

Wednesday, January 3



Message From Reclaiming Earth Committee

It feels a little “strange” to be writing 2018 for this first edition of the Wednesday Earth Wisdom in our new year. Even as we look ahead, we often learn something or become aware of situations if we look behind.

A case in point is taken from “Earth Community Earth Ethics,” written by Larry Rasmussen and published in 1996. He writes: “Typically then, poorer countries and communities and even relatively prosperous ones ... compete with one another to get in on ‘development’ by lining up with negotiated land, labor and environmental compromises. Some succeed and benefit. For the rest it is largely a slow race to the bottom. In time such plundering becomes so severe that ‘overshoot’ appears, first in poor communities, then in poor regions that still offer something of value to the global economy, either as resources or as ‘sinks’. The signs of overshoot, which profile environmental apartheid, are these:

- Falling stocks of groundwater, forest, fish and soils.
- Rising accumulations of wastes and pollutants.
- Capital, energy, materials, and labor compensating for what were once free natural services such as sewage treatment, flood control, air purification, pest control and much more.
- Capital, energy, materials and labor devoted to exploitation of more distant, deeper or more diluted resources.
- Capital, energy, materials and labor diverted to defend or gain access to resources that are concentrated in a few remaining places (such as oil in the Middle East or water in several locales).
- Deterioration in physical capital, especially long-lived infrastructure.
- Reduced investment in human resources (education, health care, shelter) in order to meet consumption needs or pay debts.
- Increasing conflict over resources.
- Less social solidarity, more hoarding, greater gaps between haves and have-nots, more crowding, more crime, less security, and larger scale displacements of persons, both within and across borders.” (Pgs 81-82)

Clearly, Dr. Rasmussen was a man ahead of his time and a prophet of earth ethics (*Integral Ecology*). As you reflect on his words, of what have you become more aware?