidency.

The developing TRANET philosophy is somewhat reminiscent

of the original vision proposed for world government, prior to Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations scheme. Early UN, or perhaps more accurately, world-union, ideas put professional associations (potentially representing the whole range of people's interests) on an equal footing with nation-state governments. Had this idea become reality, the world union might now be according equal importance to national governments and the worldwide nongovernmentally indentured networks of windmill builders, of midwives, of poets. A dream, perhaps, but.