

# The Order of the Earth

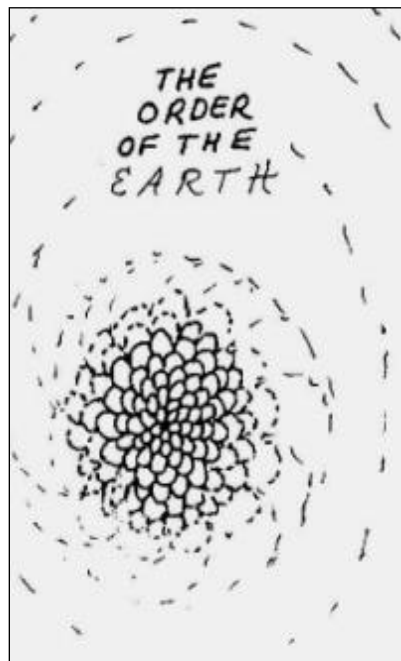
## *Heart leads, I follow.*

1995 was a wonderful year for me. Mom sold our childhood house and moved into a cozy basement apartment with Joanie and Joe. It was a perfect home for our aging, nearly-blind mother whose MS had taken its toll and she was no longer able to walk alone. Pam, a lovely Jamaican woman, was her caregiver. Pam, Mom and Mom's cat had a good life with Joanie and Joe.

Joanie and I split the profit from the sale of the house and suddenly John and I were able to get out of debt. I could coast for a while with no emergency part-time jobs.

I put my best environmental thoughts into a book, concentrating on every word. It was a concise summary with my boldest ideas. The cover started with a seed (me) in the center and grew to a flower, then spiraled out to cover the Earth and on into the Universe. Since I was at the height of my anti-technology stage, I hand-wrote every page. Then a group of friends and I made 11,000 of these 32-page, pocket-sized books. We had book-making parties on our living room floor – fold, trim, staple; fold, trim, staple; fold, trim, staple....

"The Order of the Earth" was made of two pieces of unbleached, recycled paper folded in half three times. We trimmed the edges and stapled the insides. The dimensions were 2 3/4 inches wide and 4 1/2 inches long. Mostly we gave them away until the day one of our friends was at a fair and saw a whole box of them made up from the originals we had distributed. Once I knew that my little book had a life of its own, I moved on.



**"THIS IS THE WAY I BELIEVE A LIFE SHOULD BE  
LIVED!"**

says my friend, Valley.

And thus she lives.

This little book is a composite of thoughts and actions my friends and I deliberately choose as we live day to day. It describes a Lifestyle Rebellion. If our thoughts touch your hearts, please join us!

The Order of the Earth (OE) is an invisible community of zealots of all ages, both sexes, all faiths, all ethnic backgrounds, living with reverence for all life.

We live with an acute awareness of and sorrow for the human misery and environmental devastation we see. We are taking serious steps to eliminate these problems.

We are building the future NOW!

OE is a Revolution of the Spirit. We are creating gloriously simple ways of being, living minimally and showing younger ones how to do so, too.

We constantly think about what we are doing, saying, observing, buying.

We make value judgments about what promotes life and health and what does not. Then we act accordingly.

We are falling in love again with Nature. We celebrate Earth's gifts to us.

We rejoice in the sun and the moon and the stars, the flowers, the birds, the raindrops.

We are grateful for the beauty of the Earth every minute of every day.

We walk quietly in wilderness as often as possible.

We listen.

"Beloved Creator,  
You have given us Earth, the sky and the seas.  
Show us the way to care for the Earth, not just for today,  
but for ages to come.  
Let no plan or work of ours damage or destroy  
the beauty of your Creation.  
Send forth your Spirit to direct us  
to care for the Earth  
and all Creation."  
Columban Fathers, St. Columbans, Nebraska

Our daily use of time, talent and energy reflects our innermost beliefs.

We renounce personal pride, racism and nationalism so that peace lives in our hearts all the time. God lives in every one of us.

We understand that we are intimately connected to all other life. We have suffered together.

Now the healing has begun. The work ahead of us is Holy.

We search for ways to achieve spiritual growth which benefit society.

We are joining local groups and working on common problems.

We do not waste our time, energy or money on trivial pursuits.

We do not fuel the competitive atmosphere in our country by watching, listening to or participating in organized sports/games.

We seek pleasure in non-competitive, spontaneous activities.

Our lives are a

#### **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

from multinational corporations and a militaristic society.

We resist the influence of all patriarchal institutions even if it means withdrawing from them COMPLETELY.

We will not adapt.

We will not be silenced any more.

We are part of the non-violent movement revitalizing this country. We are discovering the lies, greed and violence of many major, well-known corporations and we are boycotting them every chance we get.

It is so EMPOWERING to finally understand their evil ways and to KNOW that we don't need their "stuff" anymore!

We do not own TVs. When we are watching TV we are not really living.

We do not pay attention to commercials or advertisements. We think for ourselves.

We are making wonderfully radical lifestyle changes and enjoying our newfound freedom from deadly old habits, traditions and media brain-washing.

We are redesigning our lives and our culture.

We build healthy bodies and spirits through more alert living and thinking.

We spend more time with Nature. The Universe is our teacher. We go to parks and forests, streams, rivers and oceans to experience the mystery of the Universe more closely.

When we cannot get away, we are content beholding clouds,  
geese, squirrels, spiders, ants, grasses, leaves.....

We see the trees falling - our hearts cry out in pain.

What's happening?

Why?

Who's responsible?

Why didn't I know?

What about next time?

How do we STOP THEM??

We try to track developers but it's so hard! In the  
meantime we wage our citizen's warfare by boycotting new wood  
products; new, large, obscene homes and suburban sprawl.

We are willing to sacrifice physical comfort and ease. We  
would rather sweat in Summer than use air-conditioning which  
hurts the ozone layer and contributes to global warming. We find  
other ways to cool off.

(In my own life, I decided not to replace my toaster when  
it died. When my sewing machine couldn't be fixed, I began  
making clothes by hand. My latest habit is reading by  
candlelight.)

First we get ourselves back in harmony with Nature, then we  
assist others to return to a balanced and sacred relationship.

**ALL LIFE IS SACRED.**

**ALL LAND IS SACRED.**

We are eager to dedicate ourselves to this effort of  
healing and saving lives, both human and non-human.

We choose life partners who share our values.

*[The next two pages in the middle of the book have three words at the bottom.]*

WE TREASURE

S I L E N C E

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## **VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY**

We are rising to heights of environmental living which North Americans have never seen before and we are delighting in our escape from TOO MUCH.

We combine passive resistance to mindless habits with active encouragement of younger people to hold tightly to their ideals and to this new view. We work together unflinchingly for the flourishing of life.

We live as sensibly as we can with so few possessions and such great joy that we are proving that we don't want what the distorted "American Dream" offers. We have our own dream of a low-stress, low-impact, low-consumption, environmentally and socially friendly culture where people help each other - a much more personal society than the one which is currently crumbling.

My friends and I do the bare minimum of shopping. When we do shop, it is in small stores and worker-owned cooperatives, NOT in malls or chain stores.

We support American cottage industries and co-ops in less industrialized nations.

We choose plain things and when possible we make our own.  
Our motto is:

USE IT UP  
WEAR IT OUT  
MAKE IT DO  
OR DO WITHOUT!

We see the inner beauty, strength, goodness and intelligence of ALL people. We are not fooled by superficial outer trappings like:

- \* fashion,
- \* jewelry,
- \* hair/nails,
- \* cosmetics,
- \* cars,
- \* houses,
- \* wealth,
- \* college degrees,
- \* pedigrees,
- \* youth, or
- \* thinness.

We stubbornly avoid chemically-contaminated or genetically-engineered food.

We are determined to buy organic food no matter what the cost or we grow our own.

We search for local farmers and health food stores whose values we trust. We buy from them and tell all our friends about them so they thrive.

We work to set up organic food co-ops if there are none near us.

We place restrictions on ourselves. We are vegetarians. In *Diet for a New America*, John Robbins says:

"My family didn't understand or agree with my decision to turn down the family fortune (Baskin' Robbins) and not follow in the family business, but in order to become the person I needed to be, I had to unearth and expose all the beliefs that didn't serve me."

We are not enablers to an addictive society which allows (and even promotes) single-use, disposable products.

We are "coming off the power plant grid" by using fewer machines and appliances. When we do this, we minimize our use of electricity obtained through coal, oil, gas, nuclear power - all of which have disastrous effects.

## **WE MUST STOP THE MACHINES !!**

We:

- \*own no more than one small home (if that),
- \*use non-motorized recreational vehicles,
- \*give non-materialistic gifts,
- \*unplug ourselves from electronics and rediscover our brains,
- \*unclutter our homes,
- \*purge our bodies of addictive and harmful substances,
- \*bike and walk more,
- \*resist rushing,
- \*find inner peace, and
- \*prepare the way for the children.

We refuse certain career paths:

- \*military/weapons,
- \*genetic engineering,
- \*animal research,
- \*nuclear energy,
- \*development of unbroken land, and
- \*pesticide spraying.

We seek meaningful work:

- \*organic farming,
- \*restoration,
- \*maintenance,
- \*social change,
- \*mass transit,
- \*holistic health,
- \*alternative education,
- \*music, dance, art.

We read books like:

- \*Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television
- \*In the Absence of the Sacred
- \*When God Was a Woman
- \*Hope for the Flowers
- \*Walk in Balance
- \*Medicine Woman
- \*Behaving As If the God in All Life Mattered
- \*A Room of One's Own
- \*Silent Spring
- \*The Monkey Wrench Gang
- \*Free the Animals
- \*Dream of the Earth
- \*Universe Story

These are questions I ask before buying anything:

- \*What is it made of?
- \*Where does it come from?
- \*Were the workers treated fairly? Were they exposed to poisons?
- \*Did animals suffer?
- \*How is it packaged?
- \*What happens to it when I'm done with it?
- \*Do I REALLY need it?

The preceding ideas are but a few examples of our thoughts. We are working as hard as we can to break the molds which enslave our souls. We are redesigning our lives and our culture.

Here are some challenges:

- How many days can I go without buying anything but food?
- How many days can I go without throwing anything away?

- How many days can I live happily everafter without television?

We OE people are scattered around the country - sharing ideas, hopes and dreams with each other, forming small groups to research and act upon complex issues, offering one another support and encouragement in this struggle to live out of a whole new value system.

We are learning to trust our intuition. When we are very still, with no distractions, we receive guidance from above and from within.

Why would I want to be part of The Order of the Earth?

\* To devote my life, my imagination, my intelligence to the health, safety and happiness of all living creatures.

\* To be a neighborhood activist learning what's happening, sounding the alarm and gathering friends to act when foul deeds are found.

\* Freedom to live my life the way I believe a life should be lived!

My heartfelt thanks to Lou for rekindling my hopes for OE, to Chris for superb editorial comments, to Fran for a wonderful new friendship, to Scott for loving Fran, to John for loving me enough to let me go my own way and to Mom -- whose many gifts enabled me to do this.

*Love, Iona*

10/2/95